

Cristina of Ecuador

BEFORE READING THE STORY

- Help children sing “Sisters and Brothers” (see page 3).
- Locate and mark Ecuador on your map or globe together.
- Say the opening prayer:

*Dear Jesus, our friend and brother,
we will take a journey in our hearts
and minds to Ecuador. Please be
with us as we learn about our sisters
and brothers there. Amen.*

AFTER READING THE STORY

- Enjoy chamomile tea: Smell the herb before pouring hot water over it, smell the tea, add honey if desired, and savor.
- Discussion suggestions:
 1. What does Cristina have for breakfast? Explain that her mother would grind the barley and cook it in water to make it into cereal. Where did Cristina’s mother get the barley? What kind of food do you eat for breakfast? Where does this food come from?
 2. Cristina could see the sun on the mountains and sheep from her home. What do you see from your home?
 3. Why did Cristina’s mother make “healing tonics”? (Cristina’s mother does not have



Like Cristina, these children in Latacunga, Ecuador, are dressed warmly for working in fields with their mothers

money for medicine, and there are no doctors nearby, so she uses certain plants to make medicines.)

- Closing prayer:

We pray now for our sisters and brothers in Ecuador.

We pray for...

(encourage children to pray spontaneously for whatever was most meaningful for them in the story)

For all these prayers, we ask you, Jesus. Amen.



CRISTINA OF ECUADOR

Ecuador is warm in some places, but Cristina lives high in the Andes Mountains, where it is often cold. Inside her small, mud-brick house, she kneels on the dirt floor next to her mother. There are no windows, so Mama works in the sunlight that comes through the open door. They wear hats and warm sweaters. Mama also wears a poncho, which keeps Cristina's baby brother securely on her back.

In the wooden bowl in front of them is a grain called "barley," which Cristina's parents grew. It will be cooked as hot cereal tomorrow. Mama rubs the kernels together until the papery outside, called "chaff," comes off. She and Cristina blow the chaff away, but just then a little breeze comes through the door. The chaff blows back into Cristina's face. They laugh.

Cristina's baby brother begins to wiggle and fuss. As Mamma feeds him, she tells Cristina, "It's time to make my healing tonics, so we'll gather chamomile today."

They are soon outside. The mountains are full of light and shadows. Far away, woolly sheep graze, and a man leads a horse up the mountain. The path is steep, but Mama soon finds a patch of chamomile. The baby has fallen asleep on her back.

Mama and Cristina say a prayer to thank God for Mother Earth, which gives them the plants. Then they start picking the chamomile, the sweet smell of it soon clinging to Cristina's fingers. She puts them near her nose, closes her eyes, and takes a deep breath. Mama smiles and goes on picking.

Geltshin of Bhutan

BEFORE READING THE STORY

- Help children sing “Sisters and Brothers” (see page 3).
- Locate and mark Bhutan on your map or globe together.
- Say the opening prayer:
*Dear Jesus, our friend and brother,
we will take a journey in our hearts
and minds to Bhutan. Please be
with us as we learn about our sisters
and brothers there. Amen.*

- Closing prayer:
*We pray now for our sisters and
brothers in Bhutan.*

We pray for...

(encourage children to pray spontaneously for whatever was most meaningful for them in the story)

*For all these prayers, we ask you,
Jesus. Amen.*

AFTER READING THE STORY

- Bhutan is a strikingly beautiful country. Look for images in books or on the Internet.
- Discussion suggestions:
 1. Where does Geltshin’s family sit when they eat together? Where do you sit when you eat breakfast?
 2. What job does Geltshin do with the older children?
 3. How do the older children get to school?
 4. Geltshin’s house has one light. How many lights do you have in your house?



GELTSHIN OF BHUTAN

Geltshin woke in his mountain home, his sleeping sister's arm over his shoulder, his cousin's feet poking his leg. Geltshin moved them gently.

In the smoky kitchen, his mother, aunt, and grandmother cooked. *Slosh, slosh*, the milk went as his aunt churned it into butter. She smiled and his mother kissed him.

Grandmother said, "Good morning, little Watcher." Geltshin loved to watch all of life around him. "Watcher" was his grandmother's nickname for him.

Soon everyone else awoke. They sat on the kitchen floor by the fire to eat breakfast. Grandfather fed the baby. Everyone talked. One lightbulb hung over their heads. There was no television, radio, or computer.

The older children washed the dishes outside. Geltshin helped. Then they left for school. It would take an hour to walk there, but school was very important.

Geltshin watched his father and uncle lead two bulls a long way to plow their cornfield. Women sang in the wheat fields. He heard someone praying.

His aunt handed him the baby so she could go to milk the cows. Geltshin watched her. He showed the baby the silly pig waddling around. Grandmother came from the field, carrying a huge bundle of wheat on her back.

Then the bells that sang each day rang out over the quiet mountains. Geltshin watched clouds settle over a faraway mountain. He kissed the baby's head and smiled.