

THE YELLOW STAR



**The Mission
Newsletter of
the Magruder
Family, United
Methodist
Missionaries
to Cameroon**

Special Sunday School Edition

Welcome to this special edition of The Yellow Star, dedicated solely to the Sunday School curriculum known as "Vien et Vois!", or "Come and See!"

I have just returned from eight days in the village of Makak where the curriculum is produced. And do I have stories to tell! ... Leah Magruder

A week in Makak is like a week in Heaven. It's in the middle of the rainforest in south Cameroon, hours away from any main road. My good friend and partner-in-ministry, Ginger Cooper, and I went with some anxiety about how our eight days would go in the village knowing that we would have to go without many of our usual creature comforts.

We packed up the Land Cruiser, picked up four Cameroonians friends and fellow participants, and we were off. I had already decided I would not need a driver on this trip as I have been there four times

before, and I was pretty sure I knew how to get there.

Ummmm, maybe I had overestimated myself because we got lost and, as we say in Texas, **we got lost bad!** When I realized that I didn't recognize anything, we stopped and asked. As a result, we picked up another passenger who showed us the way — and got a free ride at the same time!

This would be true 4-wheeling, that is, if I had known how to use the 4-wheeling apparatus. The road was one lane with no place to

pass unless I went into the roadside grass that was taller than the Cruiser itself. There were deep ruts in the road, too — if it had been rainy season, I would still be in the jungle today! At first, Ginger and I laughed and laughed thinking what a great story this would be, but after a while, it wasn't really that funny anymore. The

afternoon was closing into early evening and we knew that if we didn't get to Makak soon, we would be in the dark. We still had our Cameroonian friends with us, help-

ing us ask directions every 10 km or so, but I was responsible for all these people, and I was lost in the forest with lions and tigers and bears ... ok, maybe I have watched *The Wizard of Oz* too many times, but I know for sure there are crazy monkeys and snakes around there and other critters I don't even know the names of.

After being told it would be only another 15 km about 4 different times, we pulled into Makak. What a relief! We had made it with a bit of light to spare!



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Vien et Vois! A Sunday School Curriculum

“Vien et Vois!” began in the hearts of two Protestant sisters in the village of Makak over 30 years ago. These sisters are members of a community that is based in Germany, where they are from. When they decided to move to Cameroon and start a community here, they became involved in the local Presbyterian church in Makak. Soon the leadership of the Presbyterian church had asked Sister Gisela to be the Sunday School Superintendent for the local congregations in Makak and “Vien et Vois!” was born. It took many years to develop and create all the figures for the stories they told.

There are five different packets that make the complete set of the curriculum. A basic series holds the pieces that are reused for many of the stories in both the Old and New Testaments. The tree you see in this picture along with the clouds and the sun are used in almost every story and so they are contained in the basic series. Then there is a Genesis packet, Moses packet, rest of the Old Testament packet and a New Testament packet. For training purposes, the basic and Genesis packets are used. We mostly did stories about Abraham and Joseph. Ginger and I did our final presentation on “Joseph in Potiphar’s House.” Let me tell you, we got creative on telling that little story! Something about kissing ...!

There is a very specific way that this curriculum is presented, thus the need for training. Let me give you a run-down of a typical lesson.

- ~Opening prayer
- ~Opening song
- ~Review from week before



Collins tells the story of Abraham and Sarah

- ~Set images for scene one
- ~Introduction of theme for the week
- ~Tell the story (with 4-7 scenes)
- ~Sing a song related to the story
- ~Introduce and practice the memory verse
- ~Give the lesson that incorporates a story the children can relate to in their everyday lives
- ~Ask questions about the story
- ~Sing the same song again that relates to the story
- ~Close with a prayer

This is no messing around. It took the two of us at least two hours to prepare the lesson. Not only does the lesson need to be prepared but it must also be practiced. The images need to be organized by scenes and then the story needs to be told in sync with the placing of the images.

In the afternoons when we were in our practicum, each group was assigned a “Momma.” These are ladies from the village whom have been doing this program for 10 years or more. They know their stuff and they were tough on us. Ginger and I were on the verge of tears more than once.

As Americans, she and I found out that our culture doesn’t take criticism very well and theirs does. So when we were doing our best, we were still criticized. Yikes! No warm fuzzies from these ladies! Life is hard in Africa and there is no time or energy for warm fuzzies and we just had to get over it!

We learned so much and so will our little Cameroonian kiddos. Thank you, God!

Child Psychology Essential to Program



Sister Gisela spent three full mornings teaching child psychology, from prebirth to age five. These are the all-important, impressionable first years of a child’s life. She began by talking about how we should protect our pregnant “sisters” as it is best for the mother and especially the child to live in an environment of love and happiness. Then she explains how a mother is to keep her baby close to her for the first years of the baby’s life. She also taught such life skills as: how to talk to a child, how to discipline without beating (a common form of discipline here) and the importance of boundaries.

But Sister Gisela didn’t teach only in the classroom. She found ways to teach all through the day. Even sitting down to dinner was a teachable moment!

A Day in the Life of a Participant

Our schedule was grueling. The day started at 5:30 a.m. and ended at about 9:00 with one break in the middle of the day after lunch.

5:30 a.m. Rise and shine

6:00 a.m. Fetch water from the watering hole, down a very steep, wet hill OR wash a million dishes from the night before. We were up before the roosters!

7:00 a.m. **Devotional in the chapel**

8:00 a.m. Breakfast of two pieces of bread with jam and hot tea. Not exactly breakfast of the champions but after about 3 days, we began dreaming about our 2 pieces of bread for breakfast.

9:00 a.m. **Chapel for prayers**

9:30 a.m. Child Psychology I, II or III (Excellent classes for teaching AND parenting!)

11:00 a.m. Practical lessons for teaching "Vien et Vois!"

12:00 p.m. **Chapel for prayers**

12:30 p.m. Lunch (No one leaves the table until all are finished and the dishes have been passed to the end.)

3:00 p.m. Workshop for practicing the use of the flannel graph board and images

6:00 p.m. **Chapel for prayers**

6:30 p.m. Dinner

7:15 p.m. Slides of Sister Gisela's trip to the Holy Land (Pictures of places that had never been seen by most!)

9:00 p.m. To bed with pleasure

PRAYER REQUESTS

This is where Wes puts our prayer requests! This time I will list the prayer requests that only pertain to the Sunday School program in Cameroon!

- ✚ For me in my job as Christian Education Director
- ✚ For Wes in his job as Director of Mission
- ✚ For all the teachers whom have had training and are using the program in their churches
- ✚ For Ginger Cooper, a Volunteer in Mission, who will be accompanying me to visit our Sunday Schools in the Southwest in March
- ✚ For our pastors to know how important it is to have this program and to support the teachers in their work
- ✚ For Sister Gisela Buhler as she grows older and wants the program to continue

- ✚ For our next round of participants which will allow the churches to have two fully-trained S.S. teachers to share the responsibility
- ✚ For Maman Therese who will be assisting me with the French-speaking churches in follow-up training
- ✚ For the financing of "Vien et Vois!" both in Makak and in our own mission



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to every United Methodist Church
in Cameroon!
Leah Magruder
Director of Christian Education**



*The
participants
from Class 3!
Thank you for
sponsoring us!
God bless you
always!*