

CHRIST FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

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Another First

The following scenario is undoubtedly familiar to most readers. Once a week the women gather to study God's word. Babysitting is provided for the children and many friendships have begun around this circle. A women's ministry group is a common occurrence in most parts of the States, but not so in our part of Mexico. In July as many as twenty women will pile into two vans headed for the City of Zacatecas. Leaving Fresnillo behind for the day, we will embark on the "first ever" women's retreat. After watching *The Prince of Egypt* [in español of course] we will read the story again in its original version from the Bible. Then the fun begins as we grapple with questions like

- ♦ Are you spending your life looking at the enemy, problems and trials, or the Red Sea?
- ♦ Is the God who rescued Israel still interested in parting the specific sea of difficulty that you face?
- ♦ What do you miss if you live rooted in the soil of fear?

- ♦ Can women who face disaster on a daily basis impart hope to their children if they refuse to turn and look at the Sea ahead instead of the oppression of the past?

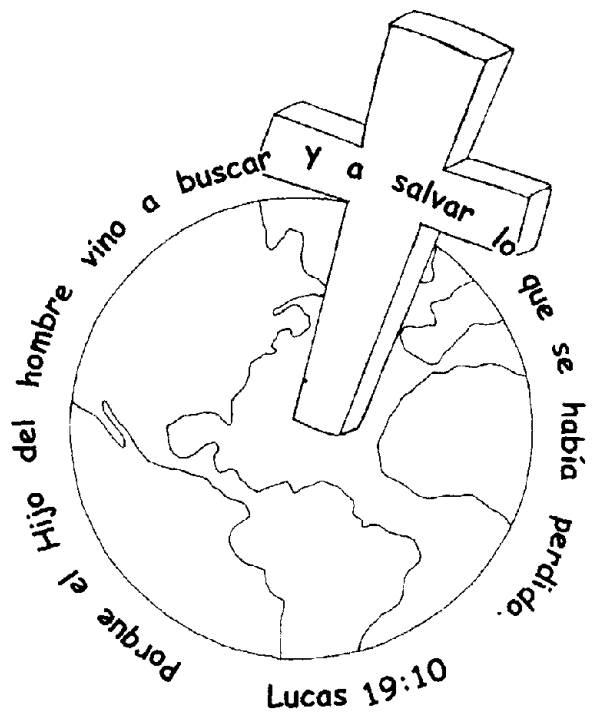
In between the "work" of the day, we plan to enjoy God, each other, some good food, and the gift of solitude. The idea of a "day off" is a foreign concept to these women who expect to work seven days a week year round. What a privilege to spend not only the day together but to enable our friends to take a well-deserved "day away!"



Moses confronts Pharaoh in "The Prince of Egypt."

¡Felicidades!

Bravo! Bravo! Bravo! To all the children and youth who earned a 'memory verse tee shirt.' As always, our kids' shirts feature one of the verses from the current year's set of nine. As you can see from the logo on the shirt, it reminds the children of our Savior who crossed time and space to bring salvation on the cross. It also sports three colors - blue water and words, orange land and yellow for the cross and can now be seen on anyone of 190 different kids who are very proud.



The Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost. Luke 19:10



The youth shirt, on the other hand, combines last year's 'pirate' theme with this year's 'Champions in Christ' and we are proud to announce that 54 are champions at Bible memory! The youth memorized many verses this year both in group and at home. But even more importantly they are learning that God's word can still speak into their lives on a daily basis.

Where are they now?

After six years on the field, **Gretchen Ruble** accepted a scholarship to Wheaton College Graduate School and is on furlough from May 2000 until she returns to Fresno in May 2001. Gretchen has enrolled in the Master's program for Evangelism and Spiritual Formation and has already completed eight of her needed thirty-six credits. Many tears flowed as she parted with friends of all ages but we rejoice for her [and us] as we hear reports of all she is learning.

After much prayer, **Kerrie Maas** felt led by God to return to the States in order to spend time with friends and family, as well as try her hand at teaching elementary school. In spring, while on vacation, she interviewed for a job as a first-grade teacher in West Chicago, Illinois in a bi-lingual class and was offered the position! Thus she returns knowing exactly what she will be doing in the fall when a roomful of six and seven-year-olds clamor "Good Morning Miss Maas" [or maybe they will say "Buenos Dias?"]

Two years ago **Andy Janssen** joined CFCI and has been a part of the kids club and men's group. His knowledge of computers and their unique needs bailed us out of a crisis on more than one occasion. He has returned to spend time in the States where he will work for a year and pursue options for graduate school

Time passes so quickly when viewed in retrospect. Not long ago we welcomed **Jim Dahlin, Scott Linhart, Jenny Schroeder,** and **Trent Korstange** to Fresno where they have been part of our lives and ministry for thirteen months. Now they are all off on other ventures as they each seek to pursue the will of God in their lives. They are missed but not forgotten as their smiling faces beam at us from the team picture hanging on our dining room wall.



¡Bienvenida a Heather!

In June, Heather Pancake, recent Wheaton College graduate and winner of NCAA Heptathlon Championship [for the second year in a row], flew south of the border. Heather's family lives in Vermont but she now calls Fresno "home" and is already happily learning the "ins and outs" of the Club program. Heather's track and field expertise will come in handy as she dashes around traffic that snakes through a labyrinth of one way streets originally built for horses and buggies. Her double major in Christian Education and Bible/Theology should come in handy for a multitude of tasks from explaining how God can be "everywhere" to a six-year-old to knowing how to plan great lessons that move spiritual truth from head to heart to life. Her love for Jesus is evident as she talks about her desire to spend her life obeying Him. We all look forward to calling Heather our teammate for the coming year.

Prayer Requests and Updates:

❖ Please pray for the team as we finish our time of training and transition and begin the new ministry year.

❖ In the last newsletter, we asked that you pray for our families. I said that some are only a "few weeks" away from an empty pantry should disaster strike. Since then we have seen the pantry completely depleted in just a few days. For now, we have been able to put a safety net of sorts under each one of these struggling families but impending disaster frequently reaps a crop of fear, anger, bitterness and abuse. Please pray that God will break this destructive cycle and point the way out.

❖ Training of new team members and transition to a new ministry year occupy many weeks each summer. As God leads, please pray for us as we rethink and reshape our programs to meet the unique needs and desires of the people we serve.

❖ Each August team members disguised as clowns race up and down our dirt streets attracting enormous attention and leading hordes of children to the bodega for a fun week of Vacation Bible School. This has consistently proven to be our greatest vehicle for attracting new children to our Club Program and opening the door for ministry in their homes.

Encourage Your Favorite Missionary

(or the whole team)

Send a letter to:

Missionary name
(or CFCI Team)
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