

Malawi, the Warm Heart of Africa

A companion piece to: “A Malawi Welcome”

A sketchbook of Life in the Warm Heart of Africa



Dear Friends,

Malawi and the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin have been connected for many years. We have had the opportunity to accompany each other on a journey of faithful witness to the grace of God in our lives. Many individuals from our Synod have visited Malawi and we have had the privilege of hosting Bishop Bvumbwe and his wife, the prayer choir, and others. This is a wonderful connection of God's people.

As many of you know, Diane Kaufman and Janelle Thompson have together written and illustrated a wonderful book about Malawi, "A Malawi Welcome" a sketchbook of Life in the Warm Heart of Africa. This is a priceless resource.

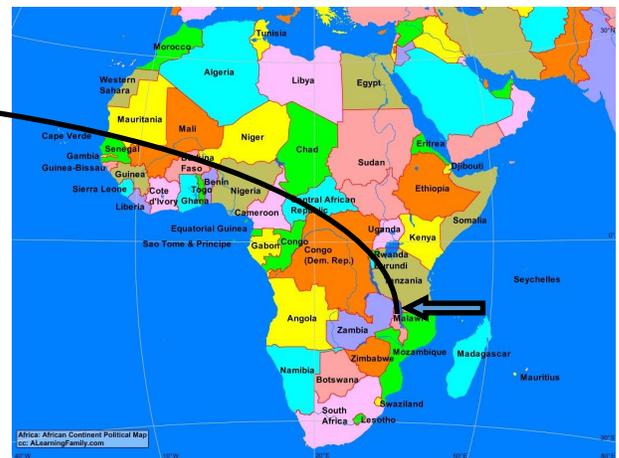
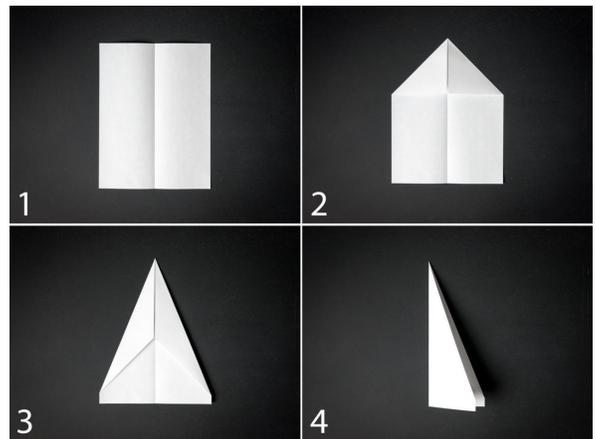
To extend your experience with the book and the country, this companion offers individual and group activities around many of the items in the book. These could also be used as a cross generational event in congregations and schools.

May we continue to walk together for many years to come. Thanks be to God.



How do I get to Malawi?

Activity: Most of us have folded a paper airplane. The most basic version is pictured here. In this activity we will fold a paper airplane, and while standing on a map of the United States, fly our paper plane to the country of Malawi on the map of Africa.



To fly to Malawi from Minnesota, US, takes a little more than 20 hours. That's about 8,695 miles. If you walked 5 miles a day, it would take you 1,739 days to get there, or almost 5 years. I think you should fly.

What is Malawi's Climate Like?

Malawi is relatively dry and strongly seasonal.

- November to April is the warm-wet season.
- September to October is the hot-dry season.
- November is the hottest month with an average temperature of 75 degrees.



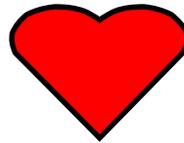
“Warm Heart of Africa”

Malawi is often called the **Warm Heart of Africa** for the kindness of its people. It has even been selected as one of the kindest countries to strangers in the world! ...

Malawi, in Chichewa – the local language – means flames or fire. It is **named** after the incredible sunsets and sunrises over Lake **Malawi**.

Wrapped in a Warm Heart

Borrow the "Wrap the Mummy" game from Halloween: Just substitute pink or red crepe paper streamers for toilet paper, and now you're on the theme for Malawi, the Warm Heart of Africa. Players must wrap a teammate as completely as possible, without breaking the crepe paper.



Heart Beat

Here's another relay race option. Cut out a batch of paper hearts and write instructions on each one: Skip, crab-walk, link arms back-to-back with a teammate, and so on. Put these in a bowl or bucket at one end of the room. Split players into teams. One at a time, a player from each team runs to the bowl and picks a heart. He then returns to his team, following the instructions on his heart. Continue until everyone from one team has taken a turn, or until all players have had a chance to run.

Now read the first four pages of the book; “A Malawi Welcome,” and *share:*

- Who you noticed welcoming people in the pictures.
- Ways that we can share a warm heart with others around us.
- What part of your country you are most proud of.
- How you welcome people who visit your family.
- What you would like to share with the children of Malawi about your hometown.

Building Homes with Bricks

Basic Mud Brick Recipe

Mix dirt and water in a bucket to make mud. Use a spoon to fill an ice cube tray with the mud, or pour it in. After you've filled the ice cube tray, press down the top of the mud in each compartment with the back of the spoon, and let the bricks dry in the sun for about an hour, or put them in a 250-degree oven for 15 minutes.

Use ice cube trays or muffin tins to bake up a batch of bricks.



Build a House

This project will give children the experience of building their own houses with mud bricks. Have your child or students make mud bricks in ice cube trays. If you want larger bricks, you can use cupcake or muffin holders. After allowing the bricks to dry according to the directions in Section 1, children can attach bricks together with plaster of Paris to make buildings and houses. If plaster of Paris is not available, the bricks can be joined using mud.

Experiment With Different Mud Mixtures

Make the mud bricks described above using a variety of mud mixtures using items from nature children can find outside. Kids can experiment with making mud mixtures using grass, straw, and/or dried crushed leaves. They can also create different textures of mud by mixing water with sand and/or clay in addition to dirt.

Read the pages in the book about Malawi families building homes, schools, and churches.

Share

Do you think your house would be as big as it is if you had to make all the bricks to build it? Why or why not?



“ubuntu”

Ubuntu is an ancient **African word** meaning “humanity to others.” It also means “I am what I am because of who we all are.” You will read in the book that Ubuntu is a word used to describe how a village cares for each other. **Ubuntu** is a profoundly personal way of life, calling on people to act in a spirit of participation, cooperation, warmth, openness, and dignity.

Say the word: ubuntu or oo-boon-too.

Activities that promote cooperation:

#1 Partner Obstacle Course

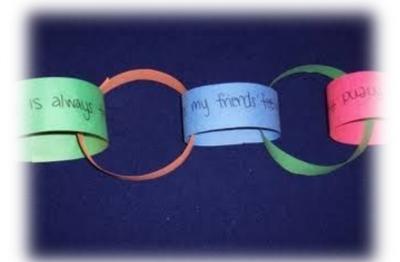
WHAT TO DO: Create an obstacle course (ideas below) and have the children try to maneuver through it while holding their partner’s hand. Don’t let go or you have to start all over!

HOW TO CHANGE IT UP: Here are some ideas for building an obstacle course at home:

- Line of painter’s tape or colored duct tape along the floor to create a “balance beam”
- Jump over pillows or any object
- Jump up or down a step
- Go under a piece of tape hanging from one doorway to another
- Up on tip toes to reach an object in a high place
- Walk backward to a location
- Carry a big or little object together
- Fit into a designated small space
- Give the game a purpose! Give your kiddos a bunch of unmatched socks. Place ½ of the socks at the start of an obstacle course and the other ½ at the end. Tell them to find the matches together.

#2 What Would Good Friends Do?

Provide each child with a rectangular piece of construction paper with a straight line drawn down the middle (making two narrow rectangles). Tell each child to cut his or her paper on the line. Once everyone has their two rectangles cut, instruct the group to write their name on one of the rectangles and set it aside. Go around the table and ask each child, “What does a good friend do?” On their other rectangle write their answer (older children can write their answers independently). The children can then draw pictures to illustrate their answers on the back of the rectangle. Have the kids help you staple or tape the rectangles together forming the links of a long chain. The chain can be hung around the room and used to count down to a specific day or event, or just for decoration.



Water: A Precious Need

Importance of Water: *Share*

- Make a list of all the places you see and use water.
- What percentage of our bodies are water?
- What is the great weight of water you have carried?
- How far have you carried water?

Only half of Malawi's rural population has access to clean drinking water and improved sanitation. The situation is slightly better in urban areas, but demand is growing fast. Most of the women and children walk 3 to 4 miles daily for water. A 5 gallon pail weighs about 40 pounds.

Combined, unclean water and poor sanitation are the world's second largest killer of children.

Activities for a Water Walking:

Children:

What you need:

- Tarp if activity is indoors. Outdoors, a level area, about 50 feet.
- Water container holding 5 gallons of water. (This is for the children to try to lift to get the idea of how heavy it is.)
- Other pails with smaller amounts of water that children carry to a point and back again. (Milk jugs work well for this.)
- Just for fun, have the children try to carry the jug of water on their head with someone to spot them.
- Talk with children about the experience.



Youth:

What you need:

- Water containers that hold up to 5 gallons of water.
- Marked trail of one and a half to two miles, for a 3-4 mile round trip.
- Adults to walk with the youth.
- Time to debrief after the walk.
- Might encourage youth to raise money for wells in Malawi. A youth group could ask for quarters for Malawi.



Malaria is a disease that some mosquitos in Malawi carry.

A story:

There was a woman who sold cans and bottles. All around her yard were cans and bottles with water in them. Her young son was always getting fever. One day the boy had a terrible headache and a high fever with chills. The woman went to the store and bought aspirin for the boy, but it did not bring the fever down, so she took him to the traditional healer. Soon after, the boy died. The mother was unhappy for a long time. She could not understand why the boy had had so much malaria. She thought perhaps the boy was not meant to live. One day she heard about a health worker close to her village. She went and told him about her son's death, so the health worker went with her to her house. When they arrived, mosquitos were buzzing everywhere because it was late afternoon. The health worker saw the cans and bottles lying around with water in them, and he found little 'summersaulters' (baby mosquitos) in the water. He showed these to the mother and told her that mosquitos biting her son had caused him to get malaria and die. Together, they cleaned up her yard. Then he told her she should bring her other children to the clinic every month so they could receive medicine pills to prevent malaria. They became healthier and all were happier.

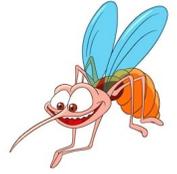


Photo Scavenger Hunt

After reading the story, invite students to go on a "Photo Scavenger Hunt" looking for places where mosquitos might live and multiply. Use a cell phone or iPad/iPod in groups of three to four and walk around the neighborhood looking for such places. When all the teams arrive back, put the pictures up on the screen and talk about what might be done in these areas to avoid more mosquitos.

Pipe Cleaner Mosquito

Instructions

You will need: 1 brown pipe cleaner cut into thirds, 1 brown pipe cleaner cut to two-thirds original, 1 white pipe cleaner cut to two-thirds original length, 1 white pipe cleaner cut to one-third original length (remainder of above), 2 googly eyes, glue.

Step One: Eyes and Wings Begin by rolling both ends of the 1/3 length white pipe cleaner in toward the center of the pipe cleaner to form a base for the googly eyes.

Next, affix the googly eyes to the eye base with the glue. Make a set of wings by folding the ends of the 2/3 length white pipe cleaner in toward the center and twisting to secure.

Step Two: Make a Set of Legs Create legs by twisting together the three smaller brown pipe cleaners at their center and then bending the ends.

Step Three: Join the Pieces Together Take the remaining brown pipe cleaner and thread it through the eyes and over the wings. Twist the brown pipe cleaner in a full circle around the wings and eyes to secure.

Add the legs by placing them underneath the long brown pipe cleaner and again twisting in a full circle underneath the legs to secure.

Step Four: Form the Body Fold the back end of the long brown pipe cleaner in half and twist at the base to form a body for your mosquito. Make a tiny bend at the end of your mosquito's nose to give it character.



Your mosquito is now complete! Pipe cleaner mosquitos can be used as a Sunday School class craft project.

One church has created a net display with one mosquito for every life they would like to save. Church members can then take these mosquitos home as a visual reminder to pray for the life of the child.



Malawi: Animals are Part of the Family

(Search for the pictures in the book of animals in Malawi)

Put together an indoor or outdoor carnival around the Animals of Malawi theme. Below find a number of examples and ideas. You might want to charge a small amount and raise funds for the Global Barnyard.

Barn Bean Bag Toss



Animal Face Photos



Cow Ring Toss



Milk the Cow



Follow the Goat
Obstacle Course



Fishing Pond



God's Global Barnyard

An animal can make a world of difference for a family in need. Animals provide food to eat, fertilizer to grow crops, and offspring to sell at the market. With one gift, you can help a family escape the cycle of hunger and poverty for good.

GA M E S

Kids in Malawi many times make their own toys to play with. One toy they make is a soccer ball using plastic bags. Let's see if we can make a soccer ball.

What you will need: 20-30 plastic bags, newspaper, and string or twine.

- Gather all your plastic bags, newspaper, and string.
- Scrunch up some newspaper tightly for the center of the soccer ball.
- Put the ball into the first plastic bag. Pull the bag tightly around the ball, then twist the end of the bag.
- Once you have twisted the end of the bag, cover the ball again by turning the bag over the ball the other way. Continue to do this until you have used all of the plastic bags.
- When you are happy with the size of the ball, tie the last knot.
- Wrap some string or twine tightly around the ball. Try to spread out the string evenly and weave it where possible. This will help the ball stay secure.
- YOU ARE FINISHED! Now it's time to play!



Playing Bao

The game is played on a board that has four rows of eight holes. The top row contains the seeds of one player and the bottom two rows contain the seeds of the other. There are two holes that are square and they are called the nyumba. The other holes are all circular. Each player has 32 seeds.

Check out Google for both written and YouTube videos on how to play this game. Boards can be made or bought at Amazon.



Other ideas to develop:

- Schooling is very important to Malawi. Children love to go to school and learn. Please find and read the pages about children and schools in Malawi. How do they compare to our schools and how children learn?
 - Transportation is another part of the book to explore. People in Malawi do a lot of walking, and they don't wear "Fitbits" to count their steps. Roads are rough and few, walking is the best way to get around. You may have a bike that you enjoy riding for fun. Most bikes in Malawi have multiple uses: transportation, hauling things, and even pulling trailers. Ever have a walk to school day?
 - The Malawian people are hardworking. Check out the pages on how people in Malawi earn a living. Some are wonderful craftsmen, others farmers and merchants. How do these jobs differ from those of Americans?
 - Music is a universal language. It is very important in Malawi. They love to sing and dance and make their own instruments. Why not try to make a drum or guitar of your own?
 - Food. In most of Malawi, people cannot go to the store and buy what they need for food. Food is grown in their yards, fish are caught, and vegetables and other items are sold at market. Nsima is a stiff porridge that is very common. A recipe for it is on one of the last pages of the book. Try eating this porridge for a week.
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