

IT'S TEAMWORK THAT COUNTS

Introduction to the Cooperative Program

**COOPERATIVE PROGRAM**

Love In Action

www.sbc.net/cp

Leader Preparation

Today's Word

Cooperation (working with others to do more than you can do alone)



Study focus

To help boys and girls learn how their church is reaching people around the world as it participates in the Cooperative Program. By working together with other churches as a team, we are fulfilling Christ's Great Commission.

Bible Passages

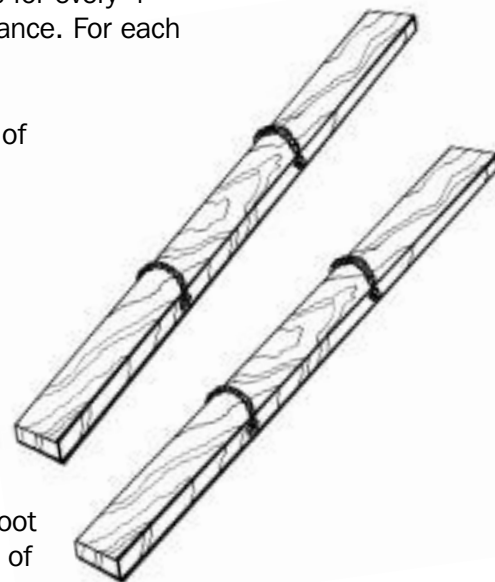
- > **Matthew 28: 19-20 (HCSB)**—
Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.
- > **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (HCSB)**—
Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts. For if either falls, his companion can lift him up; but pity the one who falls without another to lift him up. Also, if two lie down together, they can keep warm; but how can one person alone keep warm? And if somebody overpowers one person, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not easily broken.

Things to have ready for Session 1:

Warm Up

- Contemporary Christian music CD and a CD player
- Make "tandem skis" for "Team Skiing" activity. Make one pair of tandem skis for every 4 children anticipated in attendance. For each pair of skis, you will need:

- > two 6 ft. to 8 ft. lengths of 2" x 6" lumber
- > four 12-in. lengths of rope
- > hammer and nails
- > Cut the rope to lengths to serve as two pairs of "stirrups" for the skis. (Each child will slip one foot into a stirrup on each ski of the pair.)



- > Attach 2 lengths of rope (knotted at the ends) to each ski using the hammer and nails. Make sure these stirrups are paired up equal distance from the ends of the skis.

Take the Challenge

- Bibles
- Duplicate copies of Matthew 28:19-20, HCSB; one copy for each child. (See "Resources," Item 1, at the end of Session 1.)
- Pencils and paper

Huddle

- Rectangular cardboard boxes (1 for each child)
- Box cutter (to be used only by adult helpers)
- Several rolls of colored duct tape
- Rubber bands, clips, tacks, etc.

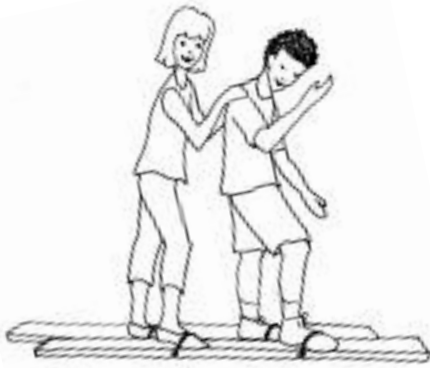


Warm Up

Warm Up

(Activities for early arrivers)

Be ready to engage the kids in an activity as they arrive. Capturing their interest in the beginning will help to keep them focused for the session. Choose a favorite CD featuring “lively” Christian music and have it playing as they enter the room.



Play “Team Skiing”

(see “Things to have ready for Session 1” on page 1).

As the kids arrive, **ask:** *Does anyone know what these funny-looking boards are?*

Engage them in conversation. Use this time to get to know each child.

Divide the group into teams, giving each team a pair of skis.

Two team members at a time will slip a foot into a “stirrup” on each ski.

The object of the activity is to move forward on the skis to a designated “finish line.” The activity will require cooperation and teamwork on the part of each participant. If the group is large, in order for everyone to participate, it may be necessary to relay or take turns letting teams compete against each other.

Discuss the importance of teamwork in playing this game. Call “time” when you need to move on to the next activity.



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM?

Since its beginning in 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has always had one mission: to do everything possible to fulfill Christ’s Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). In the early decades of the Convention, each SBC entity (IMB, NAMB, etc.) raised money for their work by making special offering appeals to the churches. This method was not very effective. More time and effort was spent raising money than reaching people. It greatly hampered the expansion of the ministry opportunities God was giving Southern Baptists and resulted in severe financial deficits.

In 1925 the Cooperative Program (CP) was launched. This God-given partnership of missions support is dependent upon individuals, churches, state conventions, and SBC entities cooperating, working toward a common goal of sharing the gospel with every person on the planet. Through the years, this approach has proven to be very successful. Log on to www.sbc.net/cp for the latest statistics from the *SBC Annual* to see how God is using our combined efforts to prepare, send, reach, and minister to people.

How does it work? Simply put, CP begins with you. You give yourself first to God (2 Cor. 8:5). Next, out of gratitude and obedience to God for what He has done for you, you commit to give back to Him, though your church, a portion of what He provides. This is commonly called a tithe and represents ten percent of your income (Lev. 27:30, Mal. 3:10).

Your church decides the next step. Every year your church prayerfully decides how much of its undesignated gifts will be committed to reaching people in your state and around the world through the Cooperative Program. This amount is then forwarded to your state Baptist convention.

During the annual meeting of your state convention, messengers from your church and other churches across your state decide what percentage of CP gifts contributed by local congregations stays in your state to reach people and support local missions and ministries. The percentage forwarded to the SBC for North American and international missions and ministries is also determined at this time.

At the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, messengers from across the country decide how the gifts received from the states will be distributed among the SBC entities. These gifts are used by Southern Baptist entities to send and support missionaries; train pastors, missionaries, and other ministry leaders; and address social, moral, and ethical concerns relating to our faith and families.

To put it another way, if you follow the people trail, you will find the CP making a difference in the lives of people in your state, across the nation, and around the world.

For more information about the Cooperative Program (CP), visit www.sbc.net/cp, contact your state Baptist convention office, or ask your pastor.

THE GREAT COMMISSION AND THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Through the years, Southern Baptists have taken seriously Jesus' command we call the Great Commission. Jesus wants us to reach people everywhere, no matter where they live.

At first, each Southern Baptist entity (The International Mission Board, The North American Mission Board, etc.) had to send someone directly to the churches and ask them to take a special offering to help them do their work. That plan did not work well enough to provide adequate resources for each ministry to accomplish its work. In fact, sometimes they spent more time trying to raise money than reaching people. Southern Baptists knew there had to be a better way.

In 1925 a new plan was begun. It was a plan that called for teamwork. It is called the Cooperative Program (CP). The Cooperative Program works so well, it continues to provide the resources needed to help prepare people, send people, reach people, and minister to people around the world. How does CP work? You give to the Lord through your church, and then your church passes on part of your gifts to your state Baptist convention. They use part of your gift to reach and minister to people in your state and then send the rest of it to the Southern Baptist Convention.

CP provides a way for all Southern Baptist churches to work together to help accomplish God's Great Commission. With each church working together, we can help more people know Jesus as Savior and follow Him as Lord. About three-fourths of the gifts given to the SBC every year helps over 10,000 missionaries tell people about Jesus in our country and all over the world.

But that's not all! In addition to helping support missionaries, CP helps train church leaders through special schools, called seminaries, and keeps us aware of laws that will lead us away from the teachings of the Bible.

During the next several weeks, we will look at the many ways Southern Baptists work together through the Cooperative Program to do what the Great Commission tells us to do—tell people everywhere that Jesus loves them!



Take the Challenge

(Large group learning)

Gather the children in a semicircle facing you. Share with them that during this study we want to learn more about how we can tell people everywhere about Jesus.

SAY: It would be hard for just one person to tell everyone in the world about Jesus, but as we work as a team with other Christians, this great task is being done.

ASK: Can anyone think of a Bible verse about teamwork?

- > After several responses, introduce Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 by asking the group to find it in their Bibles. Read it to the group as they follow along in their Bibles.

ASK: What does this passage tell us about teamwork?

- > (Responses may include: by working together, people can do more work; help each other; and help keep each other warm.)

Introduce Matthew 28:19-20.

ASK: Does anyone know what we call the last words Jesus said to His disciples before He went to live in heaven?

- > (Answer: the Great Commission)

SAY: This is the mission of every Christian. This is what Jesus told His followers to do.

Ask if anyone has the Great Commission memorized.

- > If so, ask them to say it to the group.

Ask the group to find Matthew 28:19-20 in their Bibles.

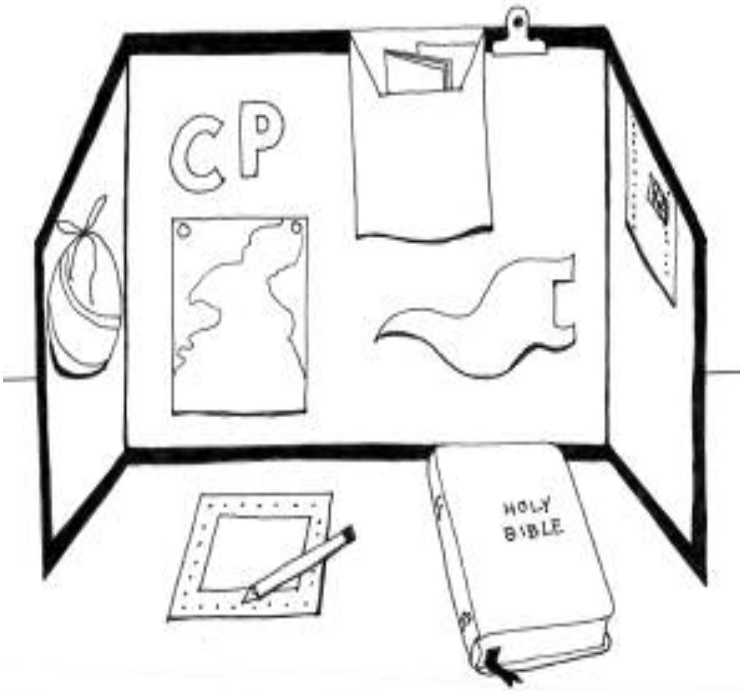
- > Since several translations of the Bible may be in use, distribute copies of the passage from the *Holman Christian Standard Bible* to the group and lead them in reading it aloud. (Resources for Session 1, Item 1)

Share the information on the left side of the page in your own words.

- > "The Great Commission and the Cooperative Program."

Explain that during the next several weeks, we will look at many ways Southern Baptists work together through the Cooperative Program to do what the Great Commission tells us to do.

Huddle



Huddle

(Small group learning)

Make a Teamwork Center

Boys and girls will enjoy having their own freestanding space at home to keep up with all of the things they are learning from this Teamwork study. When completed, the Teamwork Center may be placed on a tabletop or desk in their room—a place to display brochures, worksheets, or other materials collected during this 7-week study. The center may become a place the child uses for Bible reading and praying for the specific people, missions, and ministries supported through the Cooperative Program. (A materials list is included in “Things to have ready for Session 1.”)

Guide each child to cut away the bottom, top, and one long side of a large rectangular-shaped cardboard box. This will leave one long side and the two short sides of the original box. Trim the short sides so they slope gently away from the long side. This will enable the Teamwork Center to stand alone. Finish the edges by covering with colored duct tape. Add rubber bands, clips, and tacks to help organize notes, Bible verses, prayer requests, and other items.

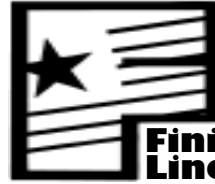
Encourage the children to add to their center with things they collect in each session. Remind them they can add items they collect from church throughout the year.



We're a Team

(Recreational activities)

Since “Team Skiing” (introduced in this session’s Warm Up activity) was probably a new game for the group, they will want to play it again. **Replay!**



Finish Line

(Closing)

Remind the kids that in today’s session we learned that by working together, we can do more than one person can do alone. CP is a way for every church member to work together through their giving to reach people, support missionaries, train church leaders, and to support other causes. Working together through the Cooperative Program helps us do what Jesus told us to do in Matthew 28:19-20. The money we give goes to help people know Jesus as Savior and to follow Him as Lord.

Lead a prayer asking God to help boys and girls learn to work together and to give an offering when they come to church. Ask God to bless the many people, missions, and ministries that are reached and supported through CP.

As the children leave, remind them to take their “Teamwork Center” and the letter to parents (see “Home Team”) home with them. Encourage them to come back next week.



Home Team

(From learning to action)

This activity is suggested to be done at home to reinforce what was learned in this session about working

together. Make copies of the “Make a Bank” activity to send home with each child.

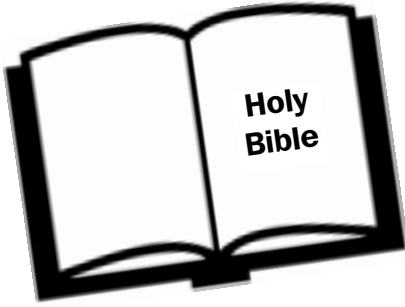
(Resources for Session 1, Item 2)

Resources

Item 1: Duplicate one copy of the Scripture passage for each child for use in “Take the Challenge” (Large group learning).

Item 2: Duplicate copies of the Home Team page and send home with each child at the end of today’s session.

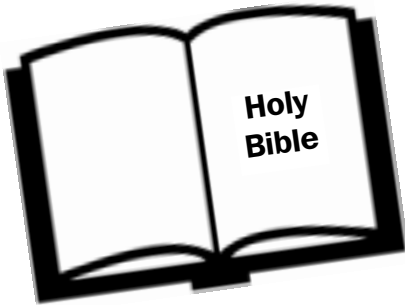
THE GREAT COMMISSION



Matthew 28:19-20 (HCSB)—

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

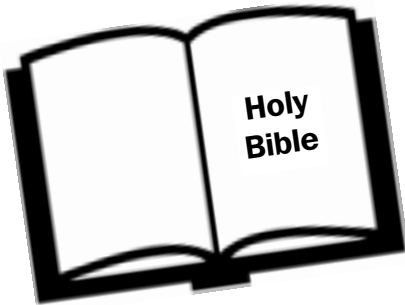
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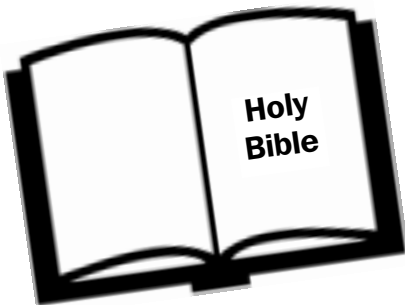
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Dear Parent,

In this session we began learning about the Cooperative Program and how it helps the people in our church fulfill Christ's Great Commission. By working together with other Southern Baptist churches, we are reaching more people and having a greater impact for Christ in our world.

Spend some time with your child this week and complete the activity below to help reinforce what was learned at church.



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

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Make a Bank

MATERIALS NEEDED:

milk carton (or other container), construction paper, scissors, tape, and markers

INSTRUCTIONS:

Cut construction paper to fit around the milk carton. On this precut construction paper, the child may print the words: "My Part—CP Gift Center" and continue to decorate the paper. The child may wrap the decorated paper around the container and fasten with tape. Younger children may need your assistance to cut an opening in the top of the milk carton where money may be placed.

Remind your child: "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). Together, think of ways children can earn money each week. (Ideas may include: feed pets, clean yard, wash car, recycle, have a yard sale.) Encourage depositing the earned money in the *My Part—CP Gift Center* and taking the money as a gift to church at the end of the Cooperative Program study. This will demonstrate that by working together, the class can give more than just one person can give.

Pray with your child that God would bless these efforts to help tell others about Jesus.

