

Mozambique Children's Activities

Making A Drum

Our brothers and sisters in Mozambique love to sing and dance. As they worship the Lord every Sunday, they join together in song and spend time praising Jesus through vivacious dances. When they engage in these dances, the instrument used to form the beat is the drum. Their music is lively, pulsing within your veins, urging you to get up and join the crowd. Children in Mozambique learn to play the drum at very young ages as they imitate the adults. They also use a rhythmic instrument made out of gourds – a large fruit with a hard skin in Africa. Most of the drums, however, are wooden with animal skin tops.

In this activity, the children will make musical instruments similar to those used in Mozambique. Use round containers such as a Quaker Oats container. Bring in brown paper to represent wood, which will go around the container. Then ask the children to decorate the drum. Have markers, feathers, glue, ribbons, string, and crayons on hand for them to use. Pick several upbeat lively songs that the children know and let them “go at it”.

You may also want to play a CD of African music for the children, which they can play along with once their drum is completed. Talk about what fun it must be to be a child from Mozambique and have fun music to play, sing and dance to, even in church.

End the activity by praying for the United Methodist boys and girls in Mozambique.

Hand-washing

The people of Mozambique practice radical hospitality on a daily basis. When a guest comes for dinner, the host washes the guest's hands with warm water. This is a magnificent gift, as many people must walk a significant distance to gather water from a river or a well, then they must gather firewood in order to heat the water. If the children have difficulty understanding, relate the act to hosting a dinner party, and explain all the work moms and dads here do in order to prepare.

Let the children take turns being the Mozambican host. In the child's left hand, place a large plastic bowl; over their left arm, drape a clean hand towel; in their right hand, place a plastic pitcher of warm water. Ask the children to line up and, one at a time; place their hands over the bowl as warm water is poured over their hands. After their hands are washed, the host lifts their left arm slightly offering the towel for drying the hands. Let each child have a turn, rotating to play the host after their hands are washed.

After the activity is completed, gather the children and ask them how it felt to be the server, and how it felt to be served. If they don't connect it themselves, ask them if this activity reminded them of a story of Jesus and His disciples. Share with the children the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Our brothers and sisters in Mozambique teach us about serving each other radically, and encourage us to expand our generosity.

Carrying A Baby

In Mozambique, Western ideas of day care do not exist. Day care is a mother's, an older brother's, or an older sister's back. Typically young children care for their younger brothers or sisters so that their parents can go to work.

For this activity, buy a 10-pound bag of sand (or bring in two 5 pound bags of flour or sugar – you may want to increase the weight depending on the age of your children). This bag represents the baby. Place the bag on the child's back and wrap it on with a piece of colorful cloth as you would wrap a towel after a shower (the tied section placed near the chest of the child carrying the 'baby').

Give the children several tasks to do around the room while carrying their 'brother or sister'. Put a plastic bowl on their head filled with Styrofoam packing peanuts. Pretend the paper is water and see if they can carry the water and the baby without using their hands.

Concluding the activity, gather the children and ask them what they think it is like to be a child in Mozambique. Pray for the children of Mozambique who have important responsibilities in their family.

Singing Activities

Nyaga Nyaga Nya

Gather the children in a circle. Assign one person as the leader. Everyone sings the "Nyaga Nyaga Nya" song, or one of the songs below. as the leader walks around the circle. When the song ends, the child in front of whom the leader is standing has to get up and dance until s/he falls down. That child is now the leader and the song starts again.

Sarah Byeyakalaba

Gather the children and sit in a circle. Sing the "Sarah Byeyakalaba" song, or one of the songs below. Instruct a leader to walk around the circle. When the song ends, the child behind whom the leader is standing gets up and dances with the leader.

Optional English songs that could be used for these activities are below.

Vusi Drives the Kombi

Vusi drives the kombi that takes us all to school.
We open all the windows so the air blows nice and cool.
He hoots when he fetches us, he hoots when he goes,
He hoots at the cows that are standing in the road.
Vusi drives the kombi that we all love to ride.
If you want to travel with us, there's lots of room inside!

Note: a "kombi" [pronounced like "calm-bee"] is a small passenger van. These vehicles are used as taxis in South Africa. Vusi is a common Zulu name. Pronounced /voo-see/, it means, "to lift up."

Walking Through Africa

Walking through Africa, what do I see?
I can see inyoka looking at me.
Walking through Africa, what do I see?
I can see ufudu looking at me.
Walking through Africa, what do I see?
I can see indlovu looking at me.
Walking through Africa, what do I see?
I can see ikhozi looking at me.

Note: This is a Zulu chant the children "sing" while they stalk about. The translation would probably be closer to "walking through the bush...", but children

love to say Africa. All the words are translated but the animals. These are as follows:

inyoka (een-yoh'-gkah) a snake

ufudu (oo-foo'-doo) a tortoise, /oo/ as in fool

indlovu (een-dloh'-voo) an elephant

ikhozi (ee-koh'zee) an eagle

Where Is the Rain

The giraffe and the elephant went for a walk.

They stopped in some shade and started to talk;

"I wish it would rain," said the giraffe with a sigh.

"I'm tired of watching the clouds pass us by!"

"Yes," said the elephant, "Where is the rain?"

I wish I could eat fresh green leaves again.

The sun is so hot and the land is so dry;

When will the rain fall from the sky?"

Later in the day the sky turned grey,

The flying ants flew out to say,

"The rain is coming! We smell it in the air!

And in the distance, thunder we hear!"

The giraffe and the elephant looked up at the sky

And heard the black eagle give forth his cry,

"The rain has come, The rivers will flow;

The dry season is over; now the green grass will grow!"

Note: Most African rivers depend upon the rains. During the dry season, they literally dry up and leave a brown, twisting snake-like path. The rainy season in KwaZulu is Summer time, when we get the most fantastic thunderstorms imaginable. And these horrible flying ants always appear right before the first big storms!