

Homes Afar

Description:

missionary
playhouses from
around the world

Aim: teach that
missionaries live in
many different types
of homes and teach
kids to pray

Audience:

2–5 year olds, any
size class with
adequate helpers

Time:

10–15 minutes,
extensive set-up time

Equipment: large
cardboard appliance
boxes, paint, blan-
kets, tents, crayons

Scripture to Study:

Matthew 19:29
1 Timothy 6:8

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*The contents of this CD may
be printed out and copied for
classroom use only.*

Leader's Instructions:**Pre-class Preparations:**

1. Construct the playhouses all at once for a missions conference or Vacation Bible School, or do them one at a time and feature a different home each week or month in your classroom. Remember, a playhouse doesn't have to be perfect or professional for preschoolers to love it. (One church in Oregon was blessed with a builder-type who constructed a durable yurt (house used by Mongols in Siberia) from PVC pipe and canvas. Maybe your church has someone like that, too? If not, anyone can convert cardboard into these simple playhouses below.)
2. If your church, class or family supports a missionary, research and find out their specific style of home. Personalizing always gives opportunity to pray for your missionary. Some have given up big homes to live in faraway countries. (See Matthew 19:29.) Recent prayer letters will give you hints as to their needs. The list below is only a starting point. Expand it with your imagination!

Homes to build:

1. **Pitch a tent.** Use real camping tents or construct them by throwing a blanket over tables, chairs pushed together, etc. If you know a missionary who works with nomadic people, move the tent from week to week in search of fresh water and grass for the animals. While inside the tent, pray for your tent-dwelling missionaries in places like northern and sub-Saharan Africa.
2. **Sail in a ship.** Pretend to be a crew member aboard the Logos II or the Mercy Ship taking the gospel and physical aid around the world. Construct your ships by laying large cardboard appliance boxes lengthwise on the floor, cutting out the top and bringing the front to a point. Voila! Some missionaries live on ships for years at a time, only getting off now and then when the ship docks at a port.

Notes:

3. **Build a city of modern homes.** Complete this set with houses, store and gas station. Tempura paint does wonders for an old cardboard box. Many missionaries live in modern cities all over the world just like the ones here in the USA.
4. **Bend a Turkish yurt.** Make a round yurt like the ones used by nomadic Mongols of Siberia. Bend heavyweight wire into a large circle of 4–6 foot diameter. Thread it back and forth every 12 inches through long strips of 3 foot high cardboard walls. Use a wire at the top and at the bottom, making sure not to leave any sharp ends exposed. Cover ends with electrical or duct tape and attach a cardboard or cloth roof. Some missionaries in Siberia live like this.
5. **Perch a house on stilts.** A preschool slide set with large square platform at the top makes the perfect frame for your house on stilts. Simply leave a doorway where the stairs go up and run cardboard walls all around the rest of the platform. (The slide will be inoperable for that time.) A blue plastic tarp makes believable water below. Cardboard or cloth is plenty for a roof here too. Missionaries to Papua New Guinea often live in these stilt houses. Sometimes there is no water below, only the families' pigs and chickens who eat the food scraps dropped from above!
6. **Hang a hammock or stretch a cot.** Some missionaries travel through the countryside and sleep outdoors under the stars with no house around them at all! Set up a camping cot with a sleeping bag on top, or a low-slung hammock and you'll have some interesting conversations for sure. Add mosquito netting and an artificial ficus tree or plants for an even more realistic setting. Missionaries in South American rainforests and in parts of Africa live this way, especially when travelling into new areas for the first time.

Notes:

7. **Turn a wagon into a travel trailer.** Cut the bottom out of a cardboard box and set it in a large wagon. Cut windows and a door. Have a helper or sturdy child pull one or two others inside. Some missionaries travel with nomadic groups in this way throughout Africa and parts of Europe. Medical teams also serve large areas all over the world by travelling from village to village with Bibles and medicine.

Class Time:

1. Let children play house in their own way with the different styles of homes. They will cook, sit and sleep, look in and out of the windows, and generally explore all on their own. Little instruction from teachers is needed. Try to have a helper assigned to each house for good supervision.
2. Display a large picture of a missionary you support on the outside of each home. Near the doorway is a good place.
3. Have a brief prayer time as children sit inside various houses. Keep it short. Ask them questions that will help them learn how to pray. For instance, you might ask if anyone ever got seasick on a boat. Then lead them in praying that (missionary) won't get seasick, but that he'll feel well so he can tell others about Jesus. Or pray that the people your missionary is living with will understand about Jesus and accept Him as their Savior and Lord. If your missionary has specific requests and praises in his most recent prayer letter, pray about those too.