

Our Great Big World

Mary Evelyn Notgrass McCurdy



**Dedicated to
Clara, Wesley, Peter, Thomas, and Patrick.
And to Colleen Joy,
who arrived in our great big world
while I was writing it. –MEM**

Our Great Big World
by Mary Evelyn Notgrass McCurdy

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Dear Parents and Students,

Our great big world gives us a glimpse of the power and majesty of our God. The skies are big, but God is bigger. The mountains are high, but God's goodness is higher. The oceans are great, but God's love is greater.

I have been blessed to communicate with many people around the world who have shared with me about their lives so that I could share their lives with you through the pages of this book. I have spent years compiling the stories, folktales, and the songs in this curriculum. I pray that it is a blessing to you.

As you open these pages, keep opening your heart to the God who created this great big world, Who loves you and has a beautiful plan for your part in it.

Mary Evelyn Notgrass McCurdy
Cookeville, Tennessee
June 2024



Grundarfjörður, Iceland

Author's Thanks

I could not have written this alone! I appreciate my husband, Nate, for heartily supporting my efforts and for creating the maps that are part of this curriculum.

I appreciate my kids for putting up with the time I have spent at my computer, especially in the final push these last couple of months, so I could get this done. I appreciate Clara for helping select the literature and for proofreading. I appreciate Wesley, Peter, Thomas, and Patrick for testing some of the activity ideas and creating artwork samples. I appreciate Colleen being so snuggly while I worked.

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I appreciate Aaron Mulenga and Charles Mwila for sharing about Zambia; Berti Dosti for sharing about his conversion to Christianity in Albania; Katja Alajärvi for teaching me about herding reindeer in Finland; Ivan Samadder and Rachel Andrews for telling me about the tea gardens of Bangladesh; Bob Craft for helping me know about Christianity in Thailand; Conrad Smith for teaching me about sheep farming in New Zealand; Job Gámez for sharing about farming in Honduras; and Abigail Rucker and her friends in Haiti for sharing their hearts. Their contributions have made this a richer study for us all. I also appreciate the talents of the men, women, and children around the world who recorded songs for us all to enjoy.

And, most importantly, I appreciate our Father in heaven for creating this great big world for us to explore. To You belong all the glory and praise.

—*Mary Evelyn*

How to Use Our Great Big World

Our Great Big World is a one-year world geography course designed for students in grades one through four. The curriculum has 30 units with three lessons each. I recommend completing one unit per week.

The lessons are grouped by continent, plus a few additional regions. The curriculum begins by exploring the North Pole and the South Pole. Lessons then explore the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and Oceania, North America, Mexico and Central America, the Caribbean, and South America.

Our Great Big World is much more than geography. As you go through the curriculum, your students will also be learning history, literature, music, and art. You can simplify your school year by making *Our Great Big World* the centerpiece of your children's learning this year.

How Does This Curriculum Work?

This book provides all of the instructions for what to do each day, so you don't need a separate Teacher's Guide. Parents can read the lessons aloud or students can read the lessons alone. I encourage you to enjoy looking closely at the pictures and talking about them.

Each lesson in this curriculum stands alone. When you begin studying a new continent or region, you will read one lesson about the whole region first, including three special foods from that part of the world. After that, each lesson will focus on one particular person, place, or subject within that region.

Each unit has three lessons. At the end of each lesson is an Activities Ideas box. Don't think of these as a checklist that you must complete. Look at these as ideas to enhance your study. Let your student's grade, age, abilities, needs, and interests be your guide as you select activities. The activities should challenge your student, but he or she should also feel competent and successful.

In the Activity Ideas box you will find instructions for:

- Finding a particular place on a globe.
- *Our Great Big World Atlas Workbook*
- *Our Great Big World Lesson Review*
- *Our Great Big World Coloring Book*
- *Folktales and Songs of Our Great Big World*
- Creative Writing
- Family Activities
- Literature

Map and Globe

A map of the continents is on the inside of the back cover of this book. In the first lesson about each continent or major region, your student will see the continent or region name in **bold red type**. Your student should find that continent or region on the map of the continents.

Since understanding our three-dimensional planet on a two-dimensional map is difficult for young children, I highly recommend that you purchase a globe that shows all the countries of the world. In lessons about specific countries, your student will see the name of the country in **red**. In the Activity Ideas box at the end of those lessons, I suggest finding the specific countries on a globe. Finding locations on the map at the end of the book *and* on a globe will help your child gain a better grasp of where things are in our great big world.



Atlas Workbook

After you have enjoyed a lesson, your child will be ready to complete the corresponding page in the *Atlas Workbook*. This resource is optional, but if your child is ready for it, I strongly encourage you to use it. Your student will learn a great deal about our great big world through these activities.

Each student should have his or her own personal *Atlas Workbook*. I recommend using pencils and high-quality colored pencils—and always having a sharpener handy!

Lesson Review

The *Lesson Review* has five questions about each lesson. This book is designed primarily for older students studying this course. You can have your child answer these on his own by writing directly in the book, you can read the questions aloud and have him answer orally, or you can skip them all together. It is completely up to you. You know the best way for your child to retain and enjoy the material.



Coloring Book

After you have enjoyed a lesson, your child will be ready to complete the corresponding page in the *Coloring Book*. We designed each page to review something from the lesson. Coloring is a great way to reinforce concepts visually. It requires children to focus on details and think about the subject they are coloring.



In developing these books, I had younger students in mind for the *Coloring Book* and older students in mind for the *Atlas Workbook*. However, many children will benefit from doing both! You know how to make the best choices for your children.

The *Coloring Book* is a great way to occupy children while they listen to you read the literature aloud. If you have a child who is not yet in first grade, you can purchase a *Coloring Book* to include her in your family's study and keep her little hands busy, too!

Folktales and Songs of Our Great Big World



This book is an exciting collection of folktales and songs from around the world. One folktale and one song correspond with each unit. Some of the folktales are taken directly from old folktale collections that are in the public domain. Others I retold based on traditional tales. You may like to read the folktales aloud to your child, but you will also find recordings of all the folktales at notgrass.com/FSOGBW. If you listen to the recordings, your child can read along in the book and look at the illustrations. Be sure to read the introduction to each selection in the book before you listen to the recording.

I am excited for you to hear the songs in this collection. People in several countries around the world recorded songs specifically for this project. Two even composed original songs. The audio quality on a few of the tracks is not professional, but the authenticity definitely makes up for it. When you come to a song, visit notgrass.com/FSOGBW (or scan this QR code and save the link on your phone).



Creative Writing Notebook

If you plan on your child completing the creative writing ideas, I suggest you give your child a notebook specifically for that purpose. Each unit contains one creative writing idea. If your child is not ready for creative writing, you can simply discuss the ideas presented in the prompts. You could also have your child draw a picture that illustrates his or her thoughts. Another idea is for your child to dictate his or her thoughts while you write them down in the notebook.

If you would like to incorporate handwriting practice, you could have your students write the names of the featured countries in a notebook. Students of any age would benefit from copying the Bible verse at the end of each lesson.

Family Activities

Each unit includes one Family Activity that is connected with one of the lessons in that unit. These activities include crafts, recipes, games, and other special projects. The instructions are on the last page of each unit. I recommend that you read the instructions and gather the supplies ahead of time. You can find a list of all the supplies you will need to complete these activities at notgrass.com/OGBWlinks. You can complete the activity on the day it is assigned or on another day that is convenient. I encourage you to let these be fun activities for your whole family.

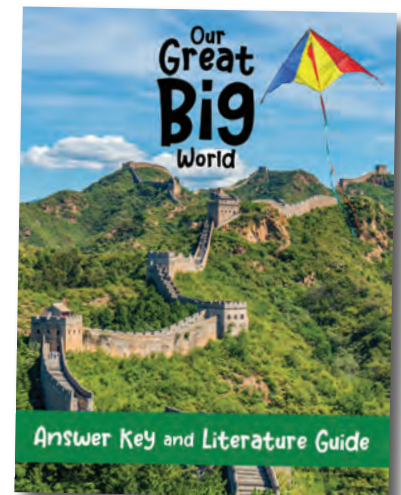
Like all components of *Our Great Big World*, the Family Activities are optional. We offer them as extra learning experiences, but do not feel obligated to do them if they do not suit your family's needs or schedule.

Parental Supervision

Please review the Family Activities and discuss with your child what he or she may do alone and what activities need your supervision. The activities include the use of scissors, knives, the oven, the microwave, and the stovetop. Some children may be allergic to recipe ingredients or craft supplies. Notgrass History cannot accept responsibility for the safety of your child in completing these activities. Thank you for being a conscientious parent who takes responsibility for your child's safety.

Answer Key and Literature Guide

This booklet for parents contains answers for the review questions in the *Lesson Review* and for the few activities in the *Atlas Workbook* that need an answer key. It also includes a guide for the literature titles. This guide lets you know about topics and words you might want to be aware of before you hand the books to your child to read. If you read the books aloud, you can always skip over the handful of words or phrases that you might not want them to hear.



Literature

Seven suggested literature titles complement the lessons in *Our Great Big World*. Each book corresponds to one of the regions in the curriculum. All of the titles are in print and available from Notgrass History.

You can read these titles aloud with your student, which is a fun and memorable way to spend time together. Or you can have your child read the books independently. You might decide to do a combination, depending on your family's schedule.

Each chapter in each literature title is assigned in the Activity Ideas box at the end of the lessons. These assignments are merely a suggested guide to help you finish the book while you are studying the corresponding region. You might prefer to read that region's book over a single weekend or on a road trip, but we do recommend you read it while you are studying the corresponding region. Some lessons do not have literature assignments when a region has more lessons than there are chapters in the corresponding book.

Each book offers an enjoyable way to learn more about a region, but if reading the literature adds too much pressure to your homeschool schedule, feel free to skip some or all of them.

The books give children a feel for life around the world during modern times or at least fairly recent history. *The Muddleheaded Wombat* is not about real life, but it is a timeless tale of talking animals that is popular with children in Australia.

- *The Turtle of Oman* by Naomi Shihab Nye
- *Akimbo of Africa* by Alexander McCall Smith
- *A Bear Called Paddington* by Michael Bond
- *Race for the Record* by Dave and Neta Jackson
- *The Muddleheaded Wombat* by Ruth Park
- *Owls in the Family* by Farley Mowat
- *Juana and Lucas* by Juana Medina

How Much Time Will Each Lesson Take?

You can read each lesson aloud in about 15 minutes. Answering the questions in the *Lesson Review* will only take a few minutes. The time it takes for a student to complete the *Atlas Workbook* will vary depending on the activity for that day and on each particular child. Many of the activities will take less than 10 minutes, while others will take a bit longer.

Reading the literature will add some time, as will the creative writing and the *Coloring Book*, if you choose to include those in your study. If you do all of the suggested activities, you should plan on an hour to an hour and a half per lesson on average (not including the Family Activities, which will require additional time). You might like to read one lesson each day for three days and complete other suggested activities on other days in your school week.

What Supplies Will My Student Need?

Students will need a pencil and colored pencils. You will need a smartphone, tablet, or computer to listen to the audio recordings of the folktales and songs. Most Family Activities require additional supplies. Remember you can access a complete supply list at notgrass.com/OGBWlinks. The individual Family Activity instruction pages at the end of the units also list supplies needed.

How Many Activities Should My Student Complete?

You know best what your student is capable of accomplishing. Some students will benefit most from completing all of the activity ideas. Others will do better completing only some of them. The variety of activities make it easy for your student to have a positive, rich, and engaging learning experience. Do not feel pressure to complete every assignment! We like to offer a variety of learning activities to meet the needs of a wide range of ages and learning styles.

Helping Struggling Students

For students who struggle with reading or writing, feel free to make adjustments to help them be successful and not become frustrated. You or an older sibling can read the lessons and literature aloud while your student reads along and looks at the rich illustrations. Struggling students might also benefit from reading aloud to you. They can orally complete creative writing activities and review questions.

Using Our Great Big World with Multiple Ages

Our Great Big World is especially designed for first through fourth graders, but other ages can certainly benefit. Younger siblings can listen in on the lessons and literature, look at the pictures, and take part in the Family Activities. If you have a student who has already completed fourth grade, but you want to keep all your children learning together, you might consider giving your older student some additional assignments. They could copy the Bible verses at the end of the lessons, write book reports about the literature titles, research and write reports about some of the places or topics presented in the lessons, make models of some of the featured structures, create travel commercials, or complete other creative activities. You can assign each child different activities, depending on his or her age, interests, and skill level.

Optional Supplemental Resources

This curriculum contains plenty of information for a rich learning experience. You do not need to supplement with anything extra. However, if you are looking for recommended videos, virtual field trips, and interactive websites, check out the suggested links available for each lesson at Homeschool History. Visit notgrass.com/OGBWlinks or scan the QR code.



Respect for All

We at Notgrass History make every effort to write about all people in an honoring and respectful way. We realize that people have different views and preferences when it comes to describing particular groups. We believe that God has created all people in His own image and that they all have equal value in His sight. We have prayerfully sought to use words that honor and respect everyone.

Encouragement for the Journey

Remember that God designed your family and the daily responsibilities you carry. A homeschooling mother who has one child can complete more activities than a homeschooling mother who has seven children and an elderly grandparent living in her home. God will use the efforts of both of these mothers. God does not expect you to do more than you can do. Be kind to yourself. He knows exactly what you and your children need this year. We encourage you to pray about how your family can make the most of *Our Great Big World*. Let it be a tool to help you have a wonderful learning experience with your children.

Remember that out of all the parents in the world to whom God could have given your children, He chose you. He is the one who put your family together. He knows what He is doing. Trust in His choice. God created you. He created your children. Relax and remember that this is the day that the Lord has made. Rejoice and be glad in it!

We at Notgrass History are here to help you. If you have questions or simply need some encouragement, send us an email (help@notgrass.com), call us at 1-800-211-8793, or send a text to 833-236-9631. Thank you for homeschooling your children.

A close-up photograph of an adult Vervet monkey with grey and white fur and a black face, sitting on a tree branch. A small baby monkey with similar fur is clinging to its chest. The background is a soft-focus green forest.

Unit 8 Africa

Vervet monkeys

Lesson 22

Transformation in Twashuka

Some places are known for their beautiful buildings. Some places are known for their delicious restaurants or peaceful parks. Walale (wah-LAH-lay), a village in the heart of the country of **Zambia**, was known for its sin. Criminals from other places often fled to Walale to hide. Many drunkards, murderers, and people who practiced witchcraft lived in the village. Life in Walale was full of darkness. How could Walale ever change?

With God, all things are possible.

In 2008 God turned the heart of Aaron Mulenga, a Zambian Christian, toward Walale. Aaron and his wife, Jennipher, began spending time in the community, praying and waiting for God to work. The Mulengas began holding a Bible study under an avocado tree in Walale. Many people in the village thought they were crazy. Were they drunk? What were they doing? The Mulengas

continued coming to the avocado tree twice a week. They visited the villagers in their homes. They began to share the gospel with the people who would listen. Slowly, the curious villagers began to join them at the avocado tree, especially the children. The Mulengas met many children. They played with them. They prayed with them. They shared Jesus with them.



Homes in Walale



Avocados

Aaron invited his friend Charles Mwila to join him in the work God had given him in Walale. Aaron and Charles walked together through the community, praying for God to work in the hearts of the people, praying for the village to be transformed with the gospel. They fasted together as they asked the Lord to come down into the community and rescue it from evil. The two men quickly came to love the community and the hurting people all around them.



Aaron and Charles under the avocado tree

“It was beautiful how the Lord opened doors for us to reach out to this community,” Aaron said. “We brought nothing. We just came with the Word of God, nothing else. No resources. It was just starting from scratch. We just obeyed God’s voice and God’s way to say ‘go.’ We said, ‘If we don’t go, then who can God send?’ God raised us to be the blessing to the people in this community. Not that we brought silver and gold. We brought nothing. Every long journey starts with one step.”



Agnes, the first new Christian in Walale

The people of Walale were amazed by these newcomers to their village. They were gentle. They were willing to help anyone. Whenever there was a problem, the newcomers rushed to lend a hand.

Aaron and Charles began establishing house churches in the village. The gatherings quickly grew as more and more people decided to become followers of Jesus. One after another, people in the village began living new lives.



Charles with a child of the village



Village children going to school

Aaron and Charles saw how much the children of the village needed clothing, food, and education. They saw how much the children needed the love of Jesus. The men felt the Lord urging them to start a school for the children of Walale. They knew they didn't have enough resources to start a school and keep it running, but they knew the Lord would provide. He did!

Aaron and Charles built a school building. The children came flooding in to learn. At first the children had to do their schoolwork on the floor, then God provided the money for desks. At first they had to fetch water from shallow, dirty wells. Then God provided money for a new well near the school with an abundance of fresh, clean water. The school outgrew one building, and God provided the money for another. When they outgrew that building, God provided money for a third.

The children who come to the school learn how to read, write, add, and subtract. They learn about farming as they raise food on the school grounds. They learn about science and history, but the most important subject is Jesus.

Charles Mwila became the school principal. "We are very much interested in having their lives transformed," he said. "We are making sure that we impact their lives spiritually so that they become like ambassadors even in this community to spread the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Discipleship has been at the center of our school."



New desks!



New well!



Learning about Jesus!

As the village of Walale began to be transformed with the gospel, it started gaining a new reputation. It even gained a new name. People no longer called it Walale, which was the name of an old witch. They gave it a new name: Twashuka. This name means “we are lucky” or “the lucky place.” Charles said the people wanted the village to have a new name “because of many things that the Lord has done.” He said the village “has really seen serious transformation spiritually. People have really changed here. We have seen the faithfulness of the Lord.”

Twashuka is now a community filled with Bible study groups. Every Sunday a church meets in the school. Hundreds of villagers have decided to follow Jesus and have been baptized. Young men play soccer and study the Bible together through a community soccer ministry. Teen girls meet together to learn about living lives of purity and faith. Christians from Twashuka now travel to neighboring villages to share the gospel with others who don’t know Jesus.

You never can tell where prayers under an avocado tree might lead.

For nothing will be impossible with God.

Luke 1:37



You can learn more about this ministry at ReachingTheHeartOfZambia.org.

Activity Ideas

- Find **Zambia** on your globe.
- Complete “Lesson 22: Zambia” in the *Atlas Workbook*.
- Answer the questions for Lesson 22 in the *Lesson Review*.
- Color the picture for Lesson 22 in the *Coloring Book*.
- Read the introduction to “Ba Yesu, Iyee Ee!” (*Folktales and Songs of Our Great Big World*, page 26) and listen to Track 16 at notgrass.com/FSOGBW.
- Imagine that you are a child in Zambia who is excited to go to school for the first time. In your creative writing notebook, write a letter to a child in a wealthier nation telling why you are excited.
- Read the chapters titled “Milking time” and “Most dangerous” in *Akimbo of Africa*.

Lesson 23

Chacma Baboons

They are fun to watch . . . until they show up at your picnic uninvited. They are quite entertaining . . . until they open your vehicle door and look for a leftover sandwich. They are amusing . . . except when they try to steal your groceries as you leave the store. They are chacma baboons, and southern Africa has a lot of them!



Chacma baboon on top of a car



Chacma baboons are large, hairy monkeys that live in several countries in southern Africa. They spend much of the daytime looking for food. They have handy pouches in their cheeks where they can store extra food. The pouches are as big as their stomachs! At night chacma baboons sleep on the high branches of trees, on rocky cliffs, or nestled in caves. Chacma baboons usually live in troops of 15 to 100 individuals. Sometimes the troops are larger, with the baboons numbering up to 200. Chacma baboons can live to be 40 years old.



Chacma baboons raiding trash cans in Cape Town

Chacma baboons tend to be troublemakers. They cause problems for farmers when they get into fields and sample the crops. In cities such as Cape Town in the country of **South Africa**, baboons raid gardens, knock over trash cans, and break into houses and restaurants. Sometimes they get in trouble with the law. At times wildlife rangers use paintball guns to chase the baboons away. In 2020 a particularly stubborn and troublesome baboon called Kataza got himself into serious trouble. After Kataza led other baboons on 15 raiding expeditions near Cape Town, local officials captured him. In the end, Kataza was sentenced to live away from the city in a home for baboons.



Even though some chacma baboons make life harder for the people around them, one particular baboon in the 1880s made life much easier for a South African railroad man. Jim Wide lost both of his legs in an accident while he was working for the railroad. Mr. Wide carved himself two wooden pegs to use as legs so he could hobble around. The railroad company gave him a new job that didn't require him to move around very much. He became a signaller, responsible for pulling the levers that made passing trains switch from one track to another.



Railroad switch lever



Jim and Jack at work

Even though Mr. Wide didn't have to use his legs very much at work, he still had to get to and from the signal box. He found a solution when he befriended a chacma baboon called Jack. Every day Jack pushed Mr. Wide to work on a little cart. Jack learned to pull the right levers at the right times. When the railroad authorities found out about the monkey business happening in the signal box, they fired Mr. Wide. Mr. Wide convinced them to watch Jack at work and see how capable he was. When they saw the baboon doing his job, the authorities hired Mr. Wide back—and they hired Jack! The baboon became an official railroad employee. He worked faithfully for nine years until he died in 1890.

Jack proved that not all baboons are troublemakers!



Jack pushes Jim on his cart

**God made the beasts of the earth
after their kind, and the cattle
after their kind, and everything
that creeps on the ground after its kind;
and God saw that it was good.**

Genesis 1:25



Activity Ideas

- Find **South Africa** on your globe.
- Complete “Lesson 23: Baboon Trip” in the *Atlas Workbook*.
- Answer the questions for Lesson 23 in the *Lesson Review*.
- Color the picture for Lesson 23 in the *Coloring Book*.
- Family Activity: Make Malva Pudding (page 112)
- Read the chapters titled “Mamba hunt” and “Capture” in *Akimbo of Africa*.

Lesson 24

Baobab Trees

It can grow to be almost 100 feet tall. It's hard to know for sure, but it seems to be able to survive for thousands of years. Africans call it the "tree of life." It is the baobab tree (pronounced BOW-bab or BAY-uh-bab).



Baobab tree in Madagascar



Baobab fruit

Baobab trees are enormous. Some are so large that it would take 20 grown men holding hands to reach around them. People have figured out many ways to use these amazing trees. They use the bark to make rope, cloth, mats, baskets, paper, nets, and fishing line. They eat the leaves and fruit and use different parts of the trees to make medicines. They make glue from the pollen. Many baobab trees are hollow at the bottom. People have used these hollow areas as burial sites, animal stables, post offices, and even prisons!



At the base of a baobab tree

For most of the year, baobab trees reach up toward the sun with bare, scraggly branches that look like roots. Around the start of the rainy season they produce leaves and large flowers. They also produce a nutritious fruit. During the rainy season, a single baobab tree can absorb an astonishing 30,000 gallons of water! When there isn't much water around, elephants sometimes quench their thirst by eating spongy baobab bark.

The island of **Madagascar** lies off the eastern coast of Africa. One of the island's most popular sites is the Avenue of the Baobabs. Scientists believe the baobabs on either side of this dirt road started growing around 800 years ago. The views of the avenue are especially beautiful in the orange glow of sunrise and sunset.



An elephant munches on baobab bark

Avenue of the Baobabs





Making a cistern out of a baobab



Gathering water from a baobab

Farther south on the island lies the Mahafaly plateau. A plateau is an area of high, level ground. Some years the Mahafaly plateau doesn't receive any rain at all. During other years, it only rains a few times. The people here depend on baobab trees to help them survive. They hollow out cisterns inside the trees, which requires days of backbreaking work. The cisterns catch and hold rainwater, keeping it amazingly fresh for months. The people who live on the Mahafaly plateau are thankful for every drop of water the baobabs provide. Baobab roots are also rich with water. People dig them up and grind them to make porridge. When the water in the baobab cisterns finally runs out, the villagers have to travel many hours by cart to buy water. In this region, baobab trees are definitely trees of life.

The Bible compares a person who delights in the law of the Lord to a strong tree:

**He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in its season
and its leaf does not wither;
and in whatever he does, he prospers.
Psalm 1:3**



Activity Ideas

- Find **Madagascar** on your globe.
- Complete “Lesson 24: African Islands in the Indian Ocean” in the *Atlas Workbook*.
- Answer the questions for Lesson 24 in the *Lesson Review*.
- Color the picture for Lesson 24 in the *Coloring Book*.
- Read the introduction to “The Legend of the Baobab Tree” (*Folktales and Songs of Our Great Big World*, page 27) and listen to Track 17 at notgrass.com/FSOGBW.
- Read the chapters titled “A brush with danger” and “Sssensational sssnake factsss” in *Akimbo of Africa*.

Family Activity: Make Malva Pudding

This rich dessert is a favorite in South Africa. **Read through the directions before you begin!**

Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 3 tablespoons apricot jam
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 tablespoon melted butter, cooled to room temperature
- 1 cup milk

Sauce Ingredients:

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup hot water
- ½ cup butter



Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease an 8" x 8" baking dish with cooking spray or butter.
2. Melt 1 tablespoon of butter. Set aside to cool.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, and sugar.
4. In a medium mixing bowl, combine the egg, apricot jam, melted butter (at room temperature), vinegar, and milk.
5. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients. As you begin to mix, you will see bubbles from the baking soda and vinegar reaction. Be careful not to overmix these ingredients.
6. Pour the batter into the prepared 8" x 8" dish.

7. Bake at 350°F for 35-45 minutes. The top will be very brown, but this does not mean it is done. Insert a knife or fork after 35 minutes to test for doneness. It may come out with crumbs, but it should not come out wet.
8. When your pudding has been in the oven for 30 minutes, begin making the sauce. The sauce and the pudding both need to be hot when you pour the sauce over the pudding.

Sauce Instructions:

1. Combine all of the sauce ingredients in a medium saucepan.
2. Heat to a simmer and cook until the sugar is dissolved and the butter is melted. This mixture should not come to a boil. If your sauce is finished before your pudding, turn the heat down to the lowest setting to keep warm.
3. When your pudding is finished baking, poke holes in the top with a skewer and slowly pour the sauce over it. It might seem like you have too much sauce, but pour it all! The pudding will absorb it.
4. Wait 5 minutes before serving to give the sauce time to soak in. South Africans like to serve malva pudding warm with custard or ice cream.



Be safe in the kitchen! Children must have adult supervision.

Unit 19

Asia



Lijiang, China

Lesson 55

God's Songwriter

All across the country of **China**, from the biggest cities to remote villages, groups of Christians gather to worship God. They know the Chinese government doesn't like it. They know they might get in trouble for doing it. These Christians gather anyway. They choose to follow Jesus no matter what. They lift their voices in song, clapping their hands to the rhythm. Some can't stop smiling as the joy of Jesus bubbles up inside them. Tears stream down some faces. Their hearts have been touched by the beautiful words of the songs they sing. They are overcome by God's love for them.

Where did the songs come from? They are not translations of English hymns. They are Chinese songs, written by a Chinese hymn writer whose life and work have touched millions of people. Her songs have helped to spread the hope of Jesus throughout China and around the world.



Chinese village



Farmland in Henan Province, China

Lü Xiao Min (pronounced *loo seow-meen*) was born into a farming family in Henan Province, China, in 1970. Her mother never went to school. Her father went for a year or two, but only learned to read a little bit. After Xiao Min was born, her parents decided they didn't have enough money to give her what she needed. They were going to give her away, but when the day arrived, a big flood came. Because of the flood, they kept Xiao Min. Her mother eventually came to see that flood as God's blessing to their family.

When Xiao Min was in middle school, she suffered from a series of sinus infections. They made her so sick that she struggled to focus on her studies. She eventually quit going to school.

Xiao Min often sat and looked at nature. She felt in her heart that someone must have made the sky and the grass. Surely someone created the birds and all the other beautiful things around her, but she didn't know who. She didn't know anything about God. Then one day, Xiao Min's aunt told her about a God in heaven who created the world and everything in it. Xiao Min's aunt was a Christian.



Lü Xiao Min as a child



Peony

Xiao Min immediately knew her aunt's words were true. She decided to go to church with her aunt that night. Before she left the gathering, Xiao Min decided she wanted to follow Jesus, too.

Xiao Min's parents and siblings were not happy. They were opposed to Xiao Min becoming a Christian. Xiao Min continued to follow Jesus anyway.

One night after she became a Christian, Xiao Min had trouble falling asleep. A song came into her head. She later sang her song to a little girl in the village. The girl sang it to her own parents. They were amazed that Xiao Min could write something so beautiful. They felt that the song must have been from the Holy Spirit working through Xiao Min. After all, she had not finished school and had no musical training.

On September 7, 1992, just three years after she became a Christian, Xiao Min was at a church gathering. The police came that day and arrested several Christians including Xiao Min. Xiao Min spent several weeks in jail. She sang and shared the gospel with the other prisoners in her cell. One day a jailer overheard her. "Let me tell you something," he said, "When you are locked up, you should be thinking about how to get out of here. But you are preaching! Unbelievable!"

Xiao Min realized that her arrest was God's marvelous idea. She rejoiced that God had brought her into a jail where she and other Christians could tell criminals of God's love for them. All of the prisoners in Xiao Min's cell decided to follow Jesus.

When Xiao Min was carried off to jail, a new song came into her soul. In English the song means:



Mountains in
Henan Province, China



Xiao Min



Xiao Min singing into a tape recorder

*In tough times, I grew strong.
 In tough times, I learned about life.
 The pine trees on high mountains
 face the wind from all sides.
 Through every season and every day
 They stand straight and reach the sky,
 Never bending and never yielding,
 Their lives are forever green.*



Bible in Chinese



Xiao Min

Xiao Min's heart is always open to being touched by the Lord and led by His spirit. God has placed in her heart a deep love for her country. She desperately wants the Chinese people to turn to the Lord. She wants to do all she can to spread His love throughout her homeland. The Holy Spirit continually floods her soul with beautiful words and melodies. She has written over 2,000 songs. Her songs have brought joy and comfort to countless Chinese Christians. Even though she is famous, she is quiet and humble and gives God the credit for her work.

Xiao Min once said, "I know that God is working through me. Think about it. I'm a girl who didn't even finish junior high school. I often come before the Lord and say, 'Lord, if you didn't use me and inspire me, I wouldn't be able to write a single word.' "

**Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth:
 Break forth and sing for joy and sing praises.
 Psalm 98:4**

Activity Ideas

- Find **China** on your globe.
- Complete "Lesson 55: China" in the *Atlas Workbook*.
- Answer the questions for Lesson 55 in the *Lesson Review*.
- Color the picture for Lesson 55 in the *Coloring Book*.
- Read the introduction to "Sheng Ming Di He" (*Folktales and Songs of Our Great Big World*, page 64) and listen to Track 38 at notgrass.com/FSOGBW.
- In your creative writing notebook, write a song about God's love.
- Read Chapter 10 in *Race for the Record*.

Lesson 56

Panda Diplomacy

Diplomacy is a big word that has to do with keeping things peaceful between countries. If the president of one country makes a deal with the president of another country so they can avoid going to war, that's diplomacy. If two countries work out an agreement about how one country can buy fruit that the other country grows, that's diplomacy. If one country's prime minister travels to meet with another country's king for official meetings, that's diplomacy. If world leaders exchange gifts with each other, that's diplomacy. If China sends the United States a present of two baby pandas, that's panda diplomacy!



A panda in the National Zoo in Washington, D.C.

Panda diplomacy might sound silly, but **China** has used it many times. World leaders often exchange presents. They might give a rug, a vase, a painting, a chess set, or a special food or drink. President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush received the gifts at right during his presidency, which lasted from 2001 until 2009. Since China is the only country in the world where pandas live in the wild, China is the only country that can give pandas as presents. A Chinese empress gave two pandas to Japan way back in the year 685.

After World War II, China became a Communist country. The relationship between China and the United States became unfriendly. President Richard Nixon of the United States wanted to change that. He made a diplomatic visit to China in 1972. His wife, First Lady Pat Nixon, traveled with him. While President Nixon met with Chinese leaders, the first lady experienced everyday life in China by visiting markets, hospitals, orphanages, schools, and a zoo. She was especially fond of the pandas she saw in the zoo. When she told a Chinese government leader how much she liked the pandas, he said he would give her some. He did! Two months after the Nixons' visit, the Chinese government put two young pandas, Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing, on a plane and sent them to Washington, D.C.



First Lady Pat Nixon (in a red coat) visits a panda in a Chinese zoo in 1972.

Gifts presented to President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush during his presidency



Bowl from the emir of Qatar



Vase from the president of South Korea



Gourd from the president of Mexico



Gold-plated silver stirrups with inlaid rubies from the king of Morocco



Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing at the National Zoo



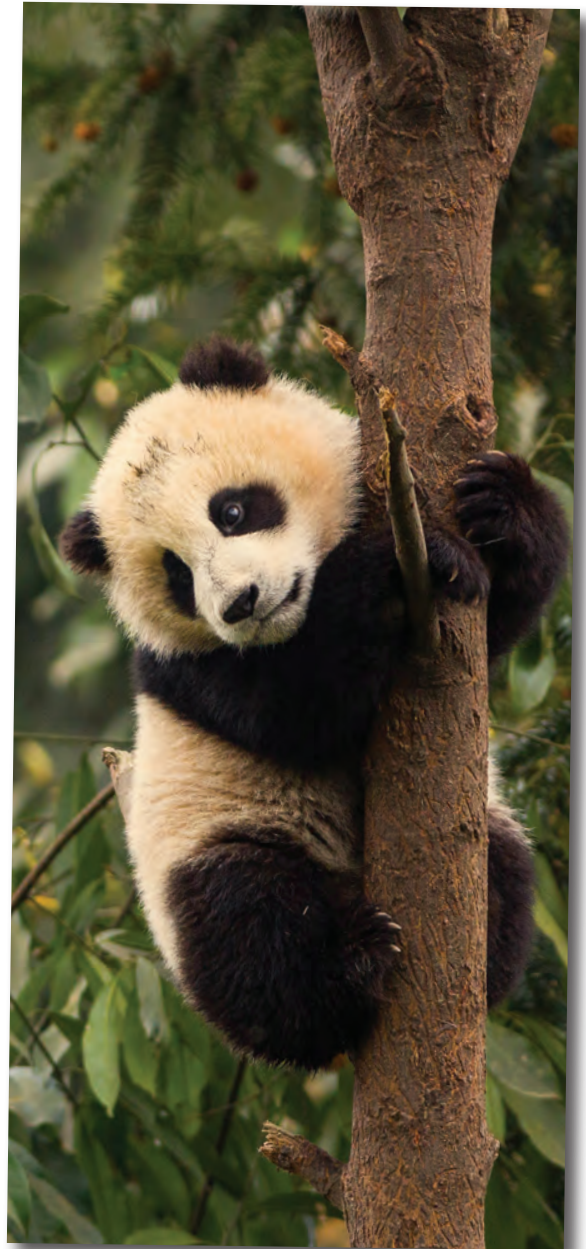
Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing lived in the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., for over 20 years. They were a popular exhibit. On the first Sunday after their arrival, 75,000 people lined up to see them!

The Chinese government continued to give pandas as gifts until 1984, when they decided to loan the pandas instead. The Chinese wanted all the pandas in the world to belong to them. China requires zoos to pay up to one million dollars a year for the privilege of having borrowed pandas on display. If a panda living in a zoo outside of China gives birth to a cub, the zoo must pay a cub tax and then send the cub to China.

Baby pandas are teeny tiny when they are born. They weigh only about five ounces. (How much did you weigh when you were born?) The cubs are wrinkly, blind, and bald. They don't have a black and white coat until they are about three weeks old. A mama panda has an exhausting job caring for a newborn cub. A cub needs so much attention that a mama panda might not even lay it down for a month as she cares for it night and day.

Pandas are adorable creatures. They are fun to watch as they do a somersault through the grass, slide down a snowy hill on their backs, or munch on bamboo. Munching on bamboo keeps pandas busy for about 12 hours every day. They will occasionally find something else to eat, but bamboo is definitely their favorite breakfast, favorite lunch, favorite dinner, and favorite snack! (What is your favorite snack?)

Rugs, vases, and pandas are nice presents and might help keep the peace, but the only place anyone will ever find true peace is in Jesus. As Christians we can fill the world with the fruit of the Spirit.



But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23

Activity Ideas

- Find **China** on your globe.
- Complete “Lesson 56: Panda Diplomacy” in the *Atlas Workbook*.
- Answer the questions for Lesson 56 in the *Lesson Review*.
- Color the picture for Lesson 56 in the *Coloring Book*.
- Family Activity: Make Felt Pandas (page 266)
- Read Chapter 11 in *Race for the Record*.

Lesson 57

The Great Wall

It is the most popular tourist spot in **China** and one of the most popular in the world. Around 10 million people visit it every year. It is the longest structure that people have ever built. It is the Great Wall of China.

Around 600 years before Jesus was born, Chinese rulers ordered their people to build walls to keep out invaders. Many years later, China's first emperor ordered that the walls be extended and connected to each other, creating one long wall. For hundreds of years, Chinese leaders kept ordering their people to make the wall longer and longer. Building stone walls that zigzag through the mountains and across the desert was extremely difficult. Sadly, many workers died during construction.



Climbing the Great Wall of China



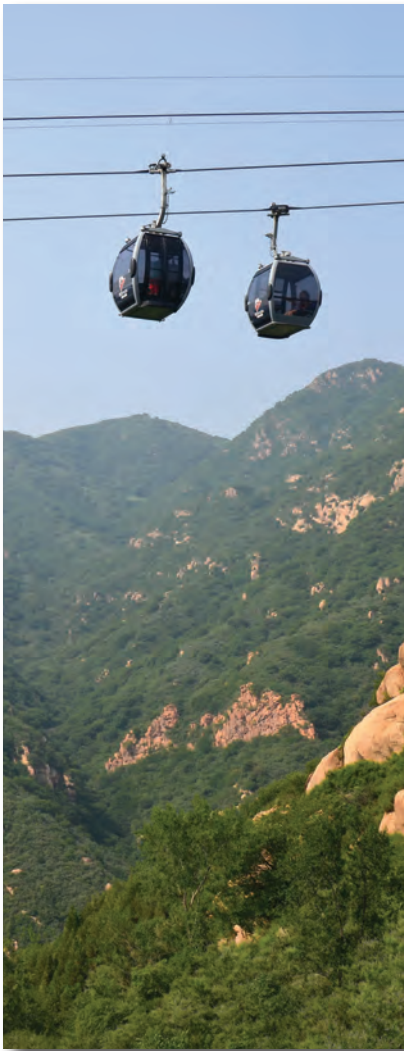
Illustration of the Great Wall from 1706

According to a Chinese legend, a dragon helped workers know where to build the Great Wall. Do you think that's true? It is true that goats helped build it! On one especially steep mountain, workers bundled bricks on the backs of goats. Goats are better at climbing mountains than people, so they were very helpful hauling the building materials to the top. Along the wall, workers built watchtowers, gates, and fortresses for soldiers. The mortar they used to hold the stones and bricks together had a surprising ingredient: sticky rice! Sticky rice has helped hold the Great Wall together for a long, long time.

Today the Chinese people celebrate this historic landmark and work to preserve it, but that hasn't always been the case. During the middle of the 1900s, the leader of China didn't think the Great Wall was worth protecting. He even encouraged people to take bricks from the wall and use them to build houses. Now the Chinese government has laws to protect the wall. People who damage it might have to pay a fine or go to jail.



View of the Great Wall from a watchtower



Cable cars near the Great Wall

The Great Wall of China officially opened for tourists in 1970. In 2019 the Chinese government set a limit on how many people could visit the most popular section in a day: only 65,000. If you are number 65,001, you will have to wait until tomorrow or go find another section. Surely you can find another section to visit. After all, if you add up all the sections that were ever built, the total length of the Great Wall of China is over 13,000 miles. That means if we could stretch the Great Wall out straight, it would go halfway around the world!

Just walking on the Great Wall is an amazing experience, but there are many ways visitors can enjoy it. How about seeing the wall at night when lanterns light the way? In some places, you can bring a tent and camp out on the wall. You could imagine that you are an ancient Chinese guard, keeping watch over your homeland through the night. Hiking the wall can be exhausting, so how about riding a cable car up to the wall and then back down? At one location on the Great Wall you can hop on a toboggan and head down the mountain on a mile-long metal slide!



Slide near the Great Wall

The Great Wall of China is a fantastic example of what people who are created in the image of God can create.

**God created man in His own image,
in the image of God He created him;
male and female He created them.
Genesis 1:27**



Activity Ideas

- Find **China** on your globe.
- Complete “Lesson 57: The Great Wall” in the *Atlas Workbook*.
- Answer the questions for Lesson 57 in the *Lesson Review*.
- Color the picture for Lesson 57 in the *Coloring Book*.
- Read the introduction to “The Empty Pot” (*Folktales and Songs of Our Great Big World*, page 65) and listen to Track 39 at notgrass.com/FSOGBW.

Family Activity: Make Felt Pandas

Supplies:

- white felt
- black felt
- white thread
- needle
- cotton balls
- ribbon, yarn, or string for a hanger
- googly eyes
- black marker
- scissors
- glue
- pins
- round object to trace panda head shape (such as a mug)
- smaller round object to trace panda ears (such as a spice jar lid)

Directions:

1. Trace two circles onto the white felt for the panda head. Cut them out.
2. Trace two circles onto the black felt for the panda ears. Cut them out.
3. Trace two circles onto the black felt for the patches around the panda's eyes. Cut them out and trim them into ovals.
4. Thread your needle with the white thread.
5. Lay one white circle on the table. Place the two eye patches in the correct locations and sew a single stitch in the center of each one to hold them in place. See Image 1.
6. Use the black marker to draw a nose and mouth shape on the panda's face. See Image 1.
7. Lay the other white circle on the table. Arrange the two ears on the top, halfway on the circle and halfway off. See Image 1.
8. Flatten two or three cotton balls and place them in the center of the white circle that has the ears. See Image 1.
9. Cut a 6" piece of ribbon, yarn, or string, and tie the two ends together to make a loop. Lay the loop on the white circle that has the ears (see photo). See Image 1.
10. Place the white circle with the face on top of the cotton balls. Pin the two circles and the ears together to hold them in place. Stitch the two circles together with white thread. Make sure you stitch the yarn loop inside of your panda's head. See Image 2.
11. Glue a googly eye onto each eye patch. See Image 2.



Sources

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