



RAISING UP LEADERS IN

# Bolivia



**Mission Banks**  
A stewardship and mission resource

“Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”

—1 Timothy 4:12

## 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

Together, we’re going to learn about a country called Bolivia. Did you know that you already share something in common with Bolivian children? You are both American! Bolivians live in South America. And we live in North America. Can you find those continents (big land areas) on the map? Now find the country of Bolivia; it’s on the South American continent.

Bolivia shares a border with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Peru. The country is one of two countries in South America that doesn’t border the ocean. Do you know what the other country is? (Paraguay.)

Bolivia has both mountains and flat lands. The western half of Bolivia is home to the Andes Mountains, some of the tallest mountains in the world. Bolivia’s two capitals, La Paz and Sucre, are settled in the mountains. The mountains are so high that the weather is cool most of the time, with average highs around 60 degrees. This is very different from the flatlands in eastern Bolivia where it is hot most of the time!

The first Mennonites in Bolivia were several German-speaking families from Paraguay in 1954. Mennonite Central

Committee (MCC) sent workers to help with agriculture and health, and they also started Bible studies among Spanish-speaking people. The MCC workers wanted help to develop the churches. They contacted Mennonite Mission Network (known at the time as Mennonite Board of Missions and the Commission on Overseas Mission). Together with the Argentina Mennonite Church, in 1971, they sent Argentine Mennonites José and Soledad Godoy as mission workers. They worked with Spanish-speaking Bolivians to share about what it means to follow Jesus, and the Bible study groups grew into churches. Now, there are eight Mennonite churches in and around Santa Cruz.

Today, the Bolivia Mennonite Church is not only thriving, but has its own ministries, like one called the Samuelito Day Care Center. For some families, day care is too expensive, so young children sometimes go to work with a parent, or are watched by other very young siblings. For these families, Samuelito helps provide a safe and loving environment for children while their parents are at work.

Margrit Kipfer Barrón and Freddy Barrón are workers with Mennonite Mission Network and the Swiss Mission. They work with the Bolivia Mennonite Church and continue to spread the good news about Jesus in their churches and community. Margrit coordinates preparing Sunday school and vacation Bible school materials that are used around the country, and trains others to teach. She also helps the churches plan camps for children and youth. You can learn more about Margrit’s work by reading the story card that comes with these materials.

## 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](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/MissionBank).

For more resources about Bolivia, visit [www.MennoniteMission.net/BoliviaMissionBank](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/BoliviaMissionBank).

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

# Bolivia

## Did you know?

- Bolivia is the size of Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma combined.
- Spanish is one of the official languages of Bolivia, but there are many indigenous languages spoken.
- Bolivia is home to South America's largest lake, Lake Titicaca.

## Meet our worker



**Margrit Kipfer Barrón** was born in Switzerland, but lives in Santa Cruz with her husband, Freddy. Margrit coordinates Christian education ministries of the Bolivia Mennonite Church, including the preparation of Sunday school materials and Bible school materials. In fact, she adapts the “Shine” Sunday school materials for Bolivian children! (So when you go to Sunday school, you are learning the same lessons as children in Bolivia!) Her husband, Freddy, is a Mennonite pastor and teaches theology. They have two children at home, Misael and Betsabé.

## Material for teachers

### Story cards

Included in this packet is a story card about God's work in Bolivia. Share this story with children during worship, Sunday school, or another gathering time. 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 Bolivia. One of the primary ways that mission happens is by sharing the good news of Jesus through friendships and loving our neighbors. In Bolivia, this happens by putting a lot of energy into teaching Sunday school and vacation Bible school. When you give, you help other children learn about Jesus in many different ways. Did you know:

- **\$50** helps to provide children's Sunday school materials.
- **\$25** helps 10 children to attend vacation Bible school to learn about Jesus.
- **\$16** helps to train one young adult in the *Sirviendo a Cristo* (Serving Christ) program that teaches people about God and how to share God's love.

## Giving project display idea

Print out a map of your state and a map of Bolivia. Place them a few feet apart on a bulletin or poster board. Go to [www.MennoniteMission.net/BoliviaMissionBank](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/BoliviaMissionBank) to print cutout shapes of boys and girls. For every \$5 you raise, tape a boy or girl to the bulletin board. For each person you add, overlap their hands to make a line. See if you can connect your state with Bolivia. If you can do that, can you also make a circle around the bulletin board?

## Additional activities

### Early childhood activities

- Find Bolivia on a map. *Teachers, point out the countries that are close to it.*
- Using construction paper, make the flag of Bolivia.
- Did you know that you can sing the same song in a different language? Learn “Jesus loves me” in Spanish from this video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9YpSikLZvI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9YpSikLZvI). Then sing it during church next Sunday!

### Kindergarten–grade 3 activities

- Did you know that you can sing the same song in a different language? Learn “Jesus loves me” in Spanish from this video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9YpSikLZvI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9YpSikLZvI). Then sing it during church next Sunday!
- Read the children's “Introduction to Bolivia” section in these materials. Given the weather, give the children the quick **“bring it or leave it” quiz** about what they might pack if they were taking a trip to La Paz, Bolivia.
- Print out a map of Bolivia. Draw a circle around the country. Put a sticker on the major cities: La Paz and Sucre (the capitals). Draw a heart shape around Santa Cruz, where the Spanish Mennonite churches are, and where the first

German-speaking Mennonites arrived from Fernheim, Paraguay. They left Russia as refugees and arrived in South America in 1930 in search of religious freedom and a place where they could pass on faith, culture and language to their children. Why do you think it was important to them to find a place where they could worship freely? Do you know of other religions who don't feel that they are able to worship freely? How do you think Jesus would treat them?

## Grades 4–6 activities

- Print out a map of Bolivia. Draw a circle around the country. Put a sticker on the major cities: La Paz and Sucre (the capitals). Draw a heart shape around Santa Cruz, where the Spanish Mennonite churches are, and where the first German-speaking Mennonites arrived from Fernheim, Paraguay. They left Russia as refugees and arrived in South America in 1930 in search of religious freedom and a place where they could pass on faith, culture and language to their children. Why do you think it was important to them to find a place where they could worship freely? Do you know of other religions who don't feel that they are able to worship freely? How do you think Jesus would treat them?

## “Bring it or leave it” quiz

If traveling to La Paz, Bolivia, should you bring:

1. **High heels?** Leave it. Bring hiking boots instead!
2. **A winter coat?** Bring it. La Paz is in the Andes Mountain Range and can get very cold, especially at night.
3. **A swimsuit?** Bring it. There are natural hot springs just outside of La Paz. It's like nature's hot tub!
4. **An umbrella?** Leave it. Although it rains sometimes, La Paz has pretty dry weather.
5. **Toothpaste?** Leave it. La Paz is a modern city, where you can easily buy things like toothpaste, shampoo, and soap.
6. **Sunglasses?** Bring it. Even though La Paz can get very cold, it's usually very sunny!
7. **Water bottle?** Bring it. Make sure you have a bottle to fill. Sometimes people get sick from the high elevation of La Paz. Drinking water will help make sure you stay healthy.

- Read the Children's Introduction to Bolivia in these materials. Given the weather, give the children the quick **“bring it or leave it” quiz** about what they might pack if they were taking a trip to La Paz, Bolivia.

## Snack ideas

**Inequality**—Bolivia has many resources, like gold, silver, and natural gas, but Bolivia is one of the countries in South America with the most poverty. Only a few people have access to the riches of the country. This is called inequality. It's a big problem in the United States, too. To show inequality, choose two “special children” in the class and give 20 Goldfish crackers to them. Give two Goldfish crackers to the rest of the children in the class. For the rest of the class period, give the “special children” certain privileges. Then discuss these questions at the end of class:

1. How did it make you feel to receive extra Goldfish and special privileges?
2. How did it make you feel to see others receiving so much more than you, for no reason?
3. In your class at school, are there people who have more or less than you? How do you think this makes them feel?
4. In our world, just like in our classroom today, there are a few people who have a lot of money, and there are many people who live on as little as \$2 a day. How does God tell us to treat the poor? Read Matthew 25:34–36 and 1 John 3:17–18.

**Demographics**—To teach the class about Bolivia, give 20 Goldfish crackers to each student.

- 68 percent of Bolivians live in the city. This can be represented by 14 Goldfish crackers. The rest of the 6 Goldfish crackers represent Bolivians who live in the country.
- Bolivian children your age (0–14) make up 32 percent of the population. To show this, separate 6 Goldfish crackers from your pile.
- In Bolivia, 45 percent have access to the Internet. Separate 9 Goldfish crackers to show this.



▶ Visit us online at [www.MennoniteMission.net/BoliviaMissionBank](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/BoliviaMissionBank) 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 Bolivia.*

**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 snack ideas 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 Jan. 1–Mar. 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](http://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.

**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 Banks: Bolivia"** or **"Project #1718"** written in the check memo line. Congregations may decide to participate with other congregations in bringing the total collected to a cluster or area conference gathering.

**Alternate 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.

**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](mailto:MissionBank@MennoniteMission.net) or 1-866-866-2872.**

### Contributors

**Content provided by:** Kelsey Hochstetler and Margrit Kipfer Barrón.

**Copy editing:** Karen Ritchie

**Design:** Cynthia Friesen Coyle and David Fast