

Joining God's team in **CONGO**

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

Africa is a very big continent—a piece of land, made of many countries. Africa and North America are both continents. The Democratic Republic of Congo and the United States are both countries. The Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the largest countries in Africa. *Can you find it on the map? Hint: It's a different country than the Republic of the Congo.*

Congo has grasslands, mountains, huge rain forests, and one of the largest rivers in the world. While some places in the United States have four seasons (spring, summer, fall and winter), Congo has two seasons: rainy and dry. Both seasons are hot, which is helpful to grow food like cassava, rice and potatoes.

Many precious stones and metals are found in Congo. Have you seen a diamond ring? That's from Congo! What about a cell phone? That has metal from Congo! But just like some kids have trouble sharing, adults sometimes don't like to share, either. In Congo—and in many other parts of the world—this means that only a few groups of people control the money and power while others go without. This led to



Mission Banks

A stewardship and mission resource

"For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free."

—1 Corinthians 12:13

many years of war. Many times the people using guns to take what they want are not even from Congo.

Music and dance are very important—in good times and bad times. They are a part of almost every celebration—even funerals! They are sometimes used to tell stories, give advice, and comment on culture.

Mennonite missionaries first went to Congo in 1912. They shared Jesus' love by building schools and hospitals to help children learn and to help sick people get well. During the next 100 years, Congolese Mennonites and missionaries from North America worked together. The Mennonite Church in Congo grew to be one of the largest in the whole world.

Last year, the *Communauté Mennonite au Congo* (Mennonite Church of Congo) planned a Bible and soccer camp. (Soccer is a very popular sport in Congo.) You can read more about it on the story card.

Did you know?

- Congo is a third of the size of the United States. If all of the states east of the Mississippi River formed a country, it would be as big as Congo.
- The capital city of Congo is Kinshasa. It is about the size of Chicago.
- Virunga National Park is located in Congo. It is the oldest national park on the continent of Africa.
- French is the official language in Congo, but common traditional languages include Lingala, Kiswahili, Kikongo, and Tshiluba.

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 Congo, visit www.MennoniteMission.net/CongoMissionBank.

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

Meet our partner

Communauté Mennonite au Congo (Mennonite Church of Congo) began 100 years ago! The church has thrived, growing to 110,000 members, 798 congregations, 95 schools, and eight hospitals.

Material for teachers

Story cards

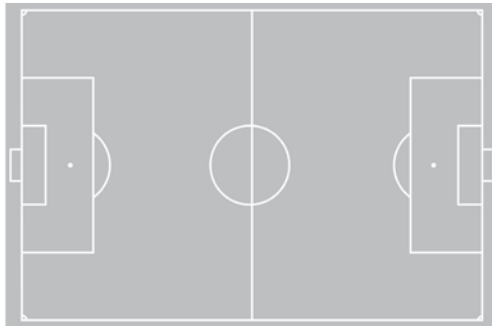
Share this story from Congo with children during worship, Sunday school, or another gathering time. After reading the story together, invite children to reflect on how they might follow Jesus at home, in school, and in church.

Giving project

Mennonite Mission Network supports a variety of ministries in Congo. One of the primary ways that mission happens is by sharing the good news of Jesus through friendships and loving our neighbors. One way this happens in Congo is during Bible and soccer camps. The Mennonite Church of Congo plans many gatherings, or camps, for men, women and youth to encourage and strengthen each other. Giving project gifts will help support these types of ministries in Congo. *(In the story enclosed, you can hear how a Bible and soccer camp strengthened the faith of many youth!)*

Giving project display idea

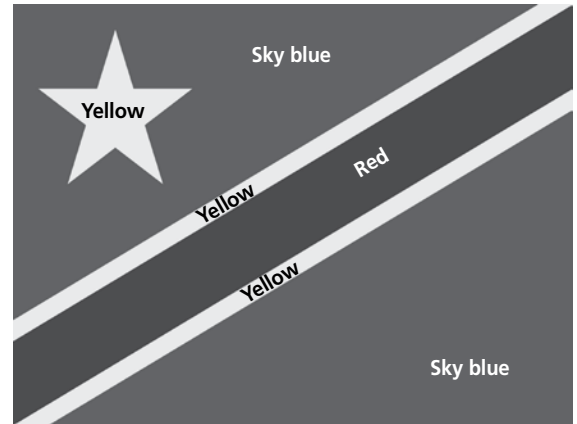
Use a bulletin board and green paper to draw a soccer field. Go to www.MennoniteMission.net/CongoMissionBank to print out photos of soccer players. To attend camp, each youth is asked to pay \$15. For each \$15 you raise, add a soccer player to the field. Use the soccer field to track your giving progress and see how many teams you can create!



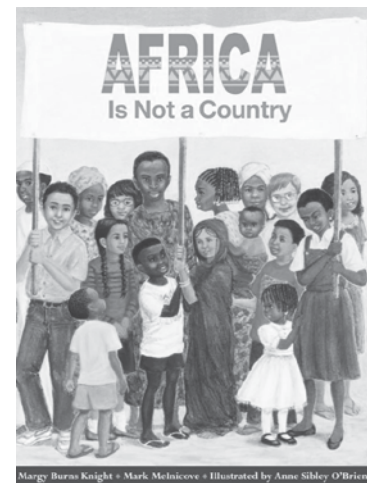
Additional activities

Early childhood activities:

- Find the Democratic Republic of Congo on a map. What other countries are close to it?
- Using construction paper, make the flag of the Democratic Republic of Congo.



- Read *Africa Is Not a Country* (see “More resources”) and learn about everyday life in Congo and other countries.



Kindergarten–grade 3 activities:

- In Congo, music is an important part of the culture. Bring in round oatmeal boxes or coffee cans for children to decorate using paper or paint. Play the drums together as you sing “Jesus loves the little children.”

- Print out a map of Congo. Draw a circle around the country. Put a sticker on the major cities: Kinshasa (the capital), Lubumbashi, Mbuji-Mayi, and Kisangani. Draw a heart shape around Tshikapa, where the Mennonite Church headquarters are. Draw squares around Kafumba, Ndjoko Punda, and Kalamba, locations of the first Mennonite missionaries in Congo. Why do you think these first mission locations were located along the Kasai River?

Grades 4–6 activities:

- Print out a map of Congo. Draw a circle around the country. Put a sticker on the major cities: Kinshasa (the capital), Lubumbashi, Mbuji-Mayi, and Kisangani. Draw a heart shape around Tshikapa, where the Mennonite Church headquarters are. Draw squares around Kafumba, Ndjoko Punda, and Kalamba, locations of the first Mennonite missionaries in Congo. Why do you think these first mission locations were located along the Kasai River?
- Congo has many natural resources like oil (used for gasoline), diamonds, gold, and coltan (used to make cell phones). Many of these resources are used to make the things we use every day, like cell phones, cars and jewelry. It is important to be aware that many Congolese people die digging these natural resources from the ground. If we limited how much gas we use, how many times we buy a new cell phone, the kind of jewelry we wear, maybe fewer people would die in Congo. Look through a magazine and cut out pictures of cars, jewelry, and cell phones. Paste the pictures on a poster board with the words, “Things that come from Congo.” Explain this poster to the church, and display this in your church foyer for a few weeks.

More resources

For more resources to teach children about Congo and other African nations, check out the book, *Africa Is Not a Country*, by Margy Burns Knight, describes the daily life in some of Africa’s 53 countries.

Snack ideas:

Many precious stones and metals are found in Congo, but only a few people have access to them. This leaves the rest of the Congolese people without. Choose two “special children” in the class and give 20 Goldfish crackers to them. Give 2 Goldfish crackers to the rest of the children in the class. For the rest of the class period, give the “special children” certain privileges (example: they can walk around the room, talk without raising their hand, etc.), while the rest of the class must behave as normal. Then discuss these questions at the end of class:

- How did it make you feel to receive extra Goldfish and special privileges?
- How did it make you feel to see others receiving so much more than you, for no reason?
- In your class at school, are there people who have more or less than you? How do you think this makes them feel?
- 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.



▶ Visit us online at www.MennoniteMission.net/
CongoMissionBank 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 Congo.

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 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 Bank—Congo"** or **"Project #1701"** 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 or 1-866-866-2872.

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