



A
Martyr's
Christmas

A unit study

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A Martyr's Christmas

Unit Study

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Introduction

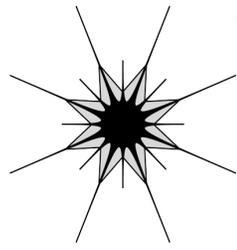
The word *martyr* can mean many things. It can mean dying for your faith, like Stephen did, as the Bible tells us in Acts 7. It can also mean suffering because of your faith in Jesus Christ and your desire to tell others about Him. The Book of Acts tells many stories of people who were beaten, arrested, lied about, and chased out of cities. Those things are still happening today, in places like Colombia, India, Turkey, Algeria, and many other places around the world.

Let's learn about these men and women, find out more about where they live, and discover ways we can pray for them.

Colombia

Father Francisco Montoya was a very happy man. He walked from village to village in the Chocó region of Colombia, entertaining children with toys and playing his clarinet for them. In November, 2004, he left his village of Istmina Tadó to celebrate a special Christmas service in the village of Nóvita, about 400 miles northeast of the capital of Colombia. After the service, as he was traveling back, he was kidnapped by FARC guerrillas. The FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, accused him of being an army informant. Even though the people told them he was not an informant, but a religious man, the guerillas eventually killed him.

Many times, it is the peasants living in the lands where the FARC and the government are fighting who are hurt. Manuel Garcia, who knew Father Montoya well, said, "The real danger is for the peasants. So we clerics go



to the rural areas to try to defend the peasants who are caught in the crossfire. Eventually we put ourselves in danger.”

Let's Learn About Colombia

Bible

What does the Bible say about putting yourself in danger to help someone in need? See Matthew 16:25; John 15:13. What does Jesus promise the person who loses his life for Him?

History/Geography

Who are the FARC? Why do they fight the government?

What mountain range covers parts of Colombia?

What countries border Colombia?

On a map, find the North Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Do any other South American countries have a border on both bodies of water?

Name the three largest cities by population in Colombia.

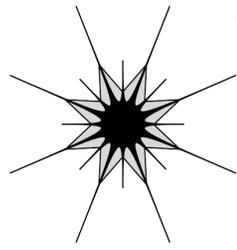
English

What is the official language of Colombia?

Practice spelling the names of the three largest cities of Colombia (that you found in history/geography) with your spelling words this week.

Math

Find the city of Bogota on a map. How many miles is it from your home?



What are the capitals of the state and country you live in? What are their populations? What is the ratio in population between your capital cities and Bogota?

Science

What precious gemstone is a natural resource of Colombia? (With a parent's permission, you can visit [The World Factbook](#) for help.)

Find the volcano Galeras on a map. What significant region known for its volcanic eruptions and earthquakes is it a part of?

Art

Birds are a common theme in historic art from Colombia. Draw a picture that includes a bird that will remind you to pray for the people of Colombia.

Ask your parents to check out www.persecution.com and discover how you and your friends can make parachutes that a brave pilot will use to drop Christian books and a radio tuned to a Christian station into areas controlled by the FARC. Pray that God's Word finds its way deep into the hearts of the guerillas.

Physical Education

With a parent's permission, play the game "Lobo." You can find instructions in [Bold Believers in Colombia](#), an activity book that is free to download from Kids of Courage and The Voice of the Martyrs.

Home Economics

Find the recipes for Arepas, Panderos, and Natilla, all Colombian desserts, in [Bold Believers in Colombia](#). Make each one and serve it to your family. Which one is their favorite? Which one is your favorite?



Spread the Word About Colombia

Now, tell other people what you have learned about Colombia. Maybe you could throw a parachute party. Make parachutes, play Lobo, and eat your favorite Colombian dessert. While you do, tell your friends about the people in Colombia who need to know Jesus. And pray for them to find Him.



In 2006, news organizations reported a story from India. On Christmas Eve, Pastor James Ram and some other Christians bravely gathered at a church in the shanty town of Jalampur, in the Chhattisgarh region of India. Hindu extremists had announced they would shut down any church service held on Christmas.

While Pastor James Ram and the Christians were singing Christmas carols, men stormed into the church and beat some of them. One Christian lost his hearing after being hit in the head. The news reports did not mention whether he lost part or all of his hearing from the attack.

Let's Learn About India

Bible

The Christians of Jalampur could not stay home and stay silent. They chose to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. I wonder how many people heard their singing that night and wanted to learn more about *Who* they were celebrating!

Read Matthew 5:14-16 to see what Jesus has to say about keeping His story hidden.



With a parent's permission, visit the [Joshua Project](#). On the right, you will see a menu that says, "Select a Country." Choose India and look at the map. Each red dot represents a people group who have very few, if any, Christians. Click on one or more of the dots and write down at least five ways you can pray for the people in India to see the Light of Jesus. (Some people groups contain specific prayer requests; other contain general topics such as Bible translation.)

History/Geography

India is made up of 35 different administrative divisions: 28 are referred to as "states" and 7 are called "union territories." With a parent's permission, visit the [World Factbook](#) for a list of these areas. Find a map that shows the borders of each.

What is the largest river in India?

How many administrative divisions does it travel through?

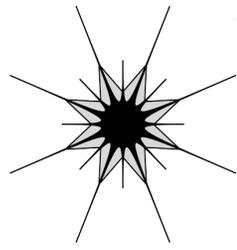
English

Imagine if a Christmas carol was the last thing you ever got to hear. Write a 250-word essay telling which carol you would pick and why.

Read more about the regions of India. A great place to get started is [this page](#) from Gospel for Asia. You can check it out, if a parent says it is OK. Choose one of the regions and write a story of 500 words or more about what it would be like to live there.

Math

On a map of India, calculate the distance between Srinagar and Chennai. If you walked 5 miles per hour, how many hours would it take you to travel that distance? How many days? Weeks?



What is the difference between the population of India and the population of your state? What would you need to multiply your population by to equal the number of people in India?

Science

Write a paper on Modadugu Gupta, a famous scientist from India. What type of cultivation techniques did he use? How did this improve the lives of people in India? What other areas is it being used in today?

Art

Which state is home to the Taj Mahal? When was it built and why?

Define the following: mausoleum, Mughal architecture, filigree, architrave, and *pietra dura*.

Using glitter, aluminum foil, beads, and other household items, create your own mosaic to remind you to pray for the people of India.

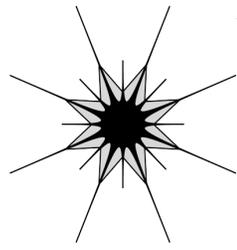
Physical Education

Cricket, soccer, and field hockey are all popular sports in India. Pick one, get a few friends together, and play one of them.

Malaria is a major health problem in India. Make a list of the most common causes of malaria and the best way to prevent them.

Home Economics

Curry is a spice you can buy ground, as a paste, as a sauce, and in other ways. Explore several grocery stores. How many different types of curry can you find? Make a chart showing the store name, the type of curry, and the price at each store.



Now that you know a lot about curry, find two Indian recipes you would like to try and make them for your family.

Praying for India

Remember to pray for the people of the many regions of India. Pray for their health and safety, and pray that God will use His people to keep sharing His light with everyone still living in darkness.



Imagine that every week, television stations aired a show that lied about you, your family, and your friends. It said you were terrorists and enemies of society. It said you did things that were illegal and wrong.

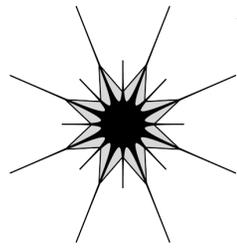
People in Turkey don't have to imagine it. In 2007, a television show called "Valley of the Wolves" aired weekly. It said such terrible lies about Christians that some of the people who watched it plotted to kill Christians.

Pastor Ramazan Arkan was a pastor in Turkey. After watching that show, a young man named Murat made plans to kill him. Thankfully, the police had become suspicious that someone was planning to hurt Pastor Arkan during the Christmas and New Year's seasons and ordered guards for him. They arrested Murat before he could hurt the pastor.

Let's Learn About Turkey

Bible

Lies are dangerous things. The Bible tells us that God hates lies. It hurts when someone lies to us or tells someone else a lie about us. But God has



something special to tell us when someone lies about us because we love Him. Find out what this is, in Matthew 5:11-12.

Can you think of stories in the Bible where people lied about God's followers?

History/Geography

Which two continents share Turkey? Most of Turkey lies on which continent? What is the name for this part of Turkey? What part of Turkey is it separated from? What is the name of the strait that separates the two? Which two bodies of water does the strait join?

What is the highest mountain peak in Turkey? Where can you read about it in the Bible?

More than one of Paul's letters in the Bible were addressed to churches found in what is now Turkey. Identify the letters and find their recipients on a modern-day map.

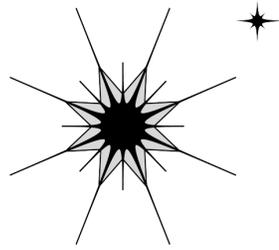
English

Find the following bodies of water on a map and use them with your spelling words this week: Tigris, Euphrates, Bosphorus, Marmara, Dardanelles, Aegean, Mediterranean.

What are the two major languages of Turkey? Find five words in each language and write a sentence using each word at least once.

Math

Add the total number of people living in Turkey's five largest cities. Add the total number of people living in your country's five largest cities. By what percent is your population larger or smaller?



* Make a chart showing the size of Turkey and each of the countries it borders. What countries is Turkey larger than? Smaller than?

Science

Many different kinds of minerals can be found in Turkey. Make a list of five or more, and write a paragraph for each, explaining what it is used for.

What are the six major climatic regions of Turkey? Locate each region on a map and make a list of a key city in each region. Now, using the list of cities, chart the average temperature in each city during the summer and winter.

Add the average temperature of the city where you live to the chart, and see how they compare. Which cities is it warmer than? Colder than?

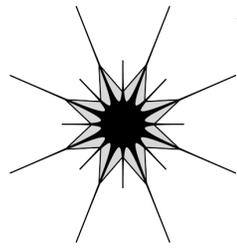
Art

The art of the Byzantine Empire is famous in countries all around the world. One word used to describe a style of Byzantine art is *cloisonné*. Discover what the word means. Find pictures of at least three examples of art made in the cloisonné style and put them together in a collage that will remind you to pray for the people of Turkey.

Physical Education

Make a list of things you would need to take with you if you were going to climb Turkey's highest peak. What muscles would have to be strong for you to carry all those supplies?

Go on a family outing and hike up a hill. If your family can't go hiking, march around the rooms of your house instead. Imagine you are climbing the highest mountain in Turkey. What kinds of animals would you see on your way? What kind of plants?



Home Economics

Turkish delight is a popular treat in Turkey. Find a recipe—many can be found online on sites approved by your parents—and make it as a sweet treat for your family.

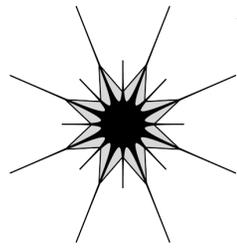
Praying for Turkey

Remember to pray for the people of Turkey. Pray that people won't believe the lies they hear about Christians. Pray that the police continue to protect everyone, no matter what religion they believe. And, pray that Christians like Pastor Arkan will continue to share Jesus Christ with love and boldness.

Algeria

Imagine how exciting it would be if your church had been meeting in a small rented building and then you finally got a new church building in November, just in time for Christmas. You gather for a Christmas service and a mob of almost fifty people refuse to let you in your church. That's what happened at Tafat Church in Algeria.

Many of the people who lived in the town were upset that there were so many people who believed in God. They didn't want them to read the Bible, and they definitely didn't want them telling other people about Jesus, not even on Christmas. So, the protestors camped outside the church for several days. They didn't let the church members in, and they even broke into the church and stole equipment.



Let's Learn About Algeria

Bible

One of the many people groups who live in Algeria are the Central Shilha Berber. Many of them are shepherds, much like the shepherds God announced Jesus' birth to 2,000 years ago. Family and tradition are very important to the Central Shilha Berber. To break with the traditional religion of their families is really hard, and it can hurt very precious family relationships. Please pray that they will hear and receive the message that angels brought to shepherds long ago. "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11 KJV)

History/Geography

What percentage of Algeria is desert? What mountain range crosses northern Algeria?

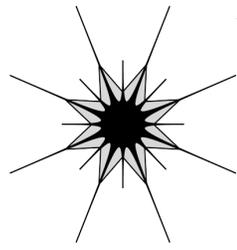
The Kabyle people of Algeria live in an area also called the "Maghrib." Write a report on the Maghrib region. What is the climate like? What are the lives like of the Kabyle people?

English

Lilias Trotter was a British missionary in Algeria in the 1800s. Do some research and write a short essay or prepare a presentation sharing about her life and her love for the Algerian people. A great place to start your research is the free downloadable activity book [*Bold Believers in Algeria and Tunisia*](#) from Kids of Courage and The Voice of the Martyrs.

Math

According to the [World Factbook](#), there are only nine countries in the



world that are larger in area than Algeria. Which countries are they? By how many square kilometers is each one larger than Algeria?

For a bonus project, create a pie chart that represents the area of the world's ten largest countries.

Science

One animal you might see a lot of in Algeria is the camel! Create a list of ten facts about camels.

Art

On a map of Algeria, color brown the part of the country that is desert. Color green the parts of the country where things will grow. In the desert area, draw tents to represent the Bedouin peoples that live in the desert.

Physical Education

Many of the Bedouin people in Algeria do not know Jesus. If a parent says it is OK, learn about some of the many groups of Bedouins living in Algeria at the [Joshua Project](#) website. With your parents' permission, build a tent and spend some time inside of it, praying for the people who do not have a permanent place to live here on earth and do not know about the forever home Jesus is preparing in Heaven.

Home Economics

Couscous is a popular dish in Algeria. With a parent's permission, find a recipe for couscous you can try. Serve it to your family.

Spread the Word About Algeria

If a parent says it is OK, invite a few friends over to camp out with you in the tent and pray with you for the Bedouins and all the people of Algeria.



Conclusion

Congratulations! You've learned a lot about how Christians in other countries live and suffer for their faith. But don't stop now. There are always people who need your prayers and your help. Keep learning, keep praying, and keep asking God how He wants you to serve them.

I would love for you to stop by and follow my blog for kids, [Exploring with Jake](#). Jake is ten years old, loves adventure, and shares every week about the people and places he learns about in Sunday School.

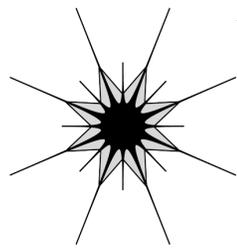
Thank you for joining me in this study. One day, we will all celebrate together with the Lord in Heaven.

Resources for Parents

I've listed here my favorite resources for learning about the persecuted Church. Some are child-friendly, such as Kids of Courage, but most listed are written for adults. I encourage you to check out the stories and resources carefully, before sharing them with your children, as some share details not appropriate for all readers.

Kids of Courage at www.kidsofcourage.com shares a tremendous amount of news and information in a manner sensitive to children of many ages. They also publish a Bold Believers series of free downloadable activity books that include Colombia, India, Turkey, and Algeria.

World Watch Monitor at <http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/> is an



invaluable resource for staying informed concerning the persecuted Church around the world.

The Voice of the Martyrs is another vital resource. You can find them at <http://www.persecution.com/>. And, don't miss a chance to help change the life of an imprisoned Christian. Check out the PrisonerAlert ministry at <http://www.prisoneralert.com/> and learn how to write a letter of encouragement to a Christian in prison.

In addition, Joshua Project at <http://www.joshuaproject.net/> and Operation World at <http://www.operationworld.org/> provide amazing free resources for learning more about the needs of people in countries around the world and how you and your family can pray for them.

The specific stories referenced in this unit study are:

Colombia: story of Francisco Montoya is adapted from the World Watch Monitor article titled "Guerrillas Refuse to Return Remains of Murdered Priest," published January 19, 2005, at http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2005/01-January/newsarticle_3656.html/.

India: story of Pastor James Ram is adapted from the World Watch Monitor article titled "Yuletide Carol-Singers Arrested, Church Burned," published December 27, 2006, at http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2006/12-December/newsarticle_4712.html/.

Turkey: story of Pastor Ramazan Arkan is adapted from the World Watch Monitor article titled "Police Arrest Suspect Plotting to Kill Pastor," published January 2, 2008, at http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2008/01-January/newsarticle_5177.html/.

Algeria: story of Tafat Church is adapted from the World Watch Monitor article titled "Algerian Muslims Block Christmas Service," published December 31, 2009, at <http://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2009/12-December/13393/>.



About Me

I live in central Pennsylvania. Along with spending time with my family and writing, making kids smile is my favorite thing to do. My heart's desire is for every child to feel the love of God and know how special they are to Him. I love creating curriculum as a member of The Old Schoolhouse Magazine's® Star Contributors Team and would love to tell you more about how you can be a part of our team. In addition, I work with both SchoolhouseTeachers.com and *The Old Schoolhouse Magazine*® as an editorial assistant. At TOS, I found a place where my love of God and history combine with my love of writing to bring encouraging, educational, and entertaining material to students and their families. I would love for you to stop by and meet the star of my children's series at [Exploring with Jake](#), look through the 10/40 window of the world and join others in prayer at [Looking Out the 10/40 Window](#), or stop by my author's blog WriteBonnieRose.com to discover how you can write for the homeschool market.