

MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION



HANDBOOK

Created for the Parish Schools and
Religious Education Programs of the
Catholic Church of Philadelphia

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INTRODUCTION



Thank you for your commitment to forming the children you teach as *Missionary Disciples*. Through membership in the **Missionary Childhood Association [MCA]**, one of the **Pontifical Mission Societies**, children in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia learn about their baptismal responsibility to evangelize. They will grow in understanding of the lives of children their age in the developing world, and become active Missionary Disciples through their own witness, prayer and sacrifice.

This **Missionary Childhood Association** Handbook is designed to provide an understanding of the purpose of **MCA** and to help augment your catechetical program to most effectively foster the development of a child's Missionary spirit in conjunction with their overall formation as Disciples of Christ.

CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN

WHAT IS THE MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION?

The **Missionary Childhood Association [MCA]** is one of the **Pontifical Mission Societies** that operates in every Diocese of the world under the papal statute:

“Convinced that children can be a spiritual and social force for a real transformation of the world, this Society aims at creating a movement of Christian children committed to helping other children.”

Pontifical Mission Societies Statute 1-13



All Catholics have a baptismal responsibility to make Jesus Christ and His love known to others. But as children grow, their understanding of living out their Christian responsibility—to be evangelizers—does not magically appear when they reach adulthood. Faith and

Missionary Discipleship must be nurtured in the same manner as reading or math.

Through **MCA**, the Holy Father elicits the zeal, love and generosity of children to share their faith with other children throughout the world, in more than 1,111 Mission dioceses. **MCA** offers the opportunity for young people to spread the Good News of God’s love and salvation. Children learn about their brothers and sisters in Mission countries—*children just like them*. And they also discover that their own prayers, personal sacrifices and financial help make a faith-filled difference for their Mission family—and make them Missionaries today.



CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN

MORE THAN A CHARITY

The **primary Mission of MCA** is to encourage children to share their faith with children in the developing world through their prayers, personal sacrifices and financial offerings. **MCA** focuses on the *spread of the Gospel* and the *importance of prayer* to help instill in our young people a desire to share their faith and to share the healing message of Jesus with other children in Missionary lands. Additionally, as local needs change each year, **MCA** responds to the need, under the direction of the Pope, as it is designated as the Holy See's official **Missionary Charity for Children**.



Therefore, the **Missionary Childhood Association** should be given “*first place*” *Ad Gentes* no 38 and the “*leading role in the Church’s work of Missionary formation*” *Redemptoris Mission* no 84 in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. This has been documented by the Ordinary of the

Archdiocese and the Directors in the Offices of Catechetical Formation and Education. Without faith, we shall see nothing of the importance in Mission work; with it, *we see everything*. This conviction is our responsibility to transmit to students in religious education classes, as well as those in parochial schools.

Many local charities and outreach programs exist to relieve the pressing needs of the poor and marginalized in our country and abroad, and these are noteworthy projects to which Catholics respond with love and generosity. **MCA** is unique to other organizations that assist children because it's primary goal is faith development and evangelization. Support also provides material needs and humanitarian relief to children most in need throughout the world.



CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN

A HISTORY OF HELPING



Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson is founder of the **Missionary Childhood Association**. Bishop Forbin-Janson, founded the Fathers of Mercy, a group of priests who dedicated themselves to renewing the vigor of Catholic life. He concentrated on leading Missions within his own Diocese after he became a Bishop in 1824. He also supported the evangelization efforts of French Missionaries, and went on to help evangelize the vast Missionary territory of North America.

In 1843, Pauline Jaricot, the founder of the *Society of the Propagation of the Faith*, one of the **Pontifical Mission Societies**, had a conversation with Bishop Forbin-Janson. Bishop shared his longtime dream – **to help the children of the Missions** and as a result, the **Missionary Childhood Association** was born. Bishop Forbin-Janson started appealing to the children of France to reach out “*in faith and love*” to help the children of the Missions of other countries. Children, as members, were asked to pray a daily Hail Mary for Mission children and contribute one penny in monthly dues which would be given in direct aid to assist those children.



The movement flourished and spread to other countries, arriving in the United States in 1846. Today, children in over 110 countries are being helped through the prayers and sacrifices of Missionary Childhood members throughout the world.



PRAYER AND SACRIFICE FOR THE MISSIONS

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

MCA will help plan Mission initiatives in your school or Parish Religious Education Program [PREP].

MISSION ANIMATION PRESENTATIONS

Invite a local Missionary to your school or PREP and bring to life the



imagination of your students by hearing personal testimony of what it means to *be a Missionary* in prayer and service of others. The **MCA** office collaborates with many local Missionaries from around the world who are happy to share their experience with your students. The school or PREP visits can be scheduled for your

entire student body, classroom-to-classroom, for a selected student-grade group or your Religious Education Program. Presentations can be scheduled during the day, in the evening and *even on the weekend!*

MONTHLY MISSION RESOURCE

During the academic school year [September to May], **MCA** provides a **Monthly Educational Resource**.

This resource includes information and activities to engage students of all ages in Missionary work through catechesis. It is distributed by the Office of Catechetical Formation and the Office of Catholic Education.



PRAYER AND SACRIFICE FOR THE MISSIONS

WORLD MISSION ROSARY MAKING

In February of 1951, Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, the National Director of the **Pontifical Mission Societies** from 1950 to 1966, created the **World Mission Rosary**. Each decade on the **World Mission Rosary** calls to mind an area where the Church continues her evangelizing Mission. **GREEN**



symbolizes the forests and grasslands of **AFRICA**, **BLUE** is for the ocean surrounding the **ISLANDS OF THE**

PACIFIC, **WHITE** symbolizes **EUROPE**, the home of the Holy Father, **RED** symbolizes the fire of faith that brought the first Missionaries to the **AMERICAS**, and **YELLOW** is for the morning light of the east, symbolizing **ASIA**.



Throughout the year, children have the opportunity to make **World Mission Rosaries** for children in the

Missions. Missionaries from around the world visit Philadelphia to speak to the local parishes about their Ministry and the ongoing projects in their Mission Diocese. Before they return to their Mission country, we are able to gift them with Rosaries made by the children in Philadelphia.

NATIONAL MCA CHRISTMAS ARTWORK CONTEST

All children in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia are encouraged to enter the annual **Missionary Childhood Association** Christmas Artwork Contest. The Archdiocesan winner's artwork is displayed:

- † At the Archdiocesan celebration of *World Mission Sunday*
- † In the **Pontifical Mission Societies** annual Christmas card
- † In the lobby of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center during Advent
- † On www.phillymissions.org

The local winning entries are also submitted to the MCA National Office for the nation wide contest.



PRAYER AND SACRIFICE FOR THE MISSIONS

BEGIN THE YEAR WITH MISSION

- † Include **Missionary Childhood Association [MCA]** Commissioning Prayer, online at www.phillymissions.org, in one of your first assemblies or school gathering.
- † Create an **MCA** Mission bulletin board display
- † Add one Hail Mary for the Missions to your morning announcements every day.
- † Add a Mission prayer corner to your classroom or place an **MCA** photo and Mission bank on your prayer table.
- † Display the Holy Father's Missionary Prayer Intention in your classroom [*there is a new intention every month posted on www.phillymissions.org*].
- † Pray the World Mission Rosary as a school community.
- † Hold a Dress Down Day for \$1 or another form of "fun giving" for the Missions.
- † Start a World Mission Rosary Making Club!



CELEBRATE LITURGICAL SEASONS WITH THE MISSIONS

- † Display the Advent and Lent Mission Calendars in your classroom [*provided in the Resource*].
- † Contact **MCA** for Mission Prayers/Services during Advent and Lent.
- † Explore the Mission Stories on the website to see how Catholics celebrate different Holy Days and seasons around the world.

OTHER IDEAS TO HELP SUPPORT MISSIONARY CHILDREN

- † Guess the Number of World Mission Rosary beads, M&Ms, jelly beans in the Rosary colors in a jar. Students buy a chance [*only 25 cents*]; winner gets a small prize. Contact **MCA** for the beads.
- † International Food Day: Students bring and sell foods from different Mission countries.
- † Walk-a-thon or other "thon" [*Prayer-a-Thon, Dance-a-Thon, Read-a-thon*] to support the Missions.
- † Mission Fun Fair: Activities like World Mission Rosary Making, face-painting, lollipop booths, ring toss, tic-tac-toe booth etc.

PRAYER AND SACRIFICE FOR THE MISSIONS

HOW TO ORDER MCA MATERIALS

All **MCA** materials are available to order by contacting our office.

MCA@archphila.org 215-587-3945

The following **FREE** materials are available for educational purposes:



- † **Mission Mite Boxes** collect children's sacrifices and are distributed at Mission Animation presentations, or can be sent to your school or PREP at any time throughout the year.
- † **World Mission Rosary Brochures** [English/Spanish] that include a teaching on the Rosary, Mission Mass intentions for each Mystery and Decade of the Rosary.
- † **Monthly Mission Resource** is emailed each month, but you can sign up to receive printed color copies in the mail.
- † **World Mission Rosaries** for children can be purchased for a perfect sacramental gift, or supplies can be ordered for the students to make their own. Contact our office for rosary-making directions and **FREE** supplies for your Rosary Club. An MCA representative can also visit and instruct the children for the first time and provide updates for where the Rosaries are distributed.
- † **Prayer Cards** for individual use. These prayer cards serve as personal reminders of a child's call to Missionary Discipleship.
- † **MCA Membership Cards** recognize children who have answered their baptismal call to be Missionary through prayer and sacrifice. Order these cards for your school. Invite an MCA representative to lead an MCA Induction Prayer Service at school or PREP.



MISSION MODERATORS, AMBASSADORS AND MORE

To assist in bringing Mission to your School or Parish, we encourage all to assign a **Mission Moderator**. The **Mission Moderator** is a member of the school faculty or a parish catechist whose special task is to raise the level of Mission consciousness among the students and teachers. The most important qualification is an appreciation of the importance of a Missionary spirituality in the life of the Church and school, and an understanding of what it means to be “*Missionary*.” It is an added benefit if the Mission Moderator has had Mission experience or is very interested in Mission-animation.

WHAT DOES A MISSION MODERATOR DO?

- † Reads the **MCA** materials and makes decisions regarding ordering the **Free** materials.
- † Develops a goal-oriented plan for the year to foster Mission awareness among students, faculty and catechists.
- † Meets with the principal or pastor/DRE at the beginning of the school/ PREP year to enlist their cooperation and input in planning the Mission projects and programs for the year.
- † Displays Mission materials, such as pictures, certificates & articles in a central location in the school, parish or PREP building
- † Plans and coordinates an annual Mission Mass, World Mission Rosary, sacrificial giving, works of mercy and/or Prayer Service in the school or PREP to celebrate Mission awareness.
- † Works with his/her office [*principal, D/CRE, accountant, or bookkeeper*] to ensure that monies collected for the **Missionary Childhood Association** are correctly forwarded to the **MCA** Office.



MISSION MODERATORS, AMBASSADORS AND MORE



Form a Mission Team at your School or PREP

Select a student **MCA Mission Ambassador** for each grade or PREP class. This student keeps their peers updated on MCA Mission News [from our *Monthly Resource* provided to you, our website or *Agenzia Fides*, the **Pontifical Mission Societies** information service].

They are responsible for sharing information with their fellow students. The **Mission Ambassador** also receives a special invitation to attend an **Archdiocesan Mission Day**.

To reawaken the Missionary spirit among young people in Philadelphia, **MCA** annually hosts an **Archdiocesan Mission Day**. One or two **Mission Ambassadors** are asked to join fellow Ambassadors for a day of Mission animation, presentations, works of mercy, prayer and one on one meet and greets with local Missionaries. The gathering is during the school day, including lunch and a Mission Mass.

Mission Ambassadors return to their school or PREP alive with *Missionary Discipleship* to inspire their peers *to be Missionary*.



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BE A PART OF MCA NOW!

1. Nominate a **Mission Moderator**.
2. Fill out a participation Response Form.
3. Schedule a Mission Presentation.
4. Call or email MCA to order materials:
215-587-3945 mca@archphila.org
5. Visit our website to explore **MCA** Mission stories, Saints and previous Monthly resources.
6. Have students nominate or select a **Mission Ambassador** for each classroom.

7. PRAY AND SACRIFICE FOR THE MISSIONS!

