

Best Ever Mission Stories

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A New Friend for Jesus

Kenya

Steve met a sad young man and made a friend for Jesus.

Steve is twelve years old. He lives in Kenya, a country in eastern Africa. One day as Steve and his family were walking along the river, they saw a man sitting in front of a little thatched hut. The man looked young, but his shoulders drooped like an old man's shoulders. They could tell he had been drinking.

A new friend

Steve learned that the man's name was Kibogo (*kee-BOH-goh*). Steve and his parents visited Kibogo often when they walked along the river. Sometimes Kibogo was friendly; but when he had been drinking, his actions frightened Steve.

One day during family worship, Steve said, "We are supposed to help the poor. Kibogo has nothing but rags to wear. Can we give him some clothes?"

Mother and Father looked at each other. They did not have much money, but they had a home and clothes to wear. "Yes,"

Father said, "I think we can find something for Kibogo."

Clothes for Kibogo

Mother went to the marketplace and found a shirt, trousers, and sandals for Kibogo. That evening Father and Steve found Kibogo sitting outside his thatched hut. "We brought you something," Steve said, giving Kibogo the bag. "I hope they fit." Kibogo opened the bag and pulled out the shirt and trousers.

"Thank you," Kibogo said quietly. "Why did you do this?"

"Your old clothes are torn," Steve said. "I wanted you to have something new." Steve waited as Kibogo tried on his new shirt. It fit well. "You know, Kibogo," Steve said, "if you stop drinking and smoking, you could earn enough money to buy food and clothes yourself."

"I know," Kibogo said sadly. "I've tried to stop, but I can't."

Steve and his father encouraged Kibogo before they returned home. "How can we help him quit drinking?" Steve asked.

"I don't know," Father said. "We can encourage him and pray for him. But God and Kibogo have to do the rest."

Kibogo, the family project

Sometimes Steve took a plate of Mother's home-cooked food to Kibogo. Steve often found Kibogo listening to his portable radio outside his hut. One day when Steve and his father arrived, Kibogo was upset. He had heard a news report saying that several people who drank the locally brewed beer had died. "That's what I drink!" Kibogo said. "I don't want to die. What can I do? Can you help me stop drinking?"

Steve and his father visited Kibogo every day to encourage him and pray with him. "Only God can free you from these addictions," Father said. "Let God help you stop drinking."

A new family

Steve invited Kibogo to come to church, and one day he agreed to visit. When he arrived at the church, he was welcomed warmly. Steve and his parents sat with Kibogo to let him know that they were glad he was there. During testimony time, Kibogo stood and said, "I have been drinking for many years, but I want God to forgive me and take away the desire to drink." The church members hugged Kibogo and welcomed him to their family.

Kibogo started attending church every week. Steve was excited to see how God was changing Kibogo's life. One Sabbath at church, Kibogo stood and said, "I don't drink alcohol anymore. I want to follow Jesus and be baptized."

People in the church said, "Praise God! Hallelujah! Amen!" Steve was so happy he could not speak, so he smiled.

On the day that Kibogo was baptized, Steve was very excited. The pastor thanked Steve and his parents for being Kibogo's friends and helping him find Jesus.

Kibogo, God's friend

Kibogo still lives in his small hut. But now he works at a regular job and is saving his money for a new house.

"Kibogo is my friend," Steve says. "God is our Father, so we are brothers. Sometimes we go fishing together on Sundays."

Today Kibogo is a church elder. He tells others about Jesus, just as Steve told him about Jesus.

You can tell others about Jesus too. Tell people who live near you that God can change their lives, just as He changed Kibogo's life.



Mwema's Mission

Democratic Republic of the Congo

A boy's dream to share God's love with others came true sooner than he thought.

Mwema (*mm-WEE-mah*) lives in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, near the border with Rwanda. One day he sat near his mother as she was cooking the family's dinner of rice with vegetables. "I want to be a pastor and lead many people to Jesus," he said.

Mwema's mother stopped stirring the big pot of steaming vegetables and smiled at her son. "How did you decide that?"

"Last year when we had the meetings at church, I listened to the speaker talk about Jesus. He told us that everyone who loves Jesus should tell other people about God's love. I want to do that. I want to start now, but I don't know what to do."

"Why don't you talk to the pastor?" Mother suggested. "He should have some good ideas."

The children's Bible club

Mwema told the pastor about his dream. The pastor asked him what he was doing to share God's love with others. "I have started a children's Bible club in my yard," Mwema said. "We—my brothers and sisters and some friends and I—meet three times a week, on Friday night, Sabbath afternoon, and Sunday evening, to tell Bible stories, sing songs, and pray with other children. Sometimes we play Bible games. Last week we had twenty-six children between nine and thirteen years old. My father gave us some Bible pictures to use, and he helps me prepare my stories to tell. Now, some of the older children lead the songs or tell a story," Mwema said.

The pastor leaned back in his chair. "You have made a great start," the pastor said, smiling. "It sounds as if you have done a fine job making friends who might like to attend evangelistic meetings. If you would like to hold meetings, I will help you."

Mwema thanked the pastor and hurried to tell his family. "The pastor said we should hold evangelistic meetings, just like the ones we had in our church last year!" Mwema said. "I want to do that."

Evangelistic meetings

It was vacation time, and Mwema had lots of time to devote to his Bible-club activities. The group continued to grow as children invited their friends. Mwema asked his father to help him prepare his sermons for the planned evangelistic meetings. He urged the children to invite their friends and their parents to the meetings. And every spare minute, Mwema worked to memorize the sermons his father had helped him write.

The time finally came for the evangelistic meetings, and Mwema was ready. Every afternoon for three weeks, children

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and their parents came to the clearing to listen to Mwema preach about God's great love for them and about His gift of Jesus. Mwema invited the children and the adults to give their lives to Jesus, and many did. A large number of the young people asked to be baptized, but many of the children were too young to be baptized or could not get their parents' permission. Even Mwema was too young to be baptized.

Mwema was disappointed that only four of the people who had come to the meetings and had decided to follow Jesus could be baptized. But the pastor encouraged him. "You've sown some good seeds, Mwema. We must continue to water those seeds, and one day we will see a good harvest." Mwema hoped that when he was old enough to be baptized, some of his Bible-club members would join him.

Mwema's dream

Soon after the evangelistic meetings ended, Mwema and his older brother packed their bags and boarded a bus. They were going to study at the Adventist school that is a day's bus ride from their home. Mwema was not afraid to leave home, but he was sorry he had to leave his friends and the children's Bible club. Many of the children who had attended the Bible club were leaving home to attend other schools too, and there would be no leader during the school year.

"When I return home from school, I want to start the children's Bible club again," Mwema says. "I have not given up my dream to share God's love with others."

Do you think Mwema will be a good pastor one day? He says it is easy to be an evangelist. All you have to do is share God's love with your friends, your playmates, and your family. It's that easy!