

PARENT AND TEACHER GUIDE

Where We Worship

Themes Found in This Story:

--How you worship God is more important than where you worship

The Story:

Where We Worship: Santo goes to church with his friends and we learn about different types of churches in Africa.

The parent/teacher may read the story aloud, or print the story for the children to read or follow along.

Characters in this Story

Jos: (JAHS)

He is an Abyssinian Roller, from the country of Nigeria. His name, "Jos", is also the name of a large city there. He is a bold, adventurous bird, and even though he is small, he is very brave. He is a very pretty bird, and so sometimes, he can be vain of how he looks. He wears a smart bowler hat, of which he is very proud.

Nyati: (NYAH-tee)

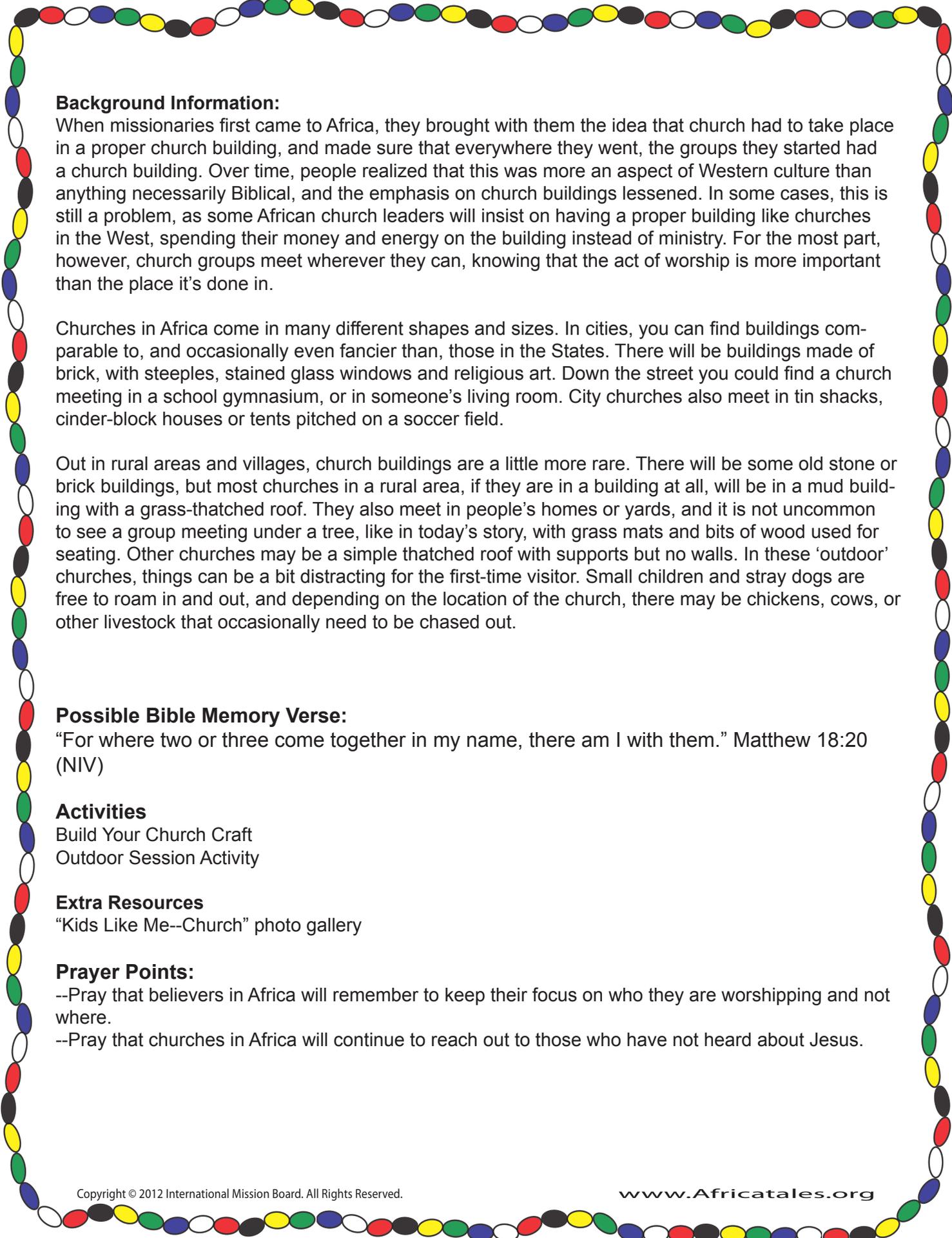
He is a Cape Buffalo from the country of Kenya. His name is a Swahili word which means "buffalo". Because he is so big and strong, others think that he is also very brave, but he isn't. He pretends to be, but really he is frightened of many things. Sometimes he has a temper (especially when he is scared!), but he is loyal to his friends, and he cares very much for them.

Omulonga: (oh-moo-LOHN-gah)

She is a Black-Footed Penguin from the country of Namibia. Her name is an Oshiwambo word which means "river". Black-Footed Penguins live along the coast of Namibia and South Africa, and she has moved from Namibia to Johannesburg in South Africa because, like so many people in Africa, she was hoping for a better chance to find work in the big city. She is very artsy and hip, and enjoys living in the city.

Santo: (SAHN-toh)

He is a Loggerhead Turtle from off the coast of Mozambique. His name is a Portuguese word which means "blessed". Because he has flippers, but no feet, he spends most of his time in a tub of water, and must depend on his friends to get around. He is a patient, very calm turtle, and has a lot of trust in God and in his friends to look after him.



Background Information:

When missionaries first came to Africa, they brought with them the idea that church had to take place in a proper church building, and made sure that everywhere they went, the groups they started had a church building. Over time, people realized that this was more an aspect of Western culture than anything necessarily Biblical, and the emphasis on church buildings lessened. In some cases, this is still a problem, as some African church leaders will insist on having a proper building like churches in the West, spending their money and energy on the building instead of ministry. For the most part, however, church groups meet wherever they can, knowing that the act of worship is more important than the place it's done in.

Churches in Africa come in many different shapes and sizes. In cities, you can find buildings comparable to, and occasionally even fancier than, those in the States. There will be buildings made of brick, with steeples, stained glass windows and religious art. Down the street you could find a church meeting in a school gymnasium, or in someone's living room. City churches also meet in tin shacks, cinder-block houses or tents pitched on a soccer field.

Out in rural areas and villages, church buildings are a little more rare. There will be some old stone or brick buildings, but most churches in a rural area, if they are in a building at all, will be in a mud building with a grass-thatched roof. They also meet in people's homes or yards, and it is not uncommon to see a group meeting under a tree, like in today's story, with grass mats and bits of wood used for seating. Other churches may be a simple thatched roof with supports but no walls. In these 'outdoor' churches, things can be a bit distracting for the first-time visitor. Small children and stray dogs are free to roam in and out, and depending on the location of the church, there may be chickens, cows, or other livestock that occasionally need to be chased out.

Possible Bible Memory Verse:

"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Matthew 18:20 (NIV)

Activities

Build Your Church Craft
Outdoor Session Activity

Extra Resources

"Kids Like Me--Church" photo gallery

Prayer Points:

--Pray that believers in Africa will remember to keep their focus on who they are worshipping and not where.
--Pray that churches in Africa will continue to reach out to those who have not heard about Jesus.