



**Mennonite
Mission
Network**

The mission agency of
Mennonite Church USA

FRANCE

Embracing differences

Packet contents

- Introduction and background information
- Guidelines for using mission banks
- A story card for use in worship or Sunday school
- Children's prayer card

Introduction for children

France is a country in western Europe, almost the same size as Texas. It's on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, so you can't drive there, but if you take a plane from New York City to Paris, you could be there in seven hours.

France is near countries like Germany, Italy and Spain, as well as some smaller countries like Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland. (*Teachers, this is the perfect time to try out our geography activities on the next page!*)

Good food is important to French people. While people in the United States often eat quickly, dinner in France can last as long as four hours! It normally starts with a drink served with nuts, olives or crackers, and is followed by an appetizer, main entrée, cheese, dessert and coffee, which are each served separately. You can see why it takes so long! (*Teachers, be sure to check out our snack activities on the next page!*)

France is a very diverse country. This means that people come from all over the world to live in France. It's no surprise, then, that some urban Mennonite churches in France



Mission Banks

A stewardship and mission resource

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

—Galatians 3:28

(like Châtenay-Malabry) have 13 countries represented! How many countries are represented in *your* church?

Every French citizen has the freedom to choose their religion. This means that each person is free to believe what they wish. Because of this, France is very accepting of many religions, including Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, and some who wonder whether there is a God at all. There are even a few Mennonites in France!

Mennonites are a part of a larger group of Christians. But since there are not many Christians in France, Linda Oyer and Neal and Janie Blough help to teach people about God in schools for adults, called Bible colleges and seminaries, and also in churches. After the adults learn about God, they'll continue to teach others. Brad and Brenna Steury Graber teach youth and young adults about God. All of these Mennonite Mission Network workers try to share God's love and peace with everyone they meet.

Did you know?

- The capital city of France is Paris.
- Paris is home to the Eiffel Tower.
- France hosts the world's largest bicycle race, called *Tour de France*.
- In France, you cannot take a type of cheese called *Vieux Boulogne* on a bus, because though some people think it is the best cheese ever, others think it smells so bad.

Using mission bank teaching tools

These teaching tools are used in conjunction with the globe-shaped mission banks provided by Mennonite Mission Network. Banks for children can be ordered online at www.MennoniteMission.net/MissionBank.

For more resources about France, visit www.MennoniteMission.net/FranceMissionBank.

Mission bank projects teach children mission-focused stewardship. The tools show children how God is at work in France and what mission can mean in a child's own context.

Meet our workers



Janie and Neal Blough serve with the Paris Mennonite Center, assist with leadership at the Mennonite congregation in Châtenay-Malabry, and teach at various schools and other settings in the region. Neal teaches church history and theology, and Janie teaches about worship and English.



Brad Graber and Brenna Steury Graber teach and nurture the youth and young adults in the three Mennonite congregations in Paris, and reach out to the community.



Linda Oyer teaches at Vaux-sur-Seine Evangelical Seminary, serves at the Mennonite Training Center (EFraTA) in Bienenberg, Switzerland, and speaks to groups across French-speaking Europe.

Material for teachers

Story cards

Included in this packet is a story card about God's work in France. Share this story with children during worship, Sunday school, or other gathering times. After reading it together, invite children to reflect on ways that they can follow Christ in their own lives.

Giving project

Mennonite Mission Network supports a variety of ministries in France. One of the primary ways that mission happens is by sharing the good news of Jesus through friendships and loving our neighbors. In Paris, that means gathering people from all over the city. Our mission workers use cars, buses and trains to get around the city. We want to help make this "getting together travel" possible. **For example, did you know that \$2 helps pay for one metro ticket to church?**

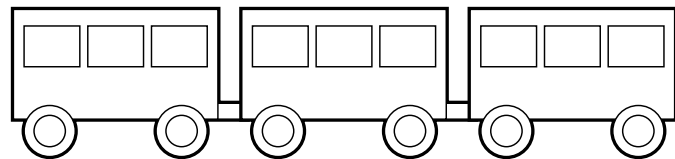
Giving project display idea

In Paris, many people use trains to get from one place to another. Copy the enclosed giving project idea sheet picturing train segments. Children may want to color in the shapes and add peoples' faces in the passenger car windows. Tack the train pieces onto a bulletin board or tape onto a wall. For every \$5 raised, add another car to the train. You may also use a Thomas the Train set or Legos to make your own train.

Additional activities

Early childhood activities:

- Find a variety of coloring pages at www.MennoniteMission.net/FranceMissionBank that reflect the diversity of the three Mennonite churches in France.
- Learn *Jésus m'aime*, or *Jesus loves me*, in French.



- Soccer is well-loved in France. Spread the love by practicing to kick a soccer ball from one side of the room to the other. (*It might be less hazardous to use a medium-sized nerf ball.*)

Kindergarten-grade 3 activities:

- Print out a map of Europe. Color and label each of the countries that border France.
- The Mennonite churches in France include people from 13 countries. Using construction paper, make flags from each of those countries and hang them around your classroom. Then pray for people in each of those countries.
- Host your own Tour de France in the church's community space. Insert your church's name and call it the Tour de ____! Use couch cushions from home or a youth room to make an obstacle course. Then, on scooters, race around the course!

Grades 3-6 activities:

- Print out a map of Paris. Find and label each of the three French Mennonite churches located in Paris.
 - *Église Évangélique Mennonite Villeneuve-le-Comte*, 82 rue du Pont de Couilly, Villeneuve, France
 - *Église Évangélique Mennonite Châtenay-Malabry*, 247-249 Av. Division Leclerc, Paris, France
 - *Église Évangélique Mennonite Lamorlaye*, 2 Place du Calvaire, Lamorlaye, France
- Write a letter to each mission worker to thank them for their work! (*Teachers, for security reasons, we don't publicize our workers' home addresses, but if you send them to Mennonite Mission Network, we'll be sure to pass on the letters!*)
- France is famous for fashion, so host your own trash fashion show! Have children create outfits from old newspaper and tape. Take pictures of the finished outfits and put them on collection cans in the church lobby for members to vote for their favorite with coins/money. Proceeds go to mission in France.

Snack ideas:

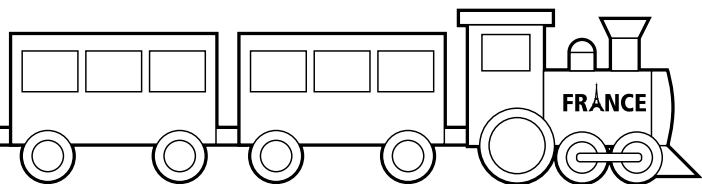
- Mennonites in France are very ethnically diverse. Open a bag of M&Ms and, before eating them, have the children group the M&Ms in any way they choose. (As a teacher and role model, group your M&Ms so that there are a variety of colors in each M&M group.) Ask each child how they decided to group the M&Ms, and then share how you grouped your M&Ms and why diversity is important. For older children, use the M&Ms to talk about France's diversity. Make sure every child has 10 M&Ms and group the M&Ms to show the demographics below*:
 - Almost 12 percent of the people in France immigrated from another country.
 - Out of 3.1 million people whose parents moved to France from a different country, 50 percent have one parent from Europe, 40 percent have one parent from Africa.
 - More than 60 percent of African immigrants to France live in Paris.

**From Mainstreaming Integration Policy in France: Education, Employment, and Social Cohesion Initiatives, 2014.*

- France is known for its cheese. Bring in a variety of cheeses and crackers for children to try.
- The Louvre is a famous art museum in Paris. Make your art by finger painting with pudding!

For more resources to teach children about diversity, check out these books:

- *One Green Apple* by Eve Bunting tells of a young Muslim immigrant named Farah, who finds a sense of belonging during a field trip to an apple orchard with her classmates.
- *Two Mrs. Gibsons* by Toyomi Ignus celebrates the cultural differences between a girl's Japanese mother and her African-American grandmother.
- *Children Just like Me: A Unique Celebration of Children around the World* by Anabel Kindersley and Barnabas Kindersley, together with UNICEF, shares about the differences and similarities of children from 140 countries.



▶ Visit us online at www.MennoniteMission.net/FranceMissionBank for more resources.



Using mission banks

Please follow these guidelines as you use Mennonite Mission Network's mission banks to support God's work in France.

Use of banks—The globe-shaped mission banks were created to collect funds for ministries in the countries highlighted by the mission bank teaching tools *produced by Mennonite Mission Network*. In these packets you can find:

- Stories about Mennonite Mission Network ministry happening in that area.
- A giving project.
- Activities, songs and recipes to help children engage the country's or region's culture.
- Videos and PowerPoint presentations that help to put a face on each country and the giving project.

Age range and cost—Mission banks are a fun way for children and congregations to learn together about stewardship and generosity, and to hear stories about the ways that God is working around the world. Because we want each child to be able to participate in this learning experience, banks are offered free of charge to all Mennonite Church USA children in grades K-6 from January 1–March 31 of every year. Banks can also be ordered throughout the year for \$4.95 per bank.

Resources—Along with each teaching tool packet, we also post extra resources online. Check back often at www.MennoniteMission.net/MissionBank for new pictures and ideas for mission education.

Other uses—Stewardship and mission education are not just important for children; they are important for the whole church. Consider giving one globe bank to each household, or sharing stories from the Mission Network teaching tool packets during worship. Invite all members of your congregation to pray and support Mission Network personnel around the world.

Gift designation—Mennonite Mission Network supports workers and partners all around the world. You may wish to consider using your banks to also support Mennonite Voluntary Service or Service Adventure participants from your congregation, or to raise support for a Mission Network worker that your congregation is connected with.

Collecting funds—Congregations are asked to collect the funds contributed through the mission banks and send a check payable to Mennonite Mission Network, with **"Mission Bank—France"** or **"Project #1618"** written in the check memo line. Congregations may decide to participate with other congregations in bringing the total amount collected to a cluster or area conference gathering. Then funds may be disbursed in the same manner as above.

If you have other questions about how to use your Mennonite Mission Network mission banks, or would like to order more teaching tool packets, please contact us at MissionBank@MennoniteMission.net or 1-866-866-2872.

Contributors

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