

# Homes Afar

**Description:**

missionary 'pretend houses' from around the world

**Aim:** teach that missionaries live in many different types of homes, and teach kids to pray

**Audience:** two to five years, any size class with enough helpers

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Equipment:**

large cardboard appliance boxes, paint, blankets, tents, crayons

**Scripture to Study:**

Matthew 19:29  
1 Timothy 6:8



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**Leader's Instructions:****Pre-class Preparations:**

1. Construct the play houses all at once for a mission conference or vacation Bible school (VBS), or do them one at a time, and feature a different home each week or month in your classroom. Remember, a play house doesn't have to be perfect or professional for preschoolers to love it. (A builder at one church in Oregon blessed the children's ministry with a durable yurt from PVC pipe and canvas. Maybe your church has someone like that, too. If not, anyone can convert cardboard into these simple play houses below.)
2. If your church, class or family supports a missionary team, research and find out their specific style of home. Personalizing always gives opportunity to pray for your missionary team. Some have given up big homes to live in far away countries. (See Matthew 19:29). Recent prayer letters will give you hints as to their needs. The list below is only a starting point. Expand it with your imagination!

**Homes to build:**

1. **Pitch a tent.** Use real camping tents or construct them by throwing a blanket over tables or chairs pushed together. If you know a missionary team that works with nomadic people, move the tent from week to week in search of fresh water and grass for the animals. While inside the tent, pray for your tent-dwelling missionaries in places like Northern and sub-Saharan Africa.
2. **Sail in a ship.** Pretend to be a crew member aboard the Logos II or the Mercy Ship taking the gospel and physical aid around the world. Construct your ships by laying large cardboard appliance boxes lengthwise on the floor, cutting out the top and bringing the front to a point. Some missionaries live on ships for years at a time, only getting off now and then when the ship docks at a port.

3. **Build a city of modern homes.** Complete this set with houses, store, and gas station. Tempera paint does wonders for an old cardboard box. Many missionaries live in modern cities all over the world.
4. **Build a Turkish yurt.** Make a round yurt similar to the ones used by nomadic Mongols of Siberia. Bend heavy-weight wire into a large circle of 4-6 foot diameter for the base. Thread it back and forth every 12 inches through long strips of three-foot high cardboard walls. Do the same with a wire at the top and also halfway up the walls, making sure not to leave any sharp ends exposed. This simulates the lattice work interior that supports some types of yurts. Cover wire ends with electrical or duct tape and attach a domed cardboard roof. Some missionaries in Siberia live in yurts made from wood, skins and wool felt.
5. **Perch a house on stilts.** A preschool slide set with large square platform at the top makes the perfect frame for your house on stilts. Simply leave a doorway where the stairs go up and run cardboard walls all around the rest of the platform. (The slide will be inoperable for that time.) A blue plastic tarp makes believable water below. Cardboard or cloth makes a good roof here, too. Missionaries to Papua New Guinea often live in these stilt houses. Sometimes instead of water below, the families' pigs and chickens roam there to eat the food scraps dropped from above!
6. **Hang a hammock or stretch a cot.** Some missionaries travel through the countryside and sleep outdoors under the stars with no house around them at all! Set up a camping cot with a sleeping bag on top, or a low-slung hammock and you'll have some interesting conversations for sure. Add mosquito netting and an artificial ficus tree or plants for an even more realistic setting. Missionaries in South American rainforests and in parts of Africa live this way, especially when travelling into new areas for the first time.
7. **Turn a wagon into a travel trailer.** Cut the bottom out of a cardboard box and set it in a large wagon. Cut windows

## Notes:



Picture from [http://www.ehow.com/about\\_4727836\\_yurts.html](http://www.ehow.com/about_4727836_yurts.html)



Solomon Island house (copyright 2006, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Photographer David J. Ringer)

**Notes:**

and a door. Have a helper or sturdy child pull one or two others inside. Some missionaries travel with nomadic groups in this way throughout Africa and parts of Europe. Medical teams also serve large areas all over the world by travelling from village to village with Bibles and medicine.

**Class Time:**

1. Let children play house in their own way with the different styles of homes. They will cook, sit and sleep, look in and out of the windows, and generally explore all on their own. Little instruction from teachers is needed. Try to have a helper assigned to each house for good supervision.
2. Display a large picture of a missionary team you support on the outside of each home. Near the doorway is a good place.
3. Have a brief prayer time as children sit inside various houses. Keep it short. Ask them questions that will help them learn how to pray. For instance, you might ask if anyone ever got seasick on a boat. Then lead them in praying that (name of your missionary team/family) won't get seasick, or even if they do that they'll feel well enough to tell others about Jesus. Or pray that the people your missionary team is living with will understand about Jesus and accept Him as their Savior and Lord. If your missionary team has specific requests and praises in their most recent prayer letter, include those in your prayer time, too.