

Motivating Teens for Global Mission

By Dorothy Eaton Watts

“You can Make a Difference!” a curricular unit on Adventist Global Mission for grades seven through 12, provides ideas that challenge teens to change their world.

Global Mission is not the number one priority of today’s teens. Friendship, not the gospel commission, is the motivating force for young people in the 1990s. Relationships are much more important to them than what happens in the former Soviet Union or China.¹

Adventist youth are part of a larger culture that some have called “The Me Generation.” Tony Campolo has called it “The Passionless Generation.”

Campolo blames youth apathy in part on youth workers who have tried to provide a comfort zone for teens instead of challenging them to respond, get involved, and make a difference. He says, “We would do better if we invited our young people to accept the challenge to heroically change the world.”²

How then can we motivate today’s teens to participate in Global Mission?

“You Can Make a Difference!” a curricular unit on Adventist Global Mission for grades seven through 12, was written to answer that question. Its purpose is to provide ideas that challenge

teens to change their world.

Five Youth Motivators

The unit suggests five basic ways educators can motivate youth for service: Provide an example, use positive peer pressure, provide exposure, mission experience, and ownership.

1. Provide an

Example. “Nothing motivates students more than a real model.” If you want your students to get excited about Global Mission, it must start with you.

Get involved yourself in Global Mission, then share your excitement with your students. The unit suggests concrete ways such as sponsoring a child through an agency, volunteering for short-term mission service, befriending an international student, helping refugees, hosting missionaries, or adopting a personal Global Mission project.

2. Use Positive Peer Pressure. Suggestions for team-type activities are included, as well as ideas for the formation of a Teen Global Mission Club. Several ways are given to involve the students in motivating other young people for service.

Activities such as parties, festivals, banquets, cookouts, mission teams, and games can help to get everyone on the Global Mission bandwagon.

3. Provide Exposure. A hundred and one ways are given to create a mood for missions. You can do this through films, videos, bulletin boards, book displays, mission artifact displays, maps, flags, and international decorations.

Quizzes, puzzles, and games are provided, along with scripts for skits, plays, and musical programs. Imagine the fun your students could have with Mission Jeopardy, Mission Marathon, and Mission Scavenger Hunt!

4. Provide Mission Experiences. The most critical element in expanding the world view of teens is actual mission experience.⁴ It is not enough to show the tremendous needs of Global Mission. Teachers must show young people that they can *do* something about those needs. They can indeed make a difference!

Getting teens involved is the key to turning apathy about missions into excitement about a world cause.⁵

This unit outlines programs to get youth involved, such as service projects, work days, mission teams, festival weekends, prayer concerts, and short-term mission trips. How-to tips, program outlines, and addresses of organizations that can help you get your teens involved are included.

5. Provide Ownership. Involve the students in the planning stages. Put two or three students on the committee that plans a week of missions emphasis or mission festival.

If teams help plan the programs, they will not be bored. If they help choose the Global Mission project, they will support it.

Contents of the Unit

Part I: Goals and Objectives. The materials in the packet were assembled for use by educators in a wide variety of situations—from the teacher of a small one-room school to the faculty of a large academy.

The packaged unit serves as a resource unit that educators can use to prepare their own units. The goals and

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objectives of the unit can be achieved in several ways. Suggestions are given for a year-long program, a month-long program, a week of mission emphasis, quarterly mission festival weekends, and a classroom unit.

Part II: Methods. Teacher presentation ideas include ideas for interviews, panel discussions, small-group discussions, pageants, parades, book displays, bulletin boards, films, mission festival weekends, Bible studies, demonstrations, topics for

chapel talks, and much more.

Student-awareness activities include ideas for art projects, language-arts projects, social-studies activities, math problems, simulation games, banquets, parties, skits, quizzes, puzzles, and games. There are ideas for public performance opportunities and a Global Mission Teen Club.

Student outreach activities get the students out of the classroom to participate in community cross-cultural experiences, short-term mission service, penetration projects, and prayer concerts. Information is included on how to adopt a people group, missionary, child, or Global Mission project.

Part III. Materials. Skits, plays, quizzes, and puzzles may be copied for classroom use. Rules for mission games are provided. Background information for the teacher is provided.

Part IV. Resources. Here you will find the names of helpful books, magazines, films, posters, cards, and organizations,

along with addresses and phone numbers.

You Can Make a Difference!

With this unit on Global Mission, you can make a difference in the way your teens' view life. You can expand their world.

Together, you and your students can impact people's lives. Through Global Mission you can be an agent of change. You can make a difference! ☞

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2. Tony Campolo, "The Passionless Generation," *Youthworker Journal* (Summer 1985), p. 20.
3. Dave Busby, "Creating a Willingness Within Students for Spiritual Maturity," *Discipling the Young Person* (Arrowhead Springs, Calif.: Here's Life, 1985), p. 166.
4. Paul Borthwick, *Youth and Missions* (Scripture Press Publications, Inc., 1988), p. 91.
5. "Breaking Through the 'Me' Barrier—Programs to Expand Your Kids' World," *Youthworker Journal* (Summer 1985), p. 34.