



Goals for a Brighter Future: Developing Meaningful Work Children's Ministry Resources



Overview: Employment is an important part of daily life, helping us to support our families and contribute to society. Through the activities below, children will begin to explore and understand why work is important, some of the challenges that workers may face, how The Salvation Army is developing meaningful work, and how we can be involved in developing meaningful work. Materials can easily be adapted for character building programs, children's sermons, Junior Church, Sunday School, and more!

Jobs in our Community

Suggested ages: 3-6 (Related to Moonbeams Helper emblem)

Materials Needed: Paper, coloring/drawing utensils

Objective: Become aware that people have different types of jobs and recognize the importance of various jobs.

Discussion: Jobs are an important part of life. When we work at a job we are helping our community and also earning money that we need to buy food and other important things for ourselves and our families. Talk about some of the jobs that people have in your community. (Examples: Teacher, Firefighter, Delivery person, Office worker, Landscaper, etc.) As kids you don't have jobs yet, but you might have things that you do to help out your family. Does anyone help with chores or have other responsibilities in your family? (Examples: Playing with younger siblings, making bed, putting dirty clothes in hamper, helping with dishes, dusting, etc.) All of these tasks help to make your family run well, just like many of the jobs that adults have help the community.

Activity: Children draw a picture of themselves working at the job they want to have when they grow up. Ask children to share their drawings with the group.

Scripture Application: Read Exodus 2:1-10 – What did Miriam do to help her family? What can you do to help your family?

Journey of a T-shirt

(Adapted from the paper "Ethical Consumerism" by Stephanie Marinelli)

Suggested ages: 3-8

Materials: A copy of the Journey of the t-shirt map for each child (at the end of this packet), cotton balls, yarn/string cut in to 1 inch pieces, small pieces of plain fabric, small pieces of fabric cut in to t-shirt shape, glue, crayons or markers

Objective: Learn that there are many different workers involved in producing a t-shirt

Discussion: Did you know that the clothes that you are wearing today were made by someone? Actually, the clothes that you are wearing were made by many different people in different places who all had a specific job in the process! Today we are going to go on a journey to learn how t-shirts are made!

Activity: Talk about each stage of making a t-shirt. Children glue the related item on the map to show the journey of a t-shirt.

- 1- Mississippi, USA – The journey of your t-shirt probably began on a cotton farm in Mississippi. The cotton was picked from the plant and the seeds were removed by a machine. (Glue a piece of a cotton ball on the map near 1.)
- 2- Indonesia – After the cotton arrived in Indonesia, the cotton was spun into yarn. (Glue yarn/string on the map near 2.)
- 3- Bangladesh – In Bangladesh, the yarn was woven into fabric, washed, and dyed to pretty colors. (Glue small piece of fabric on the map near 3.) The fabric might have been sewn into a t-shirt here in Bangladesh, or it might have been sewn in Colombia where the Star is on your map. Sometimes the workers who sew the t-shirts aren't paid fairly for the jobs that they are doing. Sometimes the factories where the workers make the t-shirts are uncomfortable and unsafe.
- 4- Ocean – Now the t-shirt made the trip back to the United States! The t-shirts were packed on to giant boats which carried them across the ocean. (Use crayons/markers to draw a big boat on the map near 4.)
- 5- USA – When the t-shirts arrived in the USA, they were printed with different designs and then sent to local stores where they were sold. (Glue t-shirt shaped fabric on the map near 5.)

Discussion: Did you know it took so many steps to make a t-shirt? Think about how many different people might have been involved in working to make the t-shirt you are wearing today! Since it takes a lot of work to make a t-shirt, that means that we should take good care of our clothes. Also, when we outgrow our clothes we can pass them on to someone else who might be able to use them!

Scripture Application: Read Mark 12:28-31. Pray for the people who were involved in making the clothes you are wearing. Praying for people is a way that we can love and care about our neighbors.

Journey of a Chocolate Bar

Suggested ages: 5-10

Materials: Access to video "A Day in the Life of a Fairtrade Cocoa Farmer"

(<https://www.cdec.org.uk/use-our-resources/films/>), Fair Trade chocolate to share with children

Objective: Learn that there are many different workers involved in making products that we buy. Become aware of some of the injustices that workers might face.

Discussion: Why do you think adults have jobs? (Examples: To make money, to help the community, to be able to use a skill or do a task that they enjoy, etc.) Have you ever thought about all of the workers who were involved in making a product that you buy at the store? Today we're going to go on a journey to learn part of the process for making a chocolate bar!

Watch video

Discussion: Some companies, like the one in the video, treat their workers fairly and sadly some do not. By choosing "fair trade" chocolate, we trust that the people who helped to grow/harvest the plants and make the chocolate were treated well and paid fairly for their work.

Eat fair trade chocolate together. Talk about the different cocoa beans processes you saw in the video.

Scripture Application: Read Mark 12:28-31. Buying fair trade items shows that we care about how other people are treated. Caring about others is a way of loving our neighbors as ourselves! Pray for all of the people who were involved in producing the chocolate that you enjoyed eating today!

Meaningful Work Case Studies

Suggested ages: 8-13; May be adapted for teens (Some applications to Rangers College and Career emblem)

Materials: Printed photos of Salvation Army meaningful work programs (at the end of this packet)

Objective: Learn about some of the obstacles that people face in the area of “meaningful work” and how The Salvation Army is developing meaningful work. Think about how you can help with developing meaningful work!

Small Group Discussions: Working in groups of 3-5, have children read one case study and discuss the questions. If you have more than one group of children, the groups can share their scenario and a summary of the discussion with the whole group at the end of the session.

Scenario 1: You are a farmer. You don’t make a lot of money, but you can feed your family and afford the fees to send your children to school. Drought comes and there is no rain for many days. Crops don’t grow. If you don’t have crops to sell, you won’t be earning any money. What options do you have? What are some ways that others can come alongside to help the farmer?

Scenario 2: You are a fisherman. A big company comes in and sets up an industrial fishing net that brings in 5 times more fish per day than you are able to catch with your basic equipment. Because the company is able to catch more fish, they are able to charge a lot less money per fish. Restaurants and grocery stores are starting to buy their fish from the big company instead of from you. What options do you have? What are some ways that others could come alongside to help the fisherman?

Scenario 3: You are a 10 year old girl. You used to go to school and really loved math class. You have heard that when some people grow up they work with money and finances. You would love to be a business woman someday, but you don’t see how that could ever be possible. Your family and your neighbors don’t have running water in your homes. It is your responsibility to fetch water from the community well for your family each day. In order to have water for cooking and drinking, you spend a lot of time walking the mile-long trip back and forth to the well several times per day. This means that there isn’t any time to attend school. You really liked attending school, but you understand how important it is for your family to have water to use. What options do you have to try to achieve your dream of becoming a business woman someday? What are some ways that others could come alongside to help the girl reach her dreams?

Large Group Discussion: These are some big obstacles that the people in these stories are facing! We thought about ways that other people might be able to come alongside to help, and we’re also going to talk about some ways that The Salvation Army is helping around the world! *(There are photos at the end of this packet to go along with each of these examples. Share 1 or all of these examples with the children!)*

-Connected with Scenario 1 – In the farming communities in Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka, families are often impacted by drought. When there isn’t enough rain, the crops don’t grow, and the families do not have food to sell. The Salvation Army is helping families in this area by giving training about different farming practices and providing helpful materials like watering cans, fertilizer, and rice barrels. Salvation Army leaders are also helping the families think of other options for home-based businesses that they could start, that don’t depend on the rainfall, such as making shoes or slippers, starting a small boutique, or setting up a roadside shop. Families who are interested in starting up one of these other types of

businesses are given some materials to help them start their business. They also receive training about setting up savings accounts to help them reach their goals and prepare for the future!

-Connected with Scenario 2 – Many of the things that we buy from the store are produced by large companies rather than smaller, independent artists or crafters. Buying from a large company often allows us to buy things for a cheaper price, but *sometimes* it also means that as the product was made people or the environment/planet were hurt in some way. Around the world, The Salvation Army has different programs that encourage artists and workers to make products that are sold in various Salvation Army stores and at events. The workers all receive fair pay for their work. One example of this is in Kibera, Kenya. The Kibera Mamas group was created as a way of providing a meaningful work opportunity for women in the community. The women gather together and make beautiful beaded animals which are sold throughout the world, even at The Salvation Army Trade store in Hoffman Estates, Illinois! The money earned by the women helps them to buy food, pay their children's school fees, and pay their rent. While the women work they also discuss important topics, encourage each other, and pray together. The beaded animals might be a bit more expensive than decorations that you can buy from a big company that produces many items, but supporting independent artists and workers such as Kibera Mamas helps these individuals have a brighter future and provide for their families!

-Connected with Scenario 3 – Many families around the world don't have access to clean water or have to travel long distances to gather water. The Salvation Army is helping communities build water tanks or develop other ways to have clean water available in their villages. Since it is the responsibility of many young girls to collect the water for the family, having a local water tank in the village means that many of these girls are now able to attend school instead of spending their days collecting water! The Salvation Army also offers different types of educational programs that provide special training for adult women who might not have been able to attend or finish school when they were younger. This training allows the women to learn specific skills so they are qualified for different types of jobs. One example is in Congo Brazzaville where The Salvation Army has a Vocational Training Centre, offering classes in tailoring, hair braiding, and beauty salon. One woman who recently graduated from the tailoring program now has her own sewing business. She is also getting ready to teach sewing workshops where she will train other girls and women who are interested in learning sewing.

-How can you get involved in developing meaningful work? Here are a few ideas and you might also have a few ideas to add to the list! (*Many of these ideas have been adapted from <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/the-clothes-line> and <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/>*)

- Consume less. Many of us like to have options which means we end up buying more clothes, toys, etc. than we really need! We want to purchase things that are inexpensive because that means we can buy more things. If something is really cheap it could be hurting people or the environment in some way. By buying less, we're able to afford to spend more money on an item so the producer can be paid a fair wage and the item can be made in a way that protects the planet.
- Learn about unemployment statistics, working conditions around the world, and other information related to "developing meaningful work." Share what you learn with your friends and family.

- Buy from local producers. When you buy local produce and support neighborhood businesses, you help people in your community to stay employed and prevent trucks from driving far distances to deliver supplies and products (which is also better for the environment!)

Scripture Application: Read Matthew 6:19-21 and Philippians 4:11-13. Are you storing up treasures on earth? Have you learned to be content in your life? These are difficult things! Ask the Lord to help you as you seek to live for Him!

Journey of a T-shirt Map





Developing Meaningful Work in Sri Lanka:
Agricultural Training and
Home-Based Business Alternatives





Developing Meaningful Work in Kenya: Kibera Mamas Group





Developing Meaningful Work in Congo Brazzaville: Vocational Training Centre

