



**FROM THESE  
ROOTS**

**Important Dates**

**June 14:**  
Flag Day

**June 21:**  
Father's Day

**July 4**  
Independence Day

## A Man for Missions

By Dr. Frank A. James III

“Geneva seems to me to be the wonderful miracle of the whole world. For so many from all countries come here, as it were, to a sanctuary. Is it not wonderful that Spaniards, Italians, Scots, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans disagreeing in manners, speech, and apparel, should live so lovingly and friendly, and dwell together like a . . . Christian congregation?”

This quote from John Bale, an English refugee to Geneva, sets the scene for Geneva, Switzerland in the 1550s. This Swiss city was an important refugee center. Throughout sixteenth-century Europe, persecuted Protestants fled their homeland, many of whom found their way to Geneva.

Geneva was also the home of John Calvin. Since Geneva was French-speaking, the vast majority of those seeking refuge came from France. As they sat under Calvin's teaching in the Cathedral of St. Pierre, many hearts among the French refugees were stirred for their homeland. Some felt compelled to return to France with the Protestant Gospel. But Calvin was disinclined to send uneducated



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missionaries back to the dangers of Catholic France. He believed that a good missionary had to be a good theologian first, so Calvin took these individuals under his wing and began to educate them. He trained them theologically, tested their preaching ability, and carefully scrutinized their moral character. Then, Calvin and the Genevan Consistory (a church court

comprised of lay elders and ministers) judged them properly equipped and ready to return to France with the Gospel.

But Calvin did not just educate them and send them back to France. He remained intimately involved in all that they were doing.

The Genevan archives hold hundreds of letters containing Calvin's pastoral and practical advice on establishing underground churches. He did not just send missionaries; he invested himself in long-term relationships with them.

Data indicates that by 1555, there were five underground Protestant churches in France. By 1559, the number of Protestant churches jumped to more than one hundred. And scholars estimate that by 1562, there were over 2,150 churches established in France with approximately three million Protestant souls in attendance.

Calvin also sent missionaries across the Atlantic Ocean to South America. Because of

increasing persecution, the leading Protestant in France, Admiral Coligny, embraced a grand vision for establishing a French Protestant colony in the New World where Protestants would be free to worship. Coligny sent out an expedition which landed in what is now Brazil. Coligny collaborated with Calvin to provide missionaries to the new settlement. Pierre Richier and William Chartier were the two missionaries sent to serve as chaplains to the settlers, as well as bring the Gospel to the natives in Brazil.

What was it that motivated Calvin's extraordinary missions interest? For Calvin, it was clear that the salvation of our souls necessarily carries with it an inevitable desire to share the Gospel with others. Calvin was missions-minded because he understood the transformational character of the Gospel. He understood that when God saves people, a profound change occurs in their lives and in the lives of others.



# Missions

## Through the Eyes of Little Children

Adapt these activities for your toddlers, preschoolers, and early elementary students. Consider sending them home for families to use together.

### Missionary Relay

Split your class into groups, with half of each group lined up on one side of the room and the other half directly across from them. Have the first child in each group run across the room and give the first person in line on the other side a high five. **Missionaries are people who travel to other places to tell people about Jesus. When you give your friend a high-five, tell them “Jesus loves you!” and then sit at the back of the line.** The first group with everyone sitting wins the race. You can adapt this based on your children. Instead of running, children could give the next child a Bible to share the Word of God. If possible, play this outside.

### If I Lived in Mexico I Might Wear ...

Gather costume pieces and clothes that reflect different cultures. Add a simple world map that shows both your church and the country the clothes represent. Let the children explore the clothes before class starts. You can talk with the children about where the country is and why people wear clothes that might be different than the ones they wear. Include how God loves the people who live in that country, too.



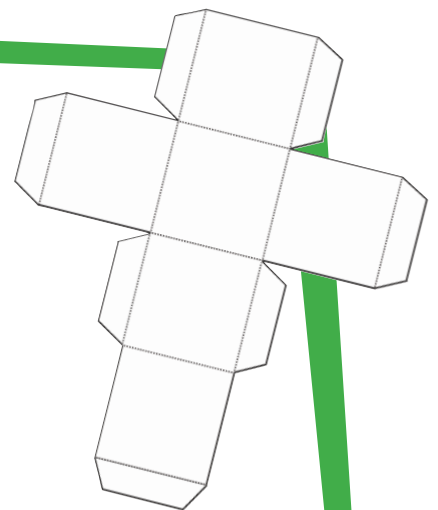
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### Prayer Cube

Use this activity throughout the quarter during prayer and worship times. You may also send home information and pictures about the missionaries for families to use in prayer at home.

» Prepare a prayer cube by taping pictures of six missionaries or country outlines onto a large foam block or cube (see pattern on page 10). The missionaries should be ones that your church supports, a child that your church may support through a mission organization, or a country/continent that you might want to emphasize.

» Each week, roll the cube during worship time. Tell a little about the side that is facing up. Then include that person or country in your class prayers.



# Jump into Missions

## with Elementary Students



Elementary children love to learn about other parts of the world. They like to discover the broader world and feel connected to children on other continents. Use these activities to help your students understand that discipleship includes sharing the story of Jesus and God’s love to people all around the world.

### Sing It in Another Language

Is there a simple Christian song that your class likes to sing? Find an online translation search for that song, then teach the song in another language. For example, a search for “Jesus Loves Me” can bring up translations in Spanish, French, German, and Japanese.

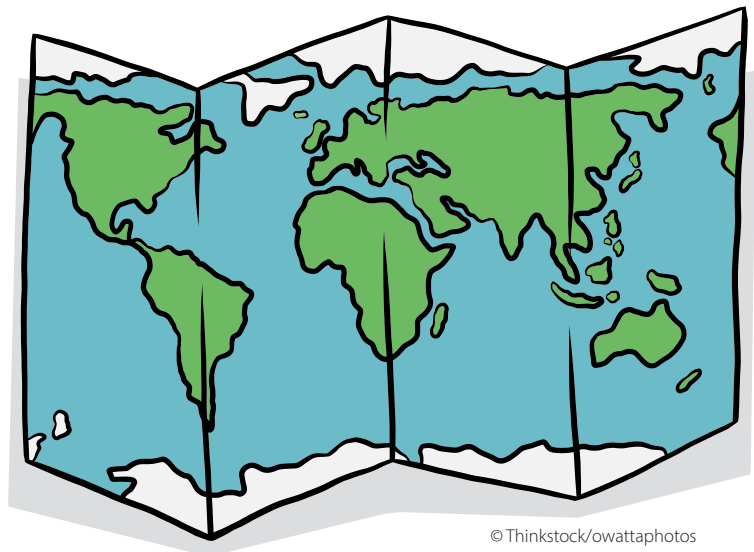


### I Have a Friend in . . .

For a long-term project for your entire Sunday school, consider adopting a child in another country through a Christian organization. Each month, a different class could send a letter to the child telling about themselves and what they are learning about God. Before beginning this project, check that your children’s ministry is prepared to take on this long-term project. You will have to commit to sending a certain amount of money each month to support the child. It is very rewarding to help another child learn about God’s love and break the cycle of poverty.

### World Prayer

As a class, pick a country in the world to pray for during this quarter. If your congregation has countries where you support missionaries, those would be good choices. Print out a map of the country along with some basic country facts and hang them on the wall in your classroom to remind you about their needs as you pray.



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# YOUTH STYLE!

## Missions

### World Prayer

As a youth group, pick a country in the world to pray for during this quarter. If your congregation has countries where you support missionaries, those would be good choices. Print out a map of the country along with some basic country facts and hang them on the wall in your youth room to remind you about their needs as you pray.

**S**ummer is a great time to plan a youth service project right in your own hometown. Check with your pastor or elder board for ideas about those in your church or community who could use some young hands. These may be the elderly, single parents, someone recuperating from surgery, or families with deployed military members. After a pastor or youth minister makes the initial contact to establish needs and times, hold a meeting with student leaders to plan the workday. Be sure to match the needs of the family with the skills of the youth. Projects don't have to be big tasks.

Consider helping out with:

- » Simple lawn and yard care
- » Painting fences, decks, porches
- » Cleaning up trash, garages, tool sheds, basements, cars
- » Washing windows
- » Laundry, housecleaning
- » Childcare with adult supervision

Ask students to volunteer in teams for the activities. Carefully plan to have any tools and supplies they may need. Parents may also help out. Be sure to take pictures to share with the rest of the youth group and your congregation.



# Teacher's Devotional

## *Hiding His Word in our Hearts*

John Calvin declared:  
"Seeing that God has given us such a treasure and so inestimable a thing as His Word, we must employ ourselves as much as we can, that it may be kept safe and sound and not perish. And let every man be sure to lock it up securely in his own heart."

Spend time this summer working on hiding God's Word in your heart. The following techniques could help you memorize Scripture more effectively.

» Read the verse you are memorizing several times, emphasizing a different word each time. This will help you with understanding and remembering the verse.

» Write out the verse by hand to help you visualize the verse in your mind.

» Have a set sequence for reviewing the verse. This routine helps your mind learn to associate the topic, reference, and verse so it is easier to recall. Here's one sequence you could use:

1. Say the topic you have assigned to the verse
2. Say the Scripture reference
3. Quote the verse
4. Say the Scripture reference again

» Keep a small notebook with the verses you have memorized next to your bed and read through them when you wake up in the morning and right before you fall asleep at night.

## Family Activity

### *Jesus as the Light of the World*

The summer solstice, June 21st, is the day on which the sun climbs to its highest point in the sky. This was originally the day when people celebrated midsummer. Early Christians moved many midsummer celebrations to coincide with the feast of John the Baptist on June 24th. Because John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, many celebrations over the centuries have been held outdoors.

Begin a new family tradition of celebrating Jesus as the Light of the World on June 24th. (This date is exactly half a year from Christmas Eve!) If possible, have this in the evening around a campfire or firepit. Or, use flashlights in the dark. Here are some ideas you could adapt to use for your family:

» Read the story of Jesus' baptism from Matthew 3:13-17 from a Bible translation that works for all your family members or from a Bible storybook.

» Spend time watching and talking about how the flames from the fire light up the area around you. Then talk together about how Jesus lights up the world.

» Sing songs about Jesus.

» Make s'mores with your family's favorite brand of chocolates.

(You could make these in a microwave if a fire isn't available. Assemble a s'more and heat on 70% power until the marshmallow and chocolate soften.)

Close your time with a prayer, thanking God for sending Jesus to be the Light of the World.

### **MATERIALS:**

- » Bible or Bible storybook
- » Campfire or firepit
- » Flashlights
- » Ingredients for s'mores



# Threads in the **ROYAL ROBE**

Scripture reveals to us who God is, what He requires of us, and how He shows His love to us in mighty saving acts of grace. We can never begin to know all there is to understand of Him, but our gracious God is able to show us enough of Him in order to have life, health, and peace in Him.

Through the written Word of God, the Holy Spirit teaches us all we need to know of the triune God. We learn what He desires to make known to us.

The Bible does not teach us in neat theological categories. Rather, God makes Himself known through accounts of His work in the lives of real people, through prophecies and prayers, doctrinal teaching, and wise sayings.

When we follow all these threads of truth, we see a pattern emerging—a royal robe woven from the gathered truths of Scripture adorns our King and displays His love.

To see God more clearly, we express what we learn from Scripture in a coherent way, known as the essentials of faith. The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed both express the essentials of faith.

The great Reformation confessions of faith further laid out the teaching of Scripture in a

systematic way, weaving together the Golden Threads of Scripture, bringing forth the royal robe that glorifies Jesus our King. By studying them, we grow in our understanding of God. Such knowledge leads us to put on the robe of Christ by faith. This means that we take our place in union with Him, growing in love and obedience by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The essentials of faith are not all Scripture has to say about God, but they represent the Golden Threads around which the whole royal robe is woven. Under the heading of “Teacher Devotionals,” every Bible lesson in this curriculum is keyed to the Golden Threads it expresses. The Stray Threads section picks up additional ideas or notes the ways in which the Golden Threads may get distorted.

Believers in the Reformed tradition are a people who celebrate that God can be known because He has graciously made Himself known. A crucial part of our faithfulness is learning and studying the essentials that have been revealed. So, we offer these in hopes of enriching every Bible lesson, enabling you as a teacher to trace the threads of Christ's Royal Robe in the teachings of Scripture.

# 1.

## **ESSENTIAL NUMBER**

**ONE: The One True God is the Triune God of Grace—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—Whom Alone We Must Serve and Worship**

In the Old Testament, we learn that the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the creator of the entire world and the constant redeemer through the mighty acts of the people of Israel. In the New Testament, we see that the LORD, Israel's God, actually is the triune God, who reveals Himself to be the eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He has entered into covenant faithfulness with His people and will not leave us or forsake us.

# 2.

**ESSENTIAL NUMBER TWO:  
The Eternal Son of God Came to Us as a Human Being in Jesus Christ**

In the fullness of time, God the Son took up our humanity as He came to us as Jesus, the man from Nazareth. Jesus is both fully God and fully human. He is all that God has to say to us, in word and deed, about who He is and how He loves us. And Jesus is all we have to say to God, as the one man who lived a life of perfect obedience to Him, on our behalf. In Jesus' relationship with His Father, and in His promise of the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, we come to know that the one God is triune: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

# 3.

**ESSENTIAL NUMBER THREE:  
Holy Scripture is the Word of God Written, Through Which, in the Power of the Holy Spirit, We Truly Meet the Triune God**

One of the great achievements of the Reformation was the recovery of Scripture as our sole authoritative source for knowledge of God and its return to the ordinary people of God. The traditions of the Church could be helpful in interpreting the Bible, but must always remain beneath the written Word of God. The Reformers affirmed at the same time that what needs to be known about God from the Scriptures can be known by ordinary people who engage in a plain reading of the Bible. The Bible is clear enough in its essential teaching for all who read with prayerful reliance on the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word.

# 4.

**ESSENTIAL NUMBER FOUR:  
The Triune God is Sovereign Over All**

Our religion is not a human invention. Nor is it subject to human whims for change or supposed corrections. We do not have the freedom to decide who we would like the LORD to be. God has made Himself known to us in Jesus Christ and the Scriptures. While what we may know of the triune God is true and reliable, we always recognize that we never know all there is to understand about Him. The Lord God is high and holy, completely other, beyond our grasp and control, and splendid in His glory. God is moving history toward its appointed end. The triune God of grace is in control. He alone is Judge. He alone is worthy of our praise. We never have dominion over Him. God alone reigns.

# 5.

**ESSENTIAL NUMBER FIVE:  
Humanity Has Fallen into Sin**

The Scriptures teach us that, although God created us good, through our own willful choices, we sinned against Him. The sin of our first parents rocked and wracked the world with terrible consequences. Now, by nature, we are prone to suppress the truth and to choose against our God and our neighbors again and again. There is nothing we do in this world that is not without the taint of sin. We are helplessly lost in our sin. This means the death of ever hoping to get to the Father on our own. Such a realization is the beginning of crying out in repentance and faith for the rightness and goodness that can only come from the LORD Himself. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, comes to us as a man and has enacted perfect obedience, free from sin, on our behalf.

## 6. **ESSENTIAL NUMBER SIX: We Are Made Right with God by Grace Alone Through Faith Alone**

Our salvation from our sins and our sinfulness is all from Christ Jesus. We can never earn our way into God's favor, whether by our good works, zealous worship, or many prayers. The Father forgives our sins by the work of Jesus Christ alone. Christ's death takes away the guilt of our sin. Christ's faith and obedience, the living sign of His covenant faithfulness, comprise our reconciliation with God. He gives us Christ's righteousness. Our record before God is replaced with Jesus' record! When this happens, we believe in who Christ Jesus is and what He has accomplished. We confess that He is our LORD and Savior. But even this belief and confession is a gift of God, the result of the Holy Spirit's work inside us. Salvation is all of God. We simply rest in what He has done for us.

## 7. **ESSENTIAL NUMBER SEVEN: Election: God Chose Us to Be His Children and Servants**

God chose us to believe in Him now that we might spend the rest of our lives serving Him and telling others about Jesus. The essential teaching of election is the awareness that we do not make our way to the Father; He has come all the way down to where we are to claim us. Election, then, is not about living a life of ease, but one of service. Those whom He calls, He sends to bring His message to a lost world. If we know Him, it is because He chose us. If He chose us, He sends us to tell others, "Believe the Good News and discover your chosenness!"

## 8. **ESSENTIAL NUMBER EIGHT: The Holy Spirit Makes Us More and More Like Jesus**

Sanctification means "to make holy," and it refers to the work of the Holy Spirit to form Christ in us. For we not only receive a new record of righteousness in

Christ, we receive a new nature. God places His own Spirit within us, and a wonderful series of benefits begins:

- ▶ The Holy Spirit unites us to Jesus Christ so that all that belongs to Him comes to belong to us (John 16:14-15).
- ▶ The Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside us, fashioning us more and more in the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29).
- ▶ The Holy Spirit opens our hearts and minds to the Scriptures so that we might be transformed by hearing the Word (John 14:26).
- ▶ The Holy Spirit prays within us, crying out to the Father for us and through us (Gal. 4:6).
- ▶ The Holy Spirit assures us that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16), and His presence is the guarantee of our salvation (Eph. 1:13).
- ▶ The Holy Spirit gives us the power to be faithful witnesses to Christ (Acts 1:8) and enables us to do the ministry and works of Jesus (see Matt. 10:1 and John 14:12).

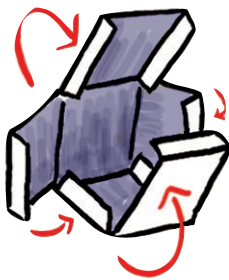
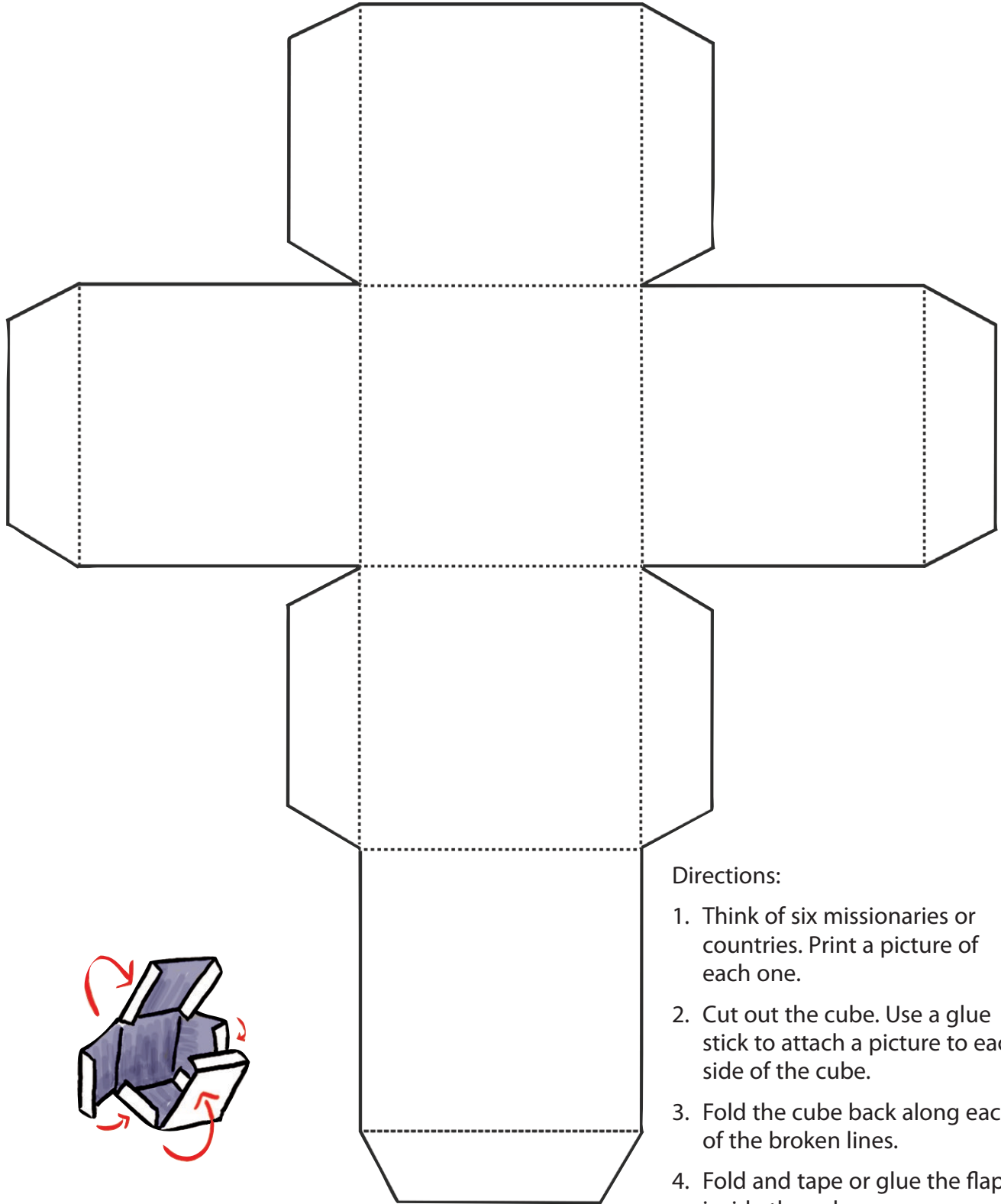
Of course, the old, sinful nature still remains in us and, thus, the new and the old are in conflict. Christian growth involves a hard struggle. We can never do it on our own. We live in constant need of "the sanctifying work of the Spirit" (1 Pet. 1:2). The person of the Holy Spirit then moves us to live in obedience and empowers us to keep going, even after we fail or when the way is difficult. His work will continue until we meet Jesus in Heaven at last.

## 9. **ESSENTIAL NUMBER NINE: A Life of Obedience**

The people of God, Christ's Church, bring His Word and His love to a broken world. We are in the world, even though we do not belong to this world (John 17:16). We serve the world even though we are aliens and strangers here, passing through on our way to our heavenly homeland. Psalm 84:5 notes that those "whose hearts are set on pilgrimage" to the city of God cause the dry, desert lands to become a place of springs as they pass through. With the Holy Spirit prompting us and empowering us, with the grace of Jesus cleansing us, and with the love of the Father beckoning us, we both gather for worship and move out in service to God. So, even though the church does not belong to the world, it strives to love the world as Christ did.

# Cube Pattern

Print this pattern for use in your classroom. You could provide a copy for each student.



## Directions:

1. Think of six missionaries or countries. Print a picture of each one.
2. Cut out the cube. Use a glue stick to attach a picture to each side of the cube.
3. Fold the cube back along each of the broken lines.
4. Fold and tape or glue the flaps inside the cube.