



Mennonite
Mission
Network



Mission Banks

A stewardship and mission resource

"Seek peace and pursue it."

—1 Peter 3:11b

Packet contents

- Introduction and background information
- Guidelines for using mission banks
- A story card for use in worship or Sunday school
- Age-specific activities for up to four 30-minute lessons. More activities can be found at www.MennoniteMission.net/EcuadorMissionBank.

Introduction for children

Over the next several weeks, we'll be learning about the country of Ecuador. In your mind, picture our world from space. Behind the clouds swirling around the earth, do you see where you live? If you live in the United States, then you live on the continent, or big land mass, of North America. Ecuador is one of the many countries on the continent of South America.

Ecuador shares a border with Colombia, Peru, and the Pacific Ocean. In fact, the Galapagos Islands, in the Pacific Ocean, belong to Ecuador even though they are 500 miles off the coast.

The country is both beautiful and diverse. It has native peoples and recent immigrants. Snow-covered mountains and steamy rain forests. Flighty butterflies and creeping sloths. For its size, Ecuador is one of the most bio-diverse countries in the world. That means there are many different types of plants and animals that live there.

Ecuador is a peaceful place for many. Its unique and protected habitats provide places where many different plants and animals can survive. Its cities provide a home for refugees—

many of whom fled violence in Colombia. A refugee is a person who is forced to leave their home because of war. Can you imagine leaving home, with only the things you could carry in your arms? That's life for many refugees around the world.

Mennonites in Ecuador try their best to show God's love and peace to everyone and everything.

At Quito Mennonite Church, one of the ways they do this is by helping refugees from Colombia and other countries build a peaceful life. They help find a house and a job, and provide things like clothes and food. But *things* aren't enough to make someone feel at peace. Often times, the church will help heal emotional scars from the past, by arranging counseling sessions so they can talk through their hurt. They also provide spiritual healing and invite refugees to come to church.

People come to Quito Mennonite Church from all around to learn what it means to be a peacemaker. By providing classes, the church is able to prevent hurt between family members, neighbors, and larger groups of people.

In the neighborhood of *Jardines del Inca*, church volunteers organized an after-school program called *Vida Juvenil* (Young Life). Just like in the United States, many of the neighborhood children have parents who shout and throw things at each other. Some of them don't have enough food to eat, or clean clothes to wear. The volunteers at *Vida Juvenil* provide good role models for how to love others like Jesus did. Together, the children learn about Jesus, complete their homework, and learn to cook, among other things.

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 Ecuador, visit www.MennoniteMission.net/EcuadorMissionBank.

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



Did you know that there are Mennonite mission workers who live in Ecuador's rain forest, too? They work with church leaders to help people keep their land and a healthy way of life. They live among people whom other people think aren't important. Being at peace with both people and God's creation is important. They believe that people in both Ecuador and the United States can learn from each other, and so they are serving in a two-way mission. For six months out of the year, they teach and learn with Christians in Ecuador, and for the other six months, they walk beside Christians in the United States.

All of these ministries are happening because churches from Colombia and the United States formed a partnership to share God's love and peace in Ecuador. Because of their decision and commitment to work together, lives have been changed, and now a new Mennonite church conference in Ecuador is leading these ministries. It all started with people following Jesus. Maybe Jesus will use you in a similar way!

Did you know?

- Ecuador is named after the equator, the imaginary line that divides the northern and southern halves of our world.
- Ecuador is one of two countries in South America that does not share a border with Brazil. The other country is Chile.
- Ecuador is the first country to officially recognize the rights of animals, plants and water.

Meet our workers



Delicia Bravo Aguilar and Peter Wigginton coordinate the partnership in Ecuador. The partnership includes churches in Ecuador, Colombia and the United States. They also help Quito Mennonite Church with music, education, and children's and youth ministries. They have two children, Aliyah (age 3) and Ariana (who was born in March 2017).



Jane and Jerrell Ross Richer work half the year with church leaders in the Ecuadorian rain forest, and half the year as teachers in the United States. They have four children, Sierra (age 18), Naomi (16), Teresa (14) and Jordan (12).

Meet our partners

Ecuador Partnership:

- Central Plains Mennonite Conference includes churches in Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, South Dakota, Colorado, Illinois, Montana and Wisconsin, and is part of Mennonite Church USA.
- *Iglesia Cristiana Menonita de Colombia* (IMCOL) is a group of about 20 churches in Colombia.
- Mennonite Mission Network helps you serve Jesus around the world. We love to hear from children who use their mission banks and get excited about mission!

***Iglesia Cristiana Anabautista Menonita de Ecuador* (ICAME)** is a conference of Ecuadorian Mennonite churches planted by the Ecuador Partnership.

***Consejo de Pueblos y Organizaciones Indígenas Evangélicas del Ecuador* (Council of Indigenous Evangelical People and Organizations, or FEINE)** is a group of Native American churches that promotes spiritual and holistic development.

Material for teachers

Story cards

Included in this packet is a story card about God's work in Ecuador. (You can find more stories online at www.MennoniteMission.net/MissionBanks.) 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 Ecuador. One of the primary ways that mission happens is by sharing the good news of Jesus through friendships and loving our neighbors. In Ecuador, this happens by showing and teaching peace to children. When you give, you help other children learn about Jesus in many different ways. Did you know:

- **\$5** a Sunday helps provide Sunday school materials for children in Quito.
- **\$15** helps the church buy supplies for one of the peace workshops with children.
- **\$25** a month helps *Vida Juvenil* provide homework support for children.
- **\$50** a week helps provide a safe place for refugee families to come and receive help.

Giving project display idea

In Ecuador, the palm branch is a symbol for peace. Make a palm tree using green construction paper. For each \$10 you raise, add another branch. See if you can make a palm tree forest!

Additional activities

Early childhood activities

- Color a picture of Ecuador's flag.
- Print out a map of Ecuador. Draw a circle around the country. Draw heart shapes around Quito where the Mennonite churches are located, and Tena where Jane and Jerrell Ross Richer live with their children, Sierra, Naomi, Teresa and Jordan, and work with churches in the rain forest. Color the Aguarico River. Can you find Zábalo, the little community where Sierra shared her food?

Kindergarten–grade 3 activities

Print out a map of Ecuador. Draw a circle around the country. Draw heart shapes around Quito where the Mennonite churches are located, and Tena where Jane and Jerrell Ross Richer live with their children, Sierra, Naomi, Teresa and Jordan, and work with churches in the rain forest. Color the Aguarico River. Can you find Zábalo, the little community where Sierra shared her food?

Grades 4–6 activities

The pan flute is a common Ecuadorian instrument. Did you know that you can make your own using plastic straws? You'll need the following things:

- 8 plastic drinking straws
- tape
- scissors
- a ruler
- pen or pencil

To make a pan flute, cut your first straw at 20 cm. For each of the following straws, cut them 2 cm shorter (20 cm, 18 cm, 16 cm, etc.). Arrange them from longest to shortest, and tape them together. Blow across the top of the straws and start your own pan flute band!



Snack ideas

- Bananas or chocolate bars. Both bananas and cacao beans (that are used to make chocolate) are grown in Ecuador.
- If you're feeling ambitious, bring some of these traditional snacks to try:
 - *Empanadas de queso*—Cheese hand pies with a dusting of sugar.
 - *Patacones*—Fried green plantains, squished into small, thick pancakes.
- To teach the class about Ecuador, give 20 Goldfish crackers to each student.
 - 64 percent of Ecuadorians live in the cities. This can be represented by 13 Goldfish crackers. The remaining 7 Goldfish crackers represent Ecuadorians who live in the country. To compare this to the United States, separate 16 Goldfish crackers to represent the 82 percent of people in the United States who live in a city.
 - Ecuadorian children 0–14 make up 28 percent of the population. To show this, separate 6 Goldfish crackers from your pile. Compare this to the United States, where only 19 percent (4 Goldfish crackers) are children under age 14.



Using mission banks

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

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—Ecuador"** or **"Project #1724"** 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.

Contributors

Content provided by: Kelsey Hochstetler and Sierra Ross Richer

Copy editing: Karen Ritchie

Design: Cynthia Friesen Coyle

