

COMPASSION

explorer®

Christmas Bonus!

Your extra activity section
includes a stand-up Nativity!



Best GIFTS EVER!

Hola, Explorers!

Say it: OH-la!

(Hola is Spanish for "Hi!")

As you exchange gifts with family and friends, remember that some gifts – like love and friendship – don't come in packages. That's what this issue is about!

Check it out!

GIGGLE

pg.3

over some hilarious photo captions.

over there!

DISCOVER

pg.4

the Dominican Republic and find out why an American boy traveled there.

Se}ve

pg.11

a crossword about the best gifts of all.

Craft

pg.12

a pet out of an egg carton.

Cook

pg.13

a meal that looks like the Dominican flag.

Care

pg.14

for others, like a girl named Ava does.

GROW

pg.15

in faith with a lesson about gatherings.

Questions or Comments?

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GIGGLE

Remember this picture from the summer 2017 *Compassion Explorer Magazine*?

Here are some of your great captions!

Wait. Which one is the real cat?

Micah, 11
Bothell, Wash.

Let's have a playdate!

Jeremiah, 11
Warsaw, Ind.

These are my "pearly whites."

Abigail, 9
Ontario, Canada

There's a cat stalking my bear! Help! It's photo-bombing my picture! Ahh!

Abigail, 11
Fort Worth, Texas

Do you know the cat is in the picture?

Cole, 8
Warsaw, Ind.

Where's my cat? Let's see ... stuffie, stuffie, stuffie, cat, stuffie, stuffie ... wait, there you are!

Grace, 10
Monroe, Wash.

A typical day in zookeeper training school.

Ari, 11
Mesa, Ariz.

I can't get to school because I'm trapped under these animals.

Josiah, 7
Queensland, Australia

I love my stuffed animals! Oh wait ...

Emma, 9
Hurst, Texas

I had to train the dog to sit ... now it's monkey's turn!

Lucy, 10
Dayton, Ohio

The cat is stuffed, too.

Jackson, 13
Warsaw, Ind.

Cat: "I sure wish I could smile."

Isabella, 10
Charlotte, N.C.

Up Next!

Even kids living in poverty, like this sponsored boy in the Dominican Republic, get silly in class sometimes! Some kids can't go to school because their parents can't afford fees or school supplies. Sponsors help cover these costs so children can learn.



Email a caption
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DISCOVER The Dominican Republic



Money:
Dominican
peso



Stats

Dominican Republic

United States

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Population | 10,606,865 | 323,995,528 |
| People Living Below Poverty Line | 30.5% | 15.1% |
| Languages | Spanish | English, Spanish, Asian, Pacific Island and Indo-European |
| Religions | Roman Catholic 95% other 5% | Christian 68.2% other 25.2% Jewish 1.9% Mormon 1.6% Muslim 0.9% Jehovah's Witness 0.8% Buddhist 0.7% Hindu 0.7% |
| Typical Family Income | \$15,900 per year | \$57,300 per year |

People don't have enough fresh water that's safe to drink, and many can't afford to buy bottled water.

Mosquitoes infect people with the Zika virus.

Compassion builds water-cleaning centers and helps families pay for clean water.

Compassion shows kids and pregnant women how to avoid bites and helps them get medical help if needed.

DISCOVER
myWORLD

IAN and ALEXANDER



These 10-year-old boys live more than 2,400 miles apart, but they have a lot in common! Ian's family in Colorado sponsors Alexander, who lives in a poor part of the Dominican Republic. Let's see what their days are like and find out what happens when the boys meet in person!



IAN

My Morning

Ian lives with his 6-year-old sister, Tava, and their parents in Colorado. On school days, he eats breakfast and chooses the clothes he wants to wear. Then he brushes his teeth using toothpaste and clean water from a faucet in his indoor bathroom. He checks his watch to make sure he brushes for two minutes — and to make sure he isn't late for school!

Mi Mañana

Thousands of miles away in the Dominican Republic, Alexander lives with his brother, Angel, sister, Erica, and their mom. Alexander wakes up in the bed he shares with Angel and Erica. He brushes his teeth at a sink in his backyard, careful not to swallow any water because it contains germs. Alexander's mom doesn't make enough money to meet his needs, so Ian's family sponsors him through Compassion!



My Trip to School

Ian and Tava's mom home-schools them in a classroom at their house. But once a week, they join other home-schooled kids at a school building. On those days, their mom drives them there in a minivan. It takes about 15 minutes. She drops them off in front of the school.

Mi Viaje a la Escuela

After getting dressed in his uniform, Alexander walks to school. His mom can't afford a car, but the walk takes only about 10 minutes. Compassion sponsors help pay for uniforms and school supplies for kids whose parents can't afford them.



My Class

Ian enjoys learning in his comfortable classrooms. His favorite school subjects are science and history. He wants to be a locksmith when he grows up.

ALEXANDER

Mi Clase

Alexander's classroom at public school doesn't have air conditioning and can get hot. But the classroom looks a lot like Ian's. Alexander's favorite subject is math, and he wants to be an architect or professional baseball player when he grows up.





My Meal

Ian and Tava, who packed their own lunch boxes, sit down to eat. Today Ian is having a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, grapes, cucumbers and water. Students can also buy lunch at the cafeteria. Today they can choose from a yogurt parfait, milk or apple juice, a salad bar or graham crackers.



My Hobby

After school, Ian and Tava enjoy riding bikes around their neighborhood. It's a great way to work up an appetite before dinner. They also like playing with their pet turtles, Tommy and Klein, in their grassy backyard.

Mi Pasatiempo

Alexander's favorite hobby is baseball. Many families in Alexander's neighborhood can't afford toys or sports equipment. So Alexander and his friends use a board as a bat and a plastic bottle filled with rocks as a ball. Baseball is the most popular sport in the Dominican Republic, and these kids really know how to play!



"I've never made a friend that fast. The moment we hugged, we were friends, I could just tell." – Ian

Our First Meeting Nuestra Primera Reunion

Ian and Alexander have been writing letters to each other for five years. Today they finally get to meet in the Dominican Republic! After a happy hug, the boys start asking each other all the questions they have. Alexander speaks Spanish, but a translator helps them communicate. Alexander is excited to show Ian what his life is like.



Our Baseball Game Nuestro Juego de Beisbol

Alexander shows Ian how to play baseball using his homemade ball and bat. It takes Ian a few minutes to get the hang of it. But soon the friends are batting it out of the yard!

Our Memories Nuestras Memorias

Ian's and Alexander's families are sad to say goodbye. But they will always have the memories of their special time together. Ian will keep writing letters to Alexander. And he knows Alexander will write him back. This is a friendship that will last no matter the distance.



Watch
a video 
about Ian and Alexander at
compassion.com/explore

Scrambled Compassion

Ian and Alexander have a lot in common. The big difference between them is that Alexander lives in poverty and Ian doesn't. That's why Ian's family gives Alexander the gift of sponsorship. Unscramble the words to see some of the gifts Alexander receives through Compassion's program.



miyeplat

decieinm

upieplss

School _____

tngriotu

ofod

sonlsse

Bible _____



Fill in the blanks below with the highlighted letter from each word above to figure out the Spanish word for "friends."



Find answers to the puzzles on the back cover.



Seize

CAN YOU WRAP IT

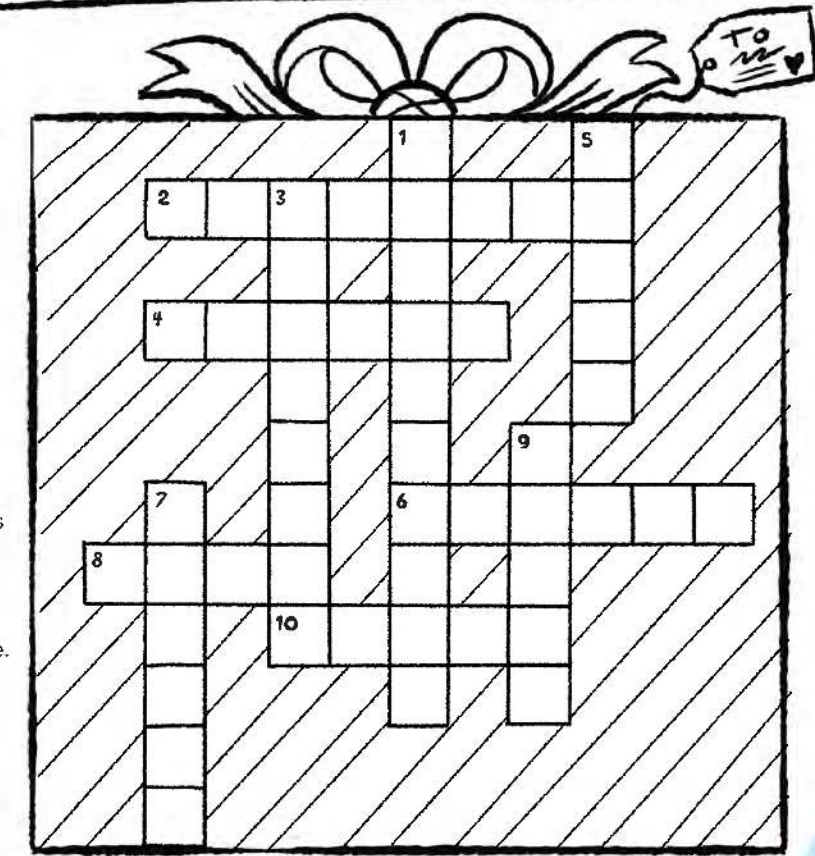


Kids who live in poverty often don't get many gifts that can be wrapped in boxes because their parents can't afford them. Compassion gives sponsored kids presents like shoes, toys and food each Christmas. But the sponsored kids receive a better gift every day of the year: the chance to learn about God's love.

Use the clues below to solve this crossword puzzle. The words that go across are gifts you could wrap up in a box. The words that go down are gifts that you couldn't wrap. Which gifts are most important to you?

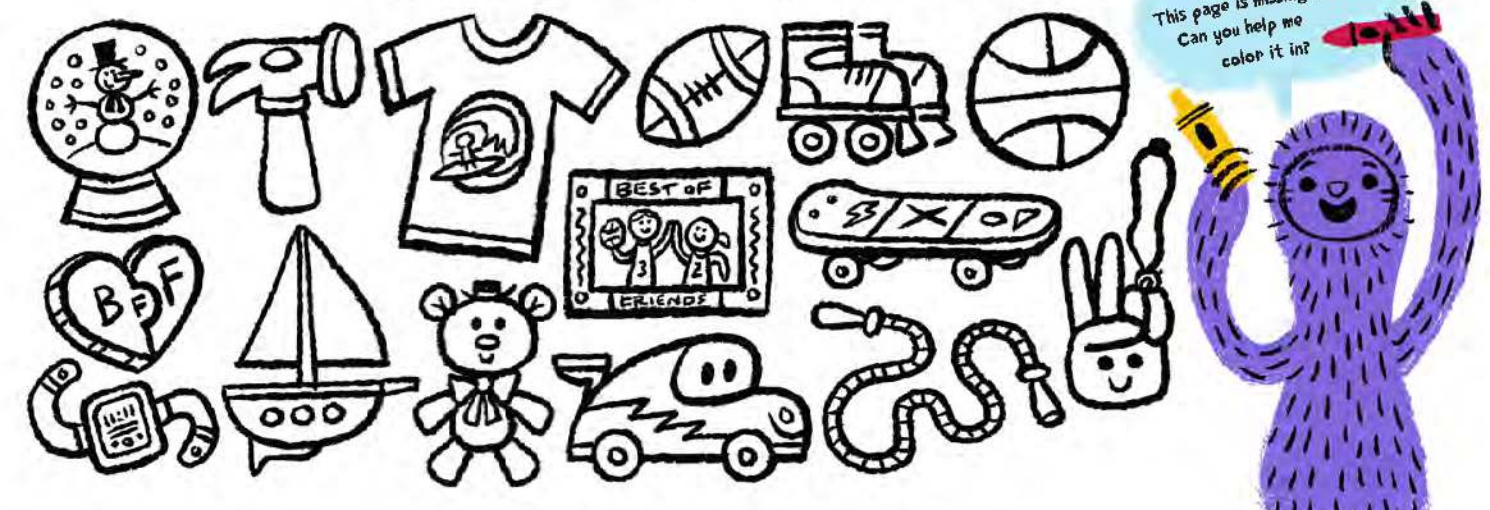
Down

- 1 You and your BFF share this special bond.
- 3 Taking photos helps keep these fresh.
- 5 "Sleep in heavenly ____."
- 7 You might see more of this group around the holidays.
- 9 "And now these three remain: ____, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." — 1 Corinthians 13:13



Across

- 2 Sponsored kids love playing Double Dutch with this (2 words)
- 4 Every toy toolbox needs one.
- 6 Don't go to the rink without these.
- 8 Candy Land is a classic.
- 10 Goes well with pants.



Oooops! This page is missing its colors! Can you help me color it in?

Craft

During Christmas a lot of people rush to stores to buy toys. But families who live in poverty usually can't afford new toys. So kids figure out how to make them out of recycled materials. Here's a turtle you can make out of an egg carton.

Shell Swap



1 Ask an adult to cut out the cups from a cardboard egg carton.



2 Paint the cups green and wait for them to dry. Then paint on brown spots.



3 Cut a pipe cleaner into 5 pieces about 2 inches long. Fold each piece in half to be feet and a tail.



4 With an adult's help, attach the feet and tail to the turtle shell with a glue gun or stapler.



5 Glue on a pom-pom ball head and some googly eyes. How cute is that?



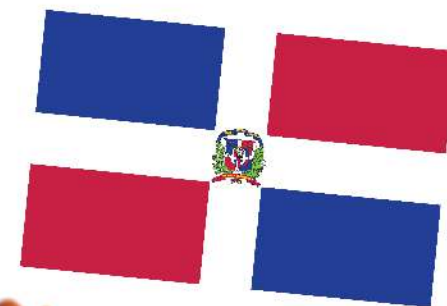
Ian and Tava have two pet turtles named Tommy and Klein. They play with them in their backyard! Read Ian's story on page 5.



Cook

The Dominican Flag

This is one of the most popular meals in the Dominican Republic. In Spanish, it's called "la bandera," which means "the flag." It includes rice, beans and meat — either chicken or beef. Each part is supposed to stand for one color of the flag. Many families living in poverty can't afford meat very often because it's more expensive than most vegetables. So this meal would be a special treat!



Steps

1. Cook rice according to package directions.
2. Cut the chicken into small pieces. Mix it in a bowl with 1 can of tomato paste and half each of the oregano, bell pepper, onion, garlic and cilantro. Let marinate at least 30 minutes.
3. Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a pot over medium heat. Remove chicken from the bowl, but keep the marinade.
4. Add chicken to the pot and sauté until light brown, about 10 minutes.
5. Add the marinade to the pot and simmer, covered, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
6. Heat 1 tbsp. oil in a large pot over medium heat. Then add the other can of tomato paste and the remaining spices. Cook about 1 minute, stirring. Add the pinto beans to the pot and cook until beans are warm, about 5 minutes.
7. Serve the beans over rice with chicken on the side. Or for extra fun, arrange the rice in a cross shape and surround it with beans and chicken.

Ingredients

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 c. white rice | 1 large red onion, diced |
| 2 lbs. chicken | 4 cloves of garlic, crushed |
| 2 (6-oz.) cans tomato paste | 1 tsp. fresh cilantro |
| 2 pinches of oregano | salt and pepper, to taste |
| 1 bell pepper, chopped | 2 (16-oz.) cans of pinto beans |



care



Kids Make a Mighty Roar

Ten-year-old Ava and her classmates at Linfield Christian School in California look forward to Market Day at the end of each quarter. It's when students set up businesses where other students can go shopping.

The students buy goodies like cookies, hot chocolate, artwork and jewelry from other kids. They don't use real money, but toy dollars they call lion paws (the lion is their mascot). Kids earn lion paws for good behavior at school. They save them up for Market Day.

Ava, who used to live in Brazil, a country where many people live in poverty, wanted to do more with her business than earn more lion paws. "Living in

Brazil ... I saw a lot of people who were homeless, and I thought it would be cool if I could help them," she says.

"God made the world perfect, and it was sad to see the people who didn't get a home and couldn't afford a job or a living."



"God treats everyone equally, and it's important that they get the chance to know about God."
— Ava

Ava, whose family sponsors children, decided she would use Market Day to help even more sponsored children. She set up a booth and asked for donations — either of lion paws or cash. Her mom and dad had agreed to donate \$1 for every lion paw that Ava collected.

Between cash donations and her parents' matching donations for the lion paws, Ava and other caring people at her school raised more than \$1,000!

"God made everyone, and the people who are living in poverty are just as important as people who are not," Ava says.



All across our country at Thanksgiving, families and friends gather around dinner tables giving thanks for everything God has given them. They eat turkey, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, and yummy pumpkin pie. They share stories about family, about what has happened to them during the year, and celebrate together for the blessings God has given them.

Jesus did the same thing. He went to wedding dinners to join others who gathered to celebrate marriages. He gathered His disciples to eat and talk and share the love of God. One day He even did a great miracle and fed thousands of people who had gathered to hear Him preach, even though there were just five loaves of bread and two fish to feed the whole crowd.

But God doesn't want us to gather just on holidays. He wants us to gather with other Christians as much as possible because that is how we grow in our faith. That's why going to church, Sunday school, Awana club, or vacation Bible school is so important. That's where our pastors and teachers walk us through the Bible and show us God's great love. Compassion kids around the world also gather to learn about Jesus.

The Bible tells us that gatherings are when God really shows up. God loves it when we learn and pray together. Jesus said: "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:19-20).

Matthew 14:13-21

• What gifts did Jesus offer to the 5,000 people gathered to hear Him speak?



• What can you share with others?

1 Start a family prayer journal. Write down your prayer requests, pray as a family, and then write down God's answers.



2 If you don't already go to a Bible study, talk to your parents about starting one with some of your friends.

• Thank our heavenly Father for church and getting the chance to know Him better.

• Thank God for hearing your prayers.

• Pray for sponsored kids around the world who gather to learn about God. Pray that they would know Him better each day.



