

"Saints Refreshing Saints" ~ Befriend A Mission Ideas ~

Introductory Information

"Your love has given me great joy and encouragement because you...have refreshed the saints"
(Philemon 7).

All members of the body of Christ have times when they need "befriending" or "refreshment." Sometimes God uses us as his means to reach out and touch the lives and hearts of fellow saints in unique ways. That is what the LWMS Befriend A Mission program is all about--saints refreshing saints.

Your assignment is the MISSION, not the MISSIONARY. If the pastor, teacher, or staff minister accepts a call to a different location, you continue to befriend the mission he/she was serving. Sometimes a vacancy can be a challenging time for a mission, and extra prayers and encouragement are appreciated!



If your BAM home mission congregation changes to self-supporting, keep praying for the congregation as the transition can prove to be difficult. The LWMS BAM coordinator (bam@lwms.org) will contact you on possibly acquiring a new mission to befriend.

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Pray! Pray! Pray! (everyone can do this)

- Pray daily for WELS missions and missionaries, particularly your BAM assignments.
- Ask your Pastor to include prayers for your BAM missions and missionaries in worship services, especially on Mission Sunday.
- Create special prayer requests from information received from your BAMs, taken from the LWMS Prayer Calendar, or downloaded from www.lwms.org, or wels.net/missions (go to individual mission pages), and share them with your women each week or month through bulletins, newsletters, or BAM display. Ask for BAM prayers at various church meetings, especially women's Bible classes and other women's groups.
- Develop a prayer corner for your congregation (Resource Catalog #7007.)
- If you receive a response from the missionary, pray accordingly. Add any prayer requests or needs to your prayer list and share the information.
- Remember to pray for the people being served by our missionaries, as they often face great challenges to their faith.
- Hold a prayer night—provide names of the missionaries and family members as well as their needs and those of their people. Take turns praying for one person/need. Read a Scripture passage that fits with sharing the good news.
- At Advent or Lenten supper, Bible study groups, and/or women's groups provide the names of your BAM missionaries for each person, and ask him/her to pray daily for that person.
- Pray for the children of world missionaries who attend school stateside. Consider the challenges they must face being so far from their parents and the different culture they consider home.

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Keep Members Informed

~ through Display Table or Bulletin Board

- If you don't have a display/bulletin board, ask your pastor for permission to create one. Explain what the LWMS BAM program strives to accomplish.
- Check out Resource Catalog #2007, "BAM Display Ideas". Be sure to keep the display updated.
- Post your assigned missions and missionary families' names, addresses, birthdays, anniversaries, and other details supplied by your circuit vice president.
- Post any correspondence received from missionaries and their families.
- Post the newsletter from your BAM assignments if they have one.
- Post news articles about the missions found in *Forward in Christ*, on www.wels.net, or www.lwms.org under Blogs.
- Post pictures of the missions/missionaries/families received from your circuit vice president or found on Flickr <https://www.flickr.com/photos/welsmissionsphotos/>
- The display can include a business-sized card or bookmark with BAM information on each side, including a prayer thought. They are small and easy to carry.
- SKYPE! Have a "living display" by arranging a Skype conversation with your missionary for a group event. Keep in mind time differences. Directions about Skyping and video presentations are in the Resource Catalog (#6007, Connect with a Missionary by SKYPE or Video).

~ through Bulletins, Newsletters, and Other Means

- Ask your pastor for permission to place BAM information sheets in each woman's mail box at church. (Don't forget the young confirmands!)
- Write BAM paragraphs to include in the congregational newsletter, with your pastor's permission.
- Include BAM birthdays and anniversaries on your church calendar or in your newsletter or bulletin announcement section.
- Ask your pastor for permission to pass out BAM updates to women as they leave worship, thus maintaining that important personal touch. (Again, include women of ALL ages.)

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Ideas to Promote Missions and Encourage Missionaries

- Promote a "letter-writing campaign" in your congregation.
- Provide stamped, addressed envelopes for members to write to BAM assignments. If replies are received, share with the congregation and your circuit vice president.
- Use a calendar sheet for people to sign up for the week they plan to write to the BAM families so cards and letters can be spread out during that month.
- Encourage ALL of your church organizations (Pioneers, OWLS, choir, youth groups, and Bible study groups), as well as individuals, to participate in the BAM program.
- Make large greeting cards and ask congregation members to sign them.
- If you have a Lutheran elementary school, ask the pastor or principal if you can talk to the children about LWMS, the BAM program, and kids c.a.r.e. and if you can create a prayer corner for the school.
- Include an LWMS flier, Befriend A Mission postcard or flier, and mission assignments (names, addresses, mission info) in your church bulletin or the women's church mail boxes one month before each rally and during the month you "befriend", if your circuit assigns congregations on a monthly rotation.
- Draw names of missionaries, wives, and children at your women's meeting, choir, or Bible study group so each can send a card—this gets ALL attendees involved.
- Write to students of missionary families who are going to school in the States.
- If a missionary student lives in your community, send the student's family pictures or video of the student at homecoming, sports events, musicals, holidays, in your home, in the dorm, etc.
- If you are having women's luncheons, mother/daughter dinners, or Bible studies, put stationery on the tables so everyone can write a few words.
- Make bookmarks (old greeting cards cut to 6"x2" work well) with BAM names, addresses, and birthdays on the back, and distribute them to the women in the congregation.
- Have Sunday school or Lutheran elementary school children make Christmas cards to mail along with gift cards to home missionaries.
- Birthday party idea: A child had asked her friends to bring a donation for the kids c.a.r.e. project rather than a present to her birthday party. Along with the donation all of the girls made a spiritually inspirational card that was sent to the mission. This idea could also be applied to BAM having adult women celebrating their birthday in the same manner.
- Hold a treat Sunday. Share treats from a BAM country/culture. Have a display set up and emphasize a special need of the mission, for which offerings can be gathered. Include cards or notes for members to write to the missionaries.
- Hold a chili cook-off. Have members bring various pots of chili. Use small cups so everyone can taste all the varieties. People "vote" by putting money in the jar of their

favorite chili. The winner is the one with the most money. Send all the money to a BAM mission. A summer variation could be a dessert bake-off.

- “Meatballs for Missions” provides a spaghetti themed dinner combined with a mission themed presentation about your BAM assignments.
- At an October Fall Festival Dinner provide Thanksgiving cards with pre-addressed envelopes to send to BAM missionaries.
- BAM Jam Sale—Give homemade jars of jams and BAM information sheets in exchange for a free-will offering.
- Host a congregational bake sale/craft bazaar to raise money for the BAM mission or gifts for the missionaries.
- **Circuit Level**—pay the dues for your home mission BAM’s LWMS membership

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Things to Send Your Befriend A Missions

NOTE: Before sending any items to missionaries, be sure they are things the missionaries want. Postage, even domestic, can be expensive!

- Only such items for ministry (Sunday school materials, flannel graph, classroom items, banners, etc.) that the missionary has requested.
- Gift cards (to restaurants, retail stores, office supply stores, NPH, etc.) to home missionaries and missionary kids attending school stateside. Make sure the gift cards can be used in the area where they live. For world missionaries, send the gift cards to the missionary's stateside representative for them to use on furlough. Contact Central Office or bam@lwms.org for stateside representative information.
- A payment directly to a missionary's NPH account.
- Bible studies your congregation has enjoyed; they will be fresh to those in the mission.
- Music CD's and DVD's
- Flowers to the home missionary for birthday or anniversary.
- A magazine subscription of the home missionary's choosing.
- Lutheran elementary school upper grade teachers can use writing and mailing letters to the BAM missionary as part of the final term's English lessons. It teaches grammar, punctuation, and letter form, besides introducing them to mission work and missionaries.
- Send flower and vegetable seed packets to home BAM assignments. The missionaries can use them or share them with members and prospects. (Save money and buy them on sale at the end of the season. Seeds keep well.)
- If you send money to a missionary in the United States, indicate if it is for his personal use or for the ministry.
- If sending money for personal use to a missionary outside the U.S., send it to his stateside representative. Contact Central Office or bam@lwms.org for this information. If sending money for the ministry of a missionary outside the United States, send it to WELS, N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive, Waukesha, WI 53188. Put the mission name on the check memo line. Always notify the missionary when you send either a personal gift to his stateside representative or a gift for his mission to WELS. The WELS Missions Office will not forward cards or letters to missionaries.
- Send soup labels to a home mission collecting them.
- **Circuit Level Project:** All circuit congregations are invited to participate in a special project (e.g., supplying Hebrew Bibles to Zambia seminary students including postage) through a letter to the reporter explaining the project. The reporters then promote the project in their congregation.

Mailing Tips

First and foremost, make sure what you are sending is something the missionary needs and cannot get at his location.

When mailing cards overseas, slip in sticker sheets, pictures, inspirational bookmarks, Bible passage cards, etc. Letter rates for overseas airmail are per ounce, so choose accordingly.

DO ~ Be aware of security issues! Do not use any Christian words or symbols on the outsides of letters or packages going to sensitive areas. Check with bam@lwms.org or Central Office if you have questions.

DO ~ Consider using padded envelopes as these usually get through customs more easily than boxes.

DON'T ~ Pack soap or perfumed products with any food items.

DON'T ~ Be surprised if your package fails to reach the person in South Asia and other developing nations.