



In Step

Children's Resource *An all age four session series*

empowering communities to develop their
own distinctive ways of following Jesus

www.globalinteraction.org.au

In Step

Children's Resource Introduction

We encourage you to help your children to connect with Global Interaction's work among least-reached people groups. The website has a lot of information or you can contact your State Office to connect with workers in your state.

Ideas for Connecting with Global Interaction's Ministry:

- » **Explore** a map and find out more about the country and people
- » **Send** a letter / email to a cross-cultural worker or their children
- » **Find** a project to support
- » **Pray** for a particular people group or worker

Theme: In Step

Since the first gatherings of God's people in Acts, the church has needed to learn how to keep in step with the mission of the Father by following Jesus, in the power of the Spirit. Jesus' example requires us to make intentional choices to look outward, to reach out and to place the needs of others above our own. Not an easy task for any church!

Session Themes:

1. **Faith not Religion is Central** Acts 15:1-4
2. **In Step with Jesus** Acts 15:5-11
3. **In Step with Others** Acts 15:12-21
4. **In Step with God's Mission** Acts 15: 22-29

Preparation

- » **Watch** 5 min Video – Overview of In Step Themes (Mike Frost)
www.globalinteraction.org.au/InStep
- » **Watch** 10 min Video – *In Step* short film (parental guidance for young children)
www.globalinteraction.org.au/InStep
- » **Read** Acts 15:1-29

All resources for the In Step series can be found at: www.globalinteraction.org.au/InStep

What you need

- » **Session One** – Bible. A shoe per person. Paper and pencils / pens. A hard object, a soft object and a bright object.
- » **Session Two** – Bible. Paper and pencils / pens.
- » **Session Three** – Bible. Phone for stopwatch and video functions. Paper, pencils / pens and glue / stapler.
- » **Session Four** - Bible. Paper, pencils / pens and glue / stapler.

Session One: Faith not Religion is Central

Acts 15:1-4

CONNECT:

God has made us all different!

We can explore these differences by playing a game as a family.

Instruct each family member to place one shoe on the floor in the centre of the room. The nominated leader will ask a question and players must quickly point to the shoe of the family member who fits that answer the best.

Ask and point!

1. Who walks the fastest?
2. Who wakes up first?
3. Who takes the longest in the shower?
4. Who laughs the most?
5. Who is the messiest?
6. Who cooks the tastiest food?
7. Who talks the most?
8. Who is the most likely to lose something?
9. Who is the strongest?
10. Who eats the slowest?

What you say: Whether it is the way that you walk, talk, or eat, we are all different! The wonderful truth is that the church is filled with people from different countries, cultures and languages. All are welcome!

EXPLORE:

Invite family members to look up **Acts 15:3**. If appropriate, make this a race to see which family member can find the Bible reference the fastest!

Instruct one family member to read the following passage aloud:

The church sent them on their way. They went through the countries of Phoenicia and Samaria and told how those who were not Jews were turning to God. This made the Christians very happy.
- Acts 15:3 (NLV)

What you say: Paul and Barnabas travelled to different places telling everyone about Jesus. While some Christians were pleased that people were becoming followers of Jesus, other Christians had questions because these new people were not Jewish – they were different!

Religion is about a larger group you can belong to and identify with, such as what the Jewish people were used to. The Jewish holy men, the pharisees, wanted Gentiles to become Jews before they could become Christians.

Paul and Barnabas (and Jesus) did not agree and explained that all people who came to faith in Jesus should be warmly received and able to follow Him regardless of their backgrounds.

Session One: Faith not Religion is Central

Acts 15:1-4

DISCUSS:

1) What might make you different from other people?

- » Prompt for *younger* children: invite them to list simple examples including eye colour, gender, hobbies, food preferences, and more!
- » Prompt for *older* children: encourage them to dig deeper and identify how people differ in terms of cultural background, ethnicity, and beliefs.

2) How should you treat others who are different?

- » Encourage children to provide of practical examples regarding ways that they can treat others the way they want to be treated. Younger children may need help to understand how to see through differences.

3) What does a Christian/follower of Jesus look like?

- » Talk about how a follower of Jesus can wear all different clothes, talk all different languages, eat different foods, and worship in different ways. You can't tell if someone is a follower of Jesus through the outside as it's about their heart. Their actions and words could help you know if they follow Jesus but ultimately it's about what's happening on the inside.

APPLY:

We can share the Good News of Jesus with all people, whether they are similar to us or completely different! However, while it is important to share the Good News with others, it is also important that we know and spend time with God ourselves. After all, faith, not religion, is key!

To explore this further, instruct family members to create an origami chatterbox. You can follow the link for instructions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYyySZLHK8E>

Once family members are finished, encourage them to open the folded insides and write eight ways that they can learn about or spend time with God. Examples can include reading the Bible, praying, worshipping, attending church, or asking questions.

What you say: It is important that we continue to learn and grow in our own faith! This week, you can use your chatterbox to spend time with God in different ways!

MISSION STORY:

Deb is a Global Interaction cross-cultural worker in Cambodia. She has a story about bikes that she uses to think about how faith and religion relate to each other.

Deb thinks about a bicycle that is sitting in the garage, gathering dust and not going anywhere. It is still a bicycle, but it is not doing what it was made to do. If the bicycle sitting in the garage is religion... then faith is when you get on the bike and ride somewhere! Faith is when you use the bicycle, when you test it out and when you maintain it. Faith is active!

Session One: Faith not Religion is Central

Acts 15:1-4

When you are old enough to go on a bike ride by yourself, it can be fun to explore on your own... although it can be easy to get lost. It's even more fun to ride with other people. It's the same for our faith. We can follow Jesus by ourselves, but it can be easy to get discouraged, especially when the road is difficult. When a group of believers are together, we can support each other through the difficult times and keep each other on the right path.

In Deb's story, religion is there (remember, it's the bike itself!), but faith is what brings it alive.

*You can learn more about Deb and the cross-cultural team in Cambodia here:
www.globalinteraction.org.au/Khmer*

PRAY:

It is time to go on a scavenger hunt!

Family members must search and find three different objects around the house – a hard object, a soft object, and a bright object. Once family members have returned, you can use these objects to help you pray:

- » **Hard object** – We all go through hard times! You can share a challenge that you face and pray God will help you through it.
- » **Soft object** – God is your comfort and strength. You can thank God for who He is and everything that He has given you.
- » **Bright object** – Jesus says that He is the light of the world. Pray that God would help you to share the Good News of Jesus with other people.

Session Two: In Step with Jesus

Acts 15:5-11

CONNECT:

We can share the Good News of Jesus!

The church in Acts 15 disagreed on the rules and customs that new believers had to follow.

As a family, we can open this discussion by playing a game. Allocate one side of the room “Agree” and the other side of the room “Disagree”. The nominated leader will read a list of topics, and players must move to their side of the room based on whether they agree or disagree with the statement.

Choose your side!

1. Cats are better than dogs
2. Pineapple belongs on a pizza
3. Bed times shouldn't exist
4. Winter is the best season of the year
5. Books are better than movies
6. Hot chocolate is better than coffee
7. Children shouldn't be given any pocket money
8. Skittles are better than M&M's
9. A pool is better than the ocean
10. School uniforms should be banned
11. Children should have an unlimited amount of screen time

What you say: As you can see, we all have different opinions! In Acts 15 we read that the followers of Jesus also had different opinions. Let's take a look at their story.

EXPLORE:

Invite family members to look up **Acts 15:10-11**. If appropriate, make this a race to see which family member can find the Bible reference the fastest!

Instruct one family member to read the following passage aloud:

Why do you test God by putting too heavy a load on the back of the followers? It was too heavy for our fathers or for us to carry. We believe it is by the loving-favor of the Lord Jesus that we are saved. They are saved from the punishment of sin the same way. - Acts 15:10-11 (NLV)

What you say: The followers of Jesus agreed that it was important to share the Good News of Jesus with others. However, they disagreed on what rules the new Christians had to follow. Paul writes that we should not make it difficult for new Christians by making them follow Jewish laws such as attending synagogue, what to eat and circumcision.

Session Two: In Step with Jesus

Acts 15:5-11

DISCUSS:

1) What rules do I have to follow?

- » Prompt for *younger* children: encourage them to list simple examples including brushing teeth, listening to parents, crossing the road, and more!
- » Prompt for *older* children: encourage them to dig deeper and recognise that rules around the world are different, and some rules are unjust. The early church questioned their rules!

2) What do I do when I disagree with someone?

- » You can help children understand that they will always meet people who they disagree with. Encourage children that they can talk to God, parents, church leaders, or directly to the person. Also, disagreement can be a good thing! In Acts 15, this disagreement helped them to see more people become followers of Jesus.

3) How can you share Jesus with other people?

- » Prompt for *younger* children: They can use their words by telling others about Jesus such as how He's always there, He loves unconditionally, He made them special. They can also use their actions by showing Jesus' love especially through helping others.
- » Prompt for *older* children: Help them to think through how a scenario may unfold; listening to the other person and what's going well/not so well, thinking of connections with their life and sharing how Jesus has helped you in that scenario.

This article may help: www.globalinteraction.org.au/Resonate/DifferentContexts

- » Invite children to share actual names of people they can talk to, rather than providing abstract answers. The children may be able to recognise that they would use different ways to share Jesus depending on the person.

APPLY:

Jesus died and rose again to forgive us for the wrong things we have done! We can thank God for this and also share this story with other people. Remember, we want to be in step with Jesus!

To explore this further, instruct family members to create an origami cross. You can follow the link for instructions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=df5fJuRSsTM>

Instruct each family member to write their name in the centre of the cross, as a reminder that Jesus did this for you. Following this, encourage family members to write or draw things they are thankful for around the name – examples can include names of family, friends, what they own, or parts of God's creation! Finally, on the back of the cross, instruct family members to write the names of someone they can share the Good News of Jesus with.

What you say: God has given us many things that we can be thankful for! But, more importantly, we can be thankful for Jesus! We want to share the Good News of Jesus with everyone, including the people that we wrote on the back of our cross.

Session Two: In Step with Jesus

Acts 15:5-11

MISSION STORY:

In Malawi and Mozambique, the Global Interaction team serves among a people group called the Yawo people. The Yawo mostly live in rural areas, although some have relocated to more urban areas in recent years. Community is extremely important to the Yawo. Rather than 'Mr' and 'Mrs', the Yawo use the titles 'Babba' and 'Mamma'.

Babba T is a Yawo follower of Jesus. He loves Jesus and shares His faith with his family and community. Years ago when Babba T first started hearing about Jesus and stories from the Bible, he thought that it might be true... but didn't want to change the way he lived his life because of it.

Over time, he heard the Bible stories, became friends with the Global Interaction cross-cultural workers and spoke with Yawo believers. He still wasn't sure he wanted to change the way he lived his life though. One day, one of the Yawo believers chatted with Babba T and said, "If you believe what you read in the Bible is true, then you have to live like it!" Babba T agreed and decided to follow Jesus with his heart and life, even though it meant making some difficult decisions.

Today, Babba T lives each day in step with Jesus and invites others to do so as well.

PRAY:

It is time to go on a prayer walk in your backyard!

Once outside, invite family members to say aloud what they can see outside and how this can remind them of God. Examples can include the open sky reminding us that God is big, tall trees reminding us that God is strong, or the grass reminding us that God gives us new life!

You can pray outside together as a family:

- » Thank God for everything He has made and how this can remind us of who He is!
- » Pray for the people written on your cross, that God would give you courage and opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus.

Session Three: In Step with Others

Acts 15:12-21

CONNECT:

We can spend time with others!

As a family, we can open this topic by playing a game. The nominated leader will use a stopwatch on their phone and instruct family members to silently count to ten. Once players believe that approximately ten seconds have passed they must say “STOP!” The winner of that round is the person who is closest to the correct time.

Guess the correct time!

1. 10 seconds
2. 20 seconds
3. 5 seconds
4. 15 seconds
5. 8 seconds
6. 18 seconds
7. 3 seconds
8. 45 seconds

What you say: Great timing skills! In Acts 15, we read that the followers of Jesus spent a lot of time together and shared stories of what God had done!

EXPLORE:

Invite family members to look up **Acts 15:12**. If appropriate, make this a race to see which family member can find the Bible reference the fastest!

Instruct one family member to read the following passage aloud:

All those who were gathered together said nothing. They listened to Paul and Barnabas who told of the powerful works God had done through them among the people who are not Jews.
- Acts 15:12 (NLV)

What you say: The church gathered and listened to Paul and Barnabas as they shared the good things that God had been doing. These stories were a great source of encouragement! In the same way, we can share our stories and encourage others too.

DISCUSS:

1) What has God done in my life?

- » Encourage children to identify personal stories where God has been at work. This is a good opportunity for parents to share their own faith stories! If children cannot identify particular stories, they can list all the things that God has given them.

Session Three: In Step with Others

Acts 15:12-21

2) Who can I share my stories with?

- » Encourage them to think of creative ways that they could share their stories
- » Prompt for younger children: Write a letter or draw a picture for specific friends and family members.
- » Prompt for older children: They could record a 60 second video to share with family and friends.

3. How can I encourage others?

- » You can encourage others with your stories and by listening to theirs. But you can also encourage others with your actions!

APPLY:

We can encourage others with our stories, but we can also encourage others with our words and actions! We recognise that authentic relationships are important, and we want to encourage our families to think of practical ways they can remain in step with others.

To explore this further, instruct each person to create three vouchers to give to other family members this week. Instruct family members to make these vouchers by folding paper into three sections and then cutting along the lines to make individual strips.

On each voucher, instruct family members to write one practical way they can encourage others or show kindness. Examples might include emptying the dishwasher, setting the table, making dinner, playing a board game of their choice, and more!

What you say: Our relationships with others are so important! This week, I want to encourage you to show kindness and give your vouchers to other members in our family.

MISSION STORY:

David and Eliza are cross-cultural workers in the Silk Road Area. In the Silk Road Area, the summers are hot (30 degrees) and the winters are very cold (-10 degrees)! David and Eliza spend lots of time getting to know their neighbours and the local people in their community. They want to talk about Jesus with the people in their community and know that people are most open to important conversations when you are friends with them... and talking about Jesus is a very important conversation!

David and Eliza's neighbour went into labour and the family asked if David would drive her to the hospital. David said, "Yes, of course I can do that." In the end he didn't need to drive them and David and Eliza stayed back with their neighbour's relatives. They prayed with them for a safe delivery of the baby. The next night, David and Eliza were invited to a dinner with the family. Previously when they had shared anything about their faith in Jesus with this family, the family had not wanted to have the conversation. However, at the dinner, the family shared how grateful they were for the prayer and David's willingness to drive to the hospital if needed.

Over time, David and Eliza have showed this family that they care about them as people and that they are there for them if they need help. Trust and friendship has grown and the family is now more open to having important conversations with David and Eliza.

You can learn more about David and Eliza and the cross-cultural team in the Silk Road Area here:
www.globalinteraction.org.au/Kpeople

Session Three: In Step with Others

Acts 15:12-21

PRAY:

It is time to create a family prayer chain!

We will make one paper chain for the entire family. Instruct family members to cut 6-8 long strips of paper. On each strip, write or draw what you are thankful for, or what you want to pray for.

Once these are written, it is time to link them together! Select one strip of paper, loop it, and connect the ends using tape or staples to create a complete circle. Then, thread a new strip of paper through that circle to create a second ring. Continue until all strips of paper have been added to the paper prayer chain. You can even add new rings throughout the week!

Pray together now, using your family prayer chain to remind you of what you can pray for.

Session Four: In Step with God's Mission

Acts 15:22-29

CONNECT:

We can be involved in God's mission!

As a family, we can open this topic by playing a game. Instruct each family member to create a paper aeroplane. If the children require assistance, you can follow the link for instructions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1nOjPzIVLM>

The nominated leader can select a 'target' indoors or outdoors. Players must throw their paper aeroplane and the person who lands closest to the target will be declared the winner of that round. Targets can be indoors or outdoors, including a specific bush, a tile on the kitchen floor, or the corner of a rug.

You can play several rounds while selecting new targets!

What you say: Your mission was to aim your paper aeroplane and hit the target. The reality is that followers of Jesus also have mission to share the message of love and forgiveness to all the people groups of the world!

EXPLORE:

Invite family members to look up **Acts 15:22**. If appropriate, make this a race to see which family member can find the Bible reference the fastest!

Instruct one family member to read the following passage aloud:

Then the missionaries and the church leaders and the whole church chose some men from among them. They were to be sent to the city of Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas Barsabbas and Silas. These men were leaders among the Christians. - Acts 15:22 (NLV)

What you say: Christian leaders, including Paul and Barnabas, travelled to different places to help others and continue the mission of God. The truth is, we can all be involved in the mission of God, whether we are travelling right now or not!

DISCUSS:

1) What is the mission of God?

- » Prompt for *younger* children: encourage simple discussion by asking, "What does God want me to do?" Examples might include treating others the way I want to be treated, telling others about Jesus, giving to those in need, and more!
- » Prompt for *older* children: invite them to reflect on their own understanding of Global Interaction's mission 'empowering communities to develop their own distinctive ways of following Jesus'.

2) Who is on the mission of God?

- » All followers of Jesus are on the mission of God. However, you can encourage further discussion regarding that we can live out the mission of God wherever we are!
- » What does mission look like here and overseas? And with those who are from the same context and others?

Session Four: In Step with God's Mission

Acts 15:22-29

3) What can I do right now?

- » Encourage children to think of practical ways that they can show love to others, and share the Good News of Jesus.
- » Get to know more of the Global Interaction teams, choose a particular people group or worker to connect with or pray for.

APPLY:

We can share the message of Jesus with everyone, through our words and our actions! We want to help our families explore practical ways they can stay in step with God's mission.

To explore this further, instruct each family member to create a 3D cube. The cube template can be found at the bottom of these notes. If you do not have capacity to print resources, you can copy the template onto blank paper by using a ruler and evenly spaced lines.

On the template, instruct family members to write or draw on each square how they can be involved in the mission of God. Examples can include praying for others, giving to those in need, sharing personal stories, using loving words and actions, caring for God's creation, and more! Following this, encourage children to colour and decorate around their ideas.

Instruct family members to finish the cube by folding along the lines and using glue, staples or tape to seal the edges.

What you say: I want to encourage you to put your cube somewhere that you can see it. This way, you can roll it and follow the action and you can be involved in God's mission and help people every day!

MISSION STORY:

Villy is a Global Interaction cross-cultural worker who has lived and served in Thailand for nearly 20 years! Before she became a cross-cultural worker, she didn't think God wanted her to go herself, she thought He just wanted her money. However, God had a different plan for her life!

Years ago, Villy moved into a neighbourhood in rural Thailand with her family. Next door lived an Ethnic Thai woman, Mae Khui, who Villy quickly began building a friendship with. Little by little, as trust grew, God opened opportunities for Villy to share faith and stories of Jesus with her.

After a few months, Mae Khui was employed as the family's home helper (something commonly expected of foreigners in Thailand). Everyday Villy and Mae Khui would do life together and as the opportunity arose, Villy shared about Jesus. Mae Khui prayed this prayer, "Jesus, if you are really the true God as Villy tells me, then please let Villy and Muana (Villy's husband) love me so I can keep this job." Right at that moment, she was remembered a dream she had twenty years before. In the dream someone told her she would be the home helper at the house Villy lived in. She believed in that moment and thought, "It was Jesus who planned it all out for me!"

When Villy heard this, she was so humbled. When she moved into the neighbourhood, she had thought that she was entering a dark place and bringing God into it. However, hearing Mae Khui's story reminded her that God was already there and already at work. She is partnering with His mission there!

You can learn more about Villy and the cross-cultural team in Thailand:
www.globalinteraction.org.au/Ethnic

Session Four: In Step with God's Mission

Acts 15:22-29

PRAY:

It is time to create a prayer hand!

We are on the mission of God together. Therefore, it is important to remember the people in our lives who help us follow God. Instruct children to trace an outline of their hand onto paper. Inside the hand, encourage them to write the names of other family members.

Go around the room and pray for each family member written on your hand, that God would help them to work together to share the Good News of Jesus to people around the world!

Session Four: In Step with God's Mission

Acts 15:22-29

