

Morning Basket

A Tradition to Change the World

By **ALYSSA JOHNSON**

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“Sit down for morning basket!” is heard in our home many mornings around 9:30 AM. We start our homeschool by gathering around the couch to center ourselves with goodness, truth and beauty served out of a basket of carefully selected books and resources.

Some mornings, we may pull out Scripture memory verses, the *World Treasury of Children's Literature*, *Book of Virtues Illustrated*, or a children's missionary biography.

But EVERY morning I insist on starting with a tattered photo album full of missionary prayer cards and the new prayer guide for families, *Who Are Frontier People Groups?*¹

After the clamor over “Can I pick the people group today?”—and I twice prevent my coffee mug from a messy fall to the floor—one child snatches my phone and opens the Spotify app to the “Who are Frontier People Groups?” podcast.

We press play and the children engage instantly, listening to the exotic intro music. We then imagine the colorful character pictured as the lilting voice narrates. “Salaam, I'm Mahzala, a Pashtun woman from Pakistan...” We turn to the map page of the book and touch the country of this people group.

Sometimes I tell the kids to close their eyes while we listen. However imperfect and distracted the children can seem in their prayer, we take turns

¹ By Indigitous, a ministry of Cru (idservice.org/home/frontier-peoples).



talking to God about the people group and end with “Amen.” I'll always smile hearing my four-year-old ask God “that the Kazakh people would be good and eat their food.”

It takes us about two months to go through the entire prayer guide, and then we start over again. We hope this new prayer ritual will be a lasting family tradition.

Just as we serve healthy meals to nourish their physical bodies, my husband and I seek to provide spiritual nurturing for our children's faith. This nurturing is much more than understanding salvation in Christ.

It extends to:

- knowing their place in God's created order
- gaining God's heart for the *ethne*
- understanding their adoption into His kingdom plan

I see us as co-laborers with God, shaping our children's worldview about His mission.

I grew up knowing a lot of missionaries—all wonderful people hosted in my grandparents' home—and was given missionary biographies regularly as assigned (and fun!) reading. These influences greatly shaped my life direction and personal calling.

My husband and I were invited to join a team in North India early on in our marriage, which further directed my thinking and perception about movements to Jesus among non-Western religions and made us seek community with other believers who prioritize reaching non-believers for Christ.

Now in Washington state, raising four kids under the age of eight, I want my children to have a similar foundation for their journey with God, and go even further. To do this well, I need to help them get regular doses of current and strategic missions information. The new “Who are Frontier People Groups?” prayer guide and accompanying podcast are perfect for us.

Kids need “mirrors and windows” throughout their education—mirrors to reflect their own experience and build their identity, and windows to let them see a different perspective and experience. Our family has found those mirrors and windows in many excellent Christian and non-Christian resources.

A few examples:

- *Children Just Like Me* (Kindersley), photojournalism of lives of kids and their families on every continent
- *Hero Tales* (Jackson), inspirational missionary biographies for children
- *Around the World with Kate & Mack* (Paredes), a kid’s guide to language and Bible translation projects among the world’s “Bible-less” peoples
- *More With Less* cookbook (Longacre), which gives a God-honoring global perspective to our eating choices

I’m grateful that Indigitous and the artists behind the *Who are Frontier People Groups?* added many child characters with relatable and interesting traits. This turns the abstractness of praying for millions of strangers we’ve never met into something our kids can do with a sense of personhood and place.

The resources I choose must provide mirrors and windows without missing the point: God has made us, saved us and called us to pray for AND go to the least-reached parts of the world with His good news, and this mission will be met with opposition. This prayer guide and podcast don’t leave out the

ugly bits, which gives me an opportunity to explain and model prayer about persecution, addiction, cultural annihilation, poverty, and violence in an age-sensitive way. Jesus told us, *In this world you will have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the world!* (John 16:33b).

The larger our family grows (I’m expecting number five!) and the older our children get (we just ordered standardized testing for the first time for our eldest) the more I realize it’s true: we are given just a few short years to influence our children directly within our home, but those years shape how they will wield their own influence out in the world. I am so thankful we have easy access to tools like the “Who Are Frontier Peoples?” guide and podcast to help me pray specifically and strategically with my children for today’s Frontier Peoples.

The best part? It doesn’t need to be done perfectly to have a powerful effect. This is a mustard seed moment in my busy day of read-alouds, diaper changes and meal prep. This seed will be of incalculable value years from now. For today I am only called to be faithful to pray with my children.

The cover of Jill Johnstone’s *You Can Change the World* (1994 edition) was illustrated with 90s kids wearing primary-colored sweatshirts touching a globe. This was definitely a mirror for me back then. The first page was a colorful spread featuring post-communist Albania. I remember my mom reading that page to me and my siblings on the couch, wondering “Why would anyone be a Muslim?” and praying for those people I didn’t know.

The amazing thing is, just 25 years later, Albania has a thriving church, sending missionaries to other nations. My prayer today is that my kids will see the Frontier People Groups “reached” in their lifetime and praise the God who answers the sincere prayers of their childhood.

Order copies of *Who are Frontier People Groups?* at CruStore.org/product/who-are-frontier-people-groups.

Find the free podcast on Spotify or Apple Podcasts by searching *Who Are Frontier People Groups?*

