

IMPRESSIONS

FOR YOUTH

Vol. 3.1

Stories
from Youth
Missionaries +
Cool Puzzles

A publication of Synergie Francophone



In French, *Impression* means
"printing" as in printing books.



Synergie
FRANCOPHONE

Synergie Francophone provides Bibles, Christian books, and Sunday school materials in French for children and their teachers around the world who cannot afford them.

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ENVISIONING ELEPHANTS: PUBLISHING IN FRENCH



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Have you heard the old story about the three blind people describing an elephant? Feeling the pachyderm with her hands, one said he was long and skinny like a snake. Another said he was shaped like a large leaf. The last said he was like a large tree trunk. None of them could envision the whole elephant because each only felt a piece. Like the blind people, we can only sense a tiny piece of who God is. It takes all of us together from all the cultures of the world to even glimpse God's majesty and beauty. That's why it is so important for believers from across the globe to listen to and learn from each other.

At SF, we are committed to empowering voices from French-speaking countries all over the world—from Benin to Haiti and beyond! These leaders not only help us to understand God better, they also are essential in speaking to their own people. One excellent example is the *Africa Study Bible*, featuring study notes written by African leaders and theologians. Some 100 French-speaking Africans contributed to that Bible, and leaders all across the continent of Africa already value this unique resource.

In addition to partnering with

French-speaking leaders, SF also seeks to find and share books that can touch people in their unique cultural contexts. Take a moment to think of one of your favorite books or stories.

Good stories can touch us deeply and speak to our specific needs and situations. Great publishing does the same. It is all about placing the right materials in the hands of the right people at the right time.

This can be a challenge! Books that would sell well in Europe or Canada often don't fit with some cultures in African countries or the French-speaking islands. Even when we find a good book, the printing and shipping costs pose a difficulty. In Europe, a publisher often prints 1,000 copies or more in a print run. But in Africa, only tens of copies may be needed. Also, the problems with international shipping and customs only continue to grow. By God's grace, we have been able to work more closely with print-on-demand centers in French-speaking Africa. This allows us to print only how much is needed, when it is needed, and where it is needed.

As you read this issue's articles, I trust they will bless you as you see how God is at work in the French-speaking world.



Credit: Ray Sanford

Ray Sanford, President of the Board

THE BIRD WITH TOO MANY EGGS

Story and Illustrations by: Angela Brandle

This is the story of a bird that lived in a French-speaking country on the continent of Africa. She had a problem. What was her problem? She had too many eggs! She was too small to sit on them all by herself. She could not keep them warm so that they would hatch.

The bird had heard that there are many birds in the United States of America. She decided to write them a letter. "*Aidez-moi!*" she wrote. In English that means "Help me!"

Some of the birds that lived in the US got together to discuss how to help the bird in Africa with too many eggs.

Being the oldest and the wisest, Owl spoke first. He had graduated from high school, had been to college, and enjoyed giving advice to other birds. "I know what to do," he declared. "I will write a book called *How to Hatch Eggs* and send it to the bird in Africa. Besides, I will be able to sell it on Amazon, and I will become famous for my knowledge." While



he was basking in his imagined future glory, the other birds thought about it and said, "The bird in Africa already knows how to hatch eggs. That is not her problem. She just has too many of them to hatch all by herself. We should ask a bird that has more practical experience."

So, they asked Pigeon. Pigeon lived in a big city where he perched on top of statues and monuments watching people come and go. "Africa," said Pigeon. "I thought of visiting Africa for vacation because it is hot there, and I like to get a suntan. So, I read all about it. Do you know where the birds in Africa build their nests? In the trees! Not like us city birds. We have the railway station and the eaves of big buildings to shelter us. And did you know that the birds in Africa must find their own food? Here we have people who give it to us. They buy their burgers and fries, share them with us, and leave the leftovers for us too. No, I do not want to go to a

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place where I must work so hard. I prefer my easy life here in the US."

"Maybe we should ask a bird who is already used to Africa," they mused. "Let's ask Ostrich!"

"Hey, Ostrich!" they called. No reply. "Ostrich," they shouted. Why couldn't Ostrich hear? Because his head was stuck in the sand! They gave him a big nudge.

He pulled his head out of the sand and said, "What is it?"

"There is a bird in Africa that has so many eggs in her nest that she cannot hatch them all by herself. You are so big and have so many feathers that you could surely help."



"Who, me?" scoffed Ostrich. "It is not my problem. I did not tell her to lay so many eggs. I say, 'Mind your own business.' Don't bother me anymore!" Upon which, he put his head back in the sand.

If it is not Ostrich's business, it must be Hen's business, thought the birds, because everyone knows that Hen is the expert at hatching eggs. "Hatch eggs for someone else?" protested Hen. "I really do not have time. When I lay eggs, I send them to the supermarket to sell them. That is how I earn money and save for my retirement. I am a business hen, you see. I cannot take time off to help someone else hatch her eggs."

"We must find someone who has time," said the birds. They looked around and noticed Peacock. Peacock had an extremely easy job. He lived in the garden of a big, stately house. All he had to do was spread his beautiful tail feathers to please guests. He loved to do that because people always admired him. "Isn't he splendid? Look how glorious he is!" they would exclaim. Peacock soaked up all this praise because he was a proud bird.

"Go to Africa?" spluttered Peacock. "Do you realize that in the dry season, orange-red dust blows everywhere and covers everything, and in the rainy season, that dust turns into mud that sticks to everything? My feathers would become dirty and stop shining. And I would be lost in the middle of nowhere with no one to admire me," he despaired. "I could never go to Africa!"

"What about Hummingbird?" they wondered. "She is so fast that the dust would not settle on her."

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"Well," said Hummingbird, "I thought of a way to help without even going to Africa."

"Tell us!" the birds pleaded. "When I was darting around, collecting nectar from as many flowers as I could find, I heard beautiful music and singing, so I took a quick look through the window. When the singing stopped, a man at the front said that we can pray for our brothers and sisters in other countries. So, I decided to do it...but it doesn't work!"

"What do you mean, it doesn't work?" enquired the birds.

"Well, I am busy all day, zipping around collecting nectar from flowers and syrup from feeders, looking through windows at suncatchers and a beautiful, big, colored screen that is always changing. I am so energetic, filling my day with interesting activities, that I forget to pray, and when night falls and it is time to stop, I fall asleep before I can pray. So, praying does not work for me."

"What can we tell the bird in Africa? We have not found a way to help her," the birds lamented. As they shook their heads, they heard a little sound. They looked around and spotted tiny Chickadee.

"May I say something?" Chickadee asked timidly.

"What does he know?" interrupted Owl. "He is only a kid!"

"We did not find an answer, so let him speak!" the other birds insisted.

Chickadee continued, "If I am here today, it is because another bird took the time to sit on the egg when I was inside it. That bird, my mother, stayed there and kept the egg warm until I hatched out. It is because of her that I am here today. When I think of all the eggs in the nest in Africa, I imagine all the little birds that will never have a life because there is no bird to sit on the eggs until they hatch."

As the other birds thought about what Chickadee



had said, each one realized that they were alive because another bird had taken the time to sit on the egg until they hatched, and they began to feel sorry for making so many excuses not to help.

"I will go!" Hen announced.

"Bravo!" cheered the others.

"That is all very well," said Owl, "but Hen could never fly all the way to Africa." He was right, of course, because Owl is a very smart bird.

Chickadee dared to speak up again: "What about the big birds that I see flying around and making so much noise? You have seen them too. They have their names written on their bodies: Delta, Spirit, Ethiopian Airlines, South African Airways, Air France...One of these big birds could carry Hen to Africa."

The birds agreed that this was a great idea, but thought about all they would need for Hen to go to Africa: a ticket to fly with the big bird, a passport, a visa, different money...Who could tell them how to plan such a journey? Then they remembered that the bird in Africa had written on the paper of Synergie Francophone, so they decided to ask the SF team how to send Hen.

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Pigeon and Peacock saved up to buy a ticket. Hen went to Africa to sit on the nest. Ostrich went on a short trip from time to time to cover more eggs than the African bird and Hen could cover on their own. Owl used his learning to write letters to encourage them all in Africa, and Hummingbird made a huge effort to be still for a while each day to pray for them all.

The most important thing is that lots of little birds hatched and had a life of their own because now there was a whole team helping to hatch them out.

The bird in Africa is like an evangelist or a missionary working alone. The eggs are like people who have never heard the Good News that Jesus came to give them new life, abundant life that lasts forever. There are just not enough people to tell them.

How did you hear about Jesus? Was it because someone else cared about you and told you? Who was it? Your mother? Your teacher? Someone else? It is because of them that you have new life in Jesus. Will you be like the birds, making excuses why you cannot help? Or are you so thankful for your new life and for the person who told you about Jesus, that you will do all you can to help others to hear about Him?

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✓ Write a letter of encouragement to a missionary.
- ✓ Ask your parents if your family would consider joining our Illuminate Quebec (IQ) or France Impressions Team (FIT). Learn more at www.synergiefrancophone.org/participer
- ✓ Save up to support a missionary.
- ✓ Send in \$10 to buy a first Bible in French for a young person in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through our "Bible Distribution" project.
- ✓ Give to SF's other projects, including "Gospel Camp for Kids," which helps kids in Quebec hear the Gospel at Camp des Îles. Learn more at www.synergiefrancophone.org/our-work.
- ✓ Commit to pray for the French-speaking countries of the world. If you write and tell us you are doing that, we will send you a tote bag and a map of the French-speaking countries.

A NINE-YEAR-OLD MISSIONARY

By: Josie Myer



LAST JULY, JOSIE WENT AS BOTH A MISSIONARY AND A CAMPER TO CAMP DES ÎLES IN QUEBEC, CANADA, WITH SF'S ILLUMINATE QUEBEC (IQ) TEAM. THE CAMP'S GOAL IS TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT BY OFFERING SUMMER CAMPS THAT PRESENT DYNAMIC ACTIVITIES FOR CAMPERS, INCLUDING TEACHING THE BIBLE AND BIBLICAL VALUES.

SF: What did you learn this week about Quebec?

JOSIE: I learned that in Quebec there are some kids who have never heard about Jesus. This is why we were on a mission to tell them about Him. During the week one girl accepted Jesus. It was great to see!

SF: How did you see God's love during the week of camp?

JOSIE: I saw how much God loves a girl named Marie.* She struggles with asking for help and not wanting to do things, but I saw times when God helped her stay calm.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Quebecois are the largest group of people in both North and South America who have never heard that Jesus died for them and wants to give them a new, wonderful life.
- In Quebec, for every 10,000 people, only six are evangelical Christian.
- There is only one evangelical Christian church for every 106,000 people.
- In the city of Montréal alone, to have just one evangelical Christian church for every 30,000 people, 50 new churches would need to be started.
- The Quebecois have more negative views on religion than anyone anywhere else in Canada.

Sources: The Gospel Coalition and Mission Quebec.

*Name changed to protect privacy

SF: How were you a missionary this week? How were you part of the team?

JOSIE: I cleaned the toilets before the inspection. I served the Lord by doing other things that I really don't like to do like take out the trash. I tried to be a friend to kids who seemed frustrated. There was one girl who I think people didn't want to be around because she was whiny. I played with her and answered her questions. She would go around asking for me, saying, "Where is Posie?"

SF: What was different about this camp than others you have been to?

JOSIE: It was in French! I sang in French. I memorized a Bible verse in French.

SF: What is your favorite Bible verse? Why?

JOSIE: Psalm 136: 1-4 (NIV)

"Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good."

His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of gods.

His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

His love endures forever.

to Him who alone does great wonders,

His love endures forever.

I love that God's love endures forever.





GOD PROVIDES IN QUEBEC

By: Selah Strassheim

Boarding my flight to Montréal, my head and heart were filled with anxious thoughts. *What would serving at Camp des Îles look like? Would I be able to connect with the staff and campers? How would I share the Gospel in French?* When I arrived in Montréal, my brain was exploding. After only one year of studying French, I was nervous to hear so much French spoken with a different accent than I had studied. That night while lying in bed at Camp des Îles, I prayed that I would give up whatever I was expecting to learn or receive and that God would use me in whatever way He needed.

Over the coming days, God showed how far his love can extend, even beyond language barriers. When the campers arrived Monday morning, I found myself gravitating towards the completely Francophone campers, even though I couldn't ask them more than a few questions or answer more than a couple of theirs. At the end of day one, I was exhausted. How was I supposed to share the Gospel when I

didn't know how to hold a conversation in French? God put before me this challenge: *Love my children; be a light; and I will do the rest.* When you rest in God and realize that you can do nothing apart from Him, doing his work becomes much easier. The rest of the camp was filled with learning alongside the

campers, dressing up in funny costumes and laughing, having water fights, climbing rock walls, and celebrating one another. The Gospel was spread not through me saying something profound to a camper but through the body of Christ showing genuine love through friendship bracelets, canoe trips, old wigs, tearful goodbyes, and yes—a little French. Most importantly, however, I saw God show up for not only me but the staff and campers. God is on the move, calling hearts to Him, and I'm blessed to have had the opportunity to be a part of his plans.



Selah (right) having fun with another member of the IQ team.
Credit: Amy Lynelle

"But the angel reassured them. 'Don't be afraid!' he said. 'I bring good news that will bring joy to all people,'" (Luke 2:10, NLT).

NOTE: After prayerful deliberation, we have decided to remove "formerly known as BLF USA" from the front cover of *Impressions for Youth* magazine. The expression was kept as a bridge for our readership during the transition of rebranding from "BLF USA" to "Synergie Francophone" in 2021. Though we recognize and honor the vital role BLF USA has played in our history, we feel it is time to move forward fully as Synergie Francophone.

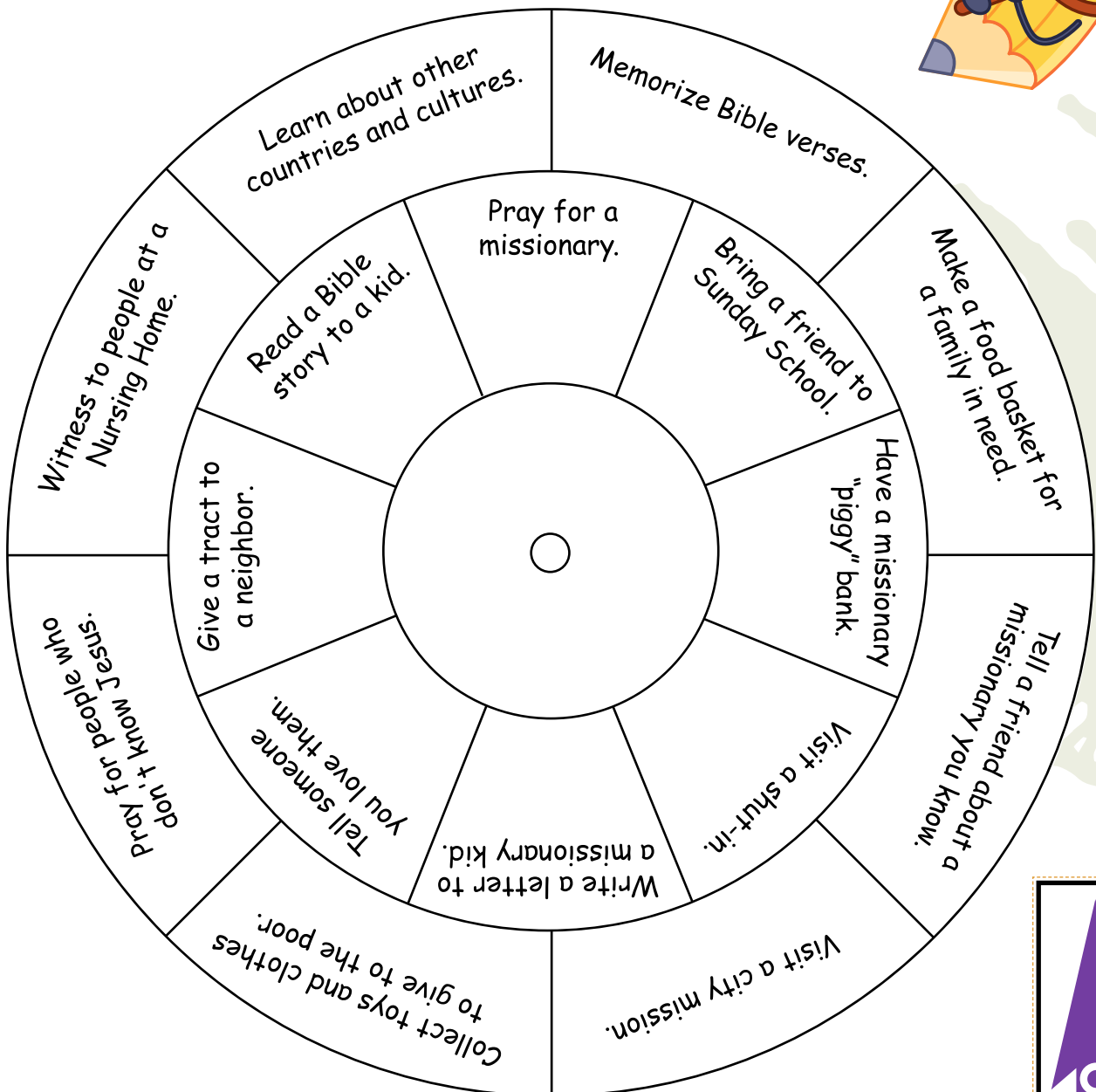
Selah (center) at Camp des Îles in Quebec, Canada, with other members of SF's 2024 Illuminate Quebec (IQ) team.
Credit: Amy Lynelle





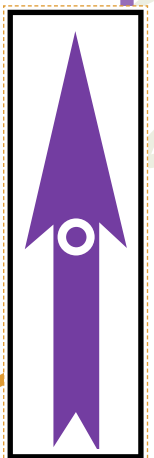
CIRCLE OF LOVE

There are many things that you can do today to show God's love to the rest of the world. A missionary's work includes many things. Here are just a few ideas to get you started.



- 1 Cut out arrow block, glue onto cardboard, and fasten in center of smallest circle with butterfly fastener.
- 2 Spin the arrow each day for a great idea to show God's love to your family friends, and the world!

CUT OUT THE BLOCK. 



SECRET MESSAGE



To read the message that Jesus has for us, color in the following letters:

L, O, P, N, T, W, A, H, E, D, I, G, C, S, R

J G M O U I J N T Y O X
 A L U L V M T B H K E
 Z W U O J R L Y D K F
 M U A X Q N Z J D U K
 P Z R B E J A Y C V H J
 U M T F V H Q Y E M Z
 Q G K O Y U O B Z D V
 M N Z J E F W V Y S M
 X T B O J U A V L M L
 C F R E Z A T K I X O N

MARK 16:15



WHO IS A MISSIONARY?

Find the following people God uses as his missionaries all over the world in the letter grid below. Words may be across, up and down, diagonal or backwards. Some letters are used in more than one word.



teacher
translator
mother
electrician
engineer
actress
father
athlete
housekeeper

plumber
musician
nurse
child
farmer
pastor
secretary
doctor
teenager

God has a unique plan for each of our lives. Maybe you want to be a lawyer or nurse, perhaps a computer whiz or dentist. Whatever profession you may choose, there is a place for you in missions. Wherever we are, in whatever we do, God has told us to shine for Him. You can do that in Africa, in Haiti, in North America, even in your own backyard.

"You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:14-16

J	H	E	Y	R	A	T	E	R	C	E	S	S
F	A	R	M	E	R	A	N	E	O	X	K	T
Z	V	R	E	G	A	N	E	E	T	E	F	F
D	H	Y	L	P	D	H	S	N	H	R	A	N
B	P	Q	E	T	E	M	R	I	V	E	T	A
R	O	T	C	O	D	E	D	G	F	P	H	I
E	A	E	T	D	F	L	K	N	G	A	E	C
B	T	A	R	K	I	J	I	E	C	H	R	I
M	H	C	I	H	L	M	S	T	S	O	N	S
U	L	H	C	P	D	R	R	C	T	U	B	U
L	E	E	I	R	U	E	N	S	G	H	O	M
P	T	R	A	N	S	L	A	T	O	R	J	H
C	E	B	N	S	V	P	R	E	H	T	O	M

