

COMPASSION

explorer

Hooray  for Holidays

GIGGLE pg.3
over some clever photo captions.

DISCOVER pg.4
Colombia and learn how kids who live there celebrate Christmas.

Cook pg.8
natilla, a dessert made during Christmastime in Colombia.

Solve pg.9
a puzzle about missing holiday traditions.

Quiz pg.10
How thankful are you?

Craft pg.12
a miniature gratitude journal.

care pg.14
for kids, like two California sisters did.

GROW pg.15
in faith with a devotional about hope.

Hooray for Holidays!



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GIGGLE

Remember this picture from the Summer 2018 *Compassion Explorer Magazine*? Here are some of your great captions! Find more at explorer.compassion.com/explorers.

Wait! Don't go away! I only have nine more to show you!
Maggie, 11
Huntsville, Ala.

Preparing for my summer look.
Jen, 10
Colorado Springs, Colo.

This is my daddy's hat, so it's too big for me.
Alex, 10
Boone, N.C.

Who needs sunscreen when you have this hat?
Katelyn, 12
Knoxville, Tenn.

I should be a model.
LaurelAnna, 14
Cleburne, Texas

Big hat, little boy.
Samuel, 12
Boone, N.C.

Too big? Too small? No, just right!
Mia, 8
Columbia, Md.

Big brim, small brim. Wide brim, thin brim. Too many options!
Ella, 12
San Antonio, Texas

One minute, I need to get my hat angle perfect!
Kaitlyn, 10
Columbus, Ohio



Up Next!

These boys in Burkina Faso show off their balancing and sharing skills! In Burkina Faso, many families can't afford bicycles. So kids who have them share with their friends.



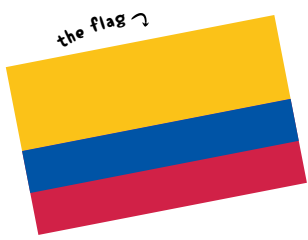
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DISCOVER Colombia



the flag ~

full name is Republic of Colombia

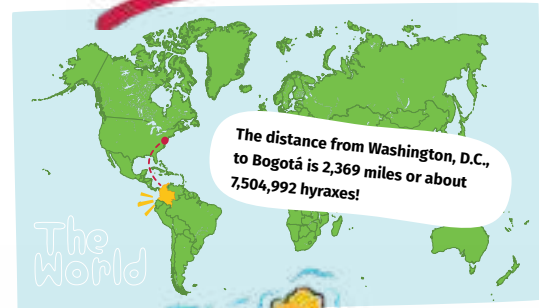


was part of one big country called Gran Colombia that separated into Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela in 1830

Wild Residents: capybaras, humpback whales, sloths, black spider monkeys



The Andean condor, one of the world's largest flying birds, is the national symbol.



The distance from Washington, D.C., to Bogotá is 2,369 miles or about 7,504,992 hyraxes!



Rock hyraxes can grow up to 20 inches in length.



drinks more fruit juice than most other countries



has a world-champion speed roller-skating team



home to more species of birds (1,900) than any other country



Favorite...

sports: tejo (players throw a puck at a target), baseball
foods: fried plantains, empanadas, arepas, arroz con leche
celebrations: Christmas, Epiphany, Carnival, Easter, All Saints' Day

Stats	Colombia	United States
Population	47,698,524	326,625,791
People Living Below Poverty Line	28%	15.1%
Languages	Spanish	English, Spanish, other Indo-European, Asian and Pacific Island
Religions	Roman Catholic 79% Protestant 14% other/unspecified 7%	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	\$14,500 per year	\$59,500 per year



Many kids, especially under age 5, are malnourished.

There is a shortage of clean water.

Public schools are crowded and don't have enough skilled teachers.



Sponsored kids eat healthy meals at their Compassion centers.

Churches give water filters to many families who need them.

Sponsored kids go to school and also learn from tutors at their centers.

DISCOVER myWORLD



Hi!

I'm Jarwin. I'm 6 years old and live with my two sisters, mom and stepdad in Cartagena, Colombia.

Here in Colombia we celebrate Jesus' birthday all December long! My parents usually don't have enough money to buy us toys. But there are many fun things to see and do. Plus, sometimes Mom finds us toys that people threw away, and she gives them to my sisters and me. We're happy to have something to play with, even if it's broken and old.

I want to tell you more about where I live — and why Christmas was extra special for me last year!

This is Mom and me at our home last year. She usually stays home to take care of my sisters and me. Dad works as a motorcycle driver. People pay him money to drive them places. If enough people need rides, Dad makes money to buy us food that day. But sometimes we can't afford food. Those are the worst nights because we go to bed hungry. Things are better since I started going to the Compassion program at our church last year when I was 5.



These are photos of me at my Compassion center coloring a picture and eating a meal of rice and vegetables. I started going to the center for food, Bible lessons, health checkups and playtime. My teachers there told me they would find someone to sponsor me. I could hardly wait until I had my own sponsor! But that's not the only thing I was excited about — Christmas activities were starting all over Colombia!



In Colombia we start celebrating Christmas on Dec. 7 with a holiday called Día de las Velitas. That's Spanish for "Day of the Little Candles." People light candles all over town to celebrate the time when Mary became pregnant with Jesus. And grandmas come over to cook foods like buñuelos, which are fried cheesy bites, and natilla, a custard dessert.



**WHEN
JESUS SPOKE
AGAIN TO THE
PEOPLE, HE SAID,
"I AM THE LIGHT
OF THE WORLD.
WHOEVER FOLLOWS
ME WILL NEVER WALK
IN DARKNESS, BUT WILL
HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE."**

JOHN 8:12



The teachers from my Compassion center invited my family to a Christmas party! We ate a feast with other sponsored kids and their families. Then the teachers surprised us. They gave presents to every sponsored child! I got this awesome toy truck and a new shirt. Since my parents didn't have to buy me a gift, they had enough money to buy rag dolls for my sisters! Then I got an even better surprise a couple of months later: The Serafin family from the United States sponsored me!



More reasons I love Christmastime in Colombia: dances, fireworks and lights! Dancers and musicians perform in the streets. And families watch fireworks at parks. On Dec. 16, we start nine nights of prayers and parties to celebrate Jesus' birth. Each night, families say a different prayer. During this time, shops, streetlights and trees are decorated with lights and giant ornaments.

Cook Natilla

[Nah-TEE-yuh]

This pudding dessert is one of the most popular Christmastime treats in Colombia. Some sponsored kids get to enjoy it at Christmas celebrations at their Compassion centers!



Here's how to make natilla. Many abuelas — Spanish for “grandmothers” — make it using whole cane sugar. But this recipe uses brown sugar instead, which is easier to find in the U.S.

Natilla

Yield: 14 servings

Ingredients

4½ c. milk, divided

½ c. packed brown sugar

¼ c. white sugar

4 cinnamon sticks

¾ c. shredded coconut, optional

1 c. cornstarch

1 tbsp. cinnamon powder for sprinkling

Directions

1. Pour 3½ c. milk into a large pot over medium-low heat. Add the brown sugar, white sugar and cinnamon sticks. Bring to a boil, stirring regularly. Quickly remove from heat and set aside for 5 minutes.

2. Meanwhile mix the cornstarch with the remaining cup of milk in a bowl until the cornstarch dissolves completely.

3. Put the pot of milk back on the stove over medium-low heat. Remove the cinnamon sticks and add the coconut if using. Pour in the cornstarch mixture. Stir constantly until it all thickens and you can see the bottom of the pot.

4. Immediately pour into a serving dish or casserole and let cool at least 1 hour. Then top it with cinnamon powder and serve — with buñuelos if you'd like!



Buñuelos

Natilla is usually served on a plate next to buñuelos, which are fried cheese bites. Get the recipe for buñuelos online at explorer.compassion.com!

Seize Missing Traditions

People around the world celebrate Christmas in lots of ways. Families who are poor usually can't afford presents or big meals that feed a lot of people. But sponsored kids go to Christmas parties at their Compassion centers, where they get presents and a special meal!

Here are some fun traditions from countries where sponsors help kids. But each one has a word missing. Can you find out which word from the word bank belongs in each blank space? Answers are on the back cover if you get stuck.

word
bank

calendar

feathers

firecrackers

prizes

shoes

straw



Haiti

Kids wash their shoes, fill them with _____ and put them under the Christmas tree or outside their front doors. They hope that Tonton Nwèl (Santa Claus) will empty their shoes and put presents inside.

Mexico

In the city of Oaxaca, artists carve giant radishes into sculptures — including Nativity scenes! The event is called The Night of the Radishes, or Noche de Rábanos in Spanish. The best radish carvers win _____.

Indonesia

Most Christmas trees in Indonesia are made of plastic. But on the island of Bali, some people make artsy trees using chicken _____ as branches.

Ethiopia

Ethiopians follow a different _____ than the one North Americans use. So they celebrate Christmas on Jan. 7. Presents are not part of most people's traditions. To enjoy the holiday, people spend time with family and friends, and dress in special clothes to go to church.

Brazil

Some families serve Christmas dinner at midnight on Christmas Eve. Kids eat first so they can go to bed and await a visit from Papai Noel (Santa Claus). They leave their _____ out in the open, hoping that Papai Noel will fill them with sweets.

El Salvador

There's no “silent night” in El Salvador during the Christmas season! The streets are filled with people setting off _____ to celebrate.

United States

Fill in your family's traditions: _____

Quiz

Count Your Acorns

Did you know that thankful people are happier? Scientists have done studies on gratitude, the feeling of being thankful. They found that people who take time to count their blessings are happier. And as Christians, we know that our hope and happiness come from Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 tells us to “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

It’s nice to spend Thanksgiving Day counting your blessings and thinking about everything God has given you. But it’s important to build up gratitude all year long. When you take time to give thanks, you’re like a smart squirrel who stores up food for the winter. Take this quiz to find out how many “acorns of thanks” you keep in your squirrel nest.

1. I thank God for the blessings in my life ...

- a. Once a year.
- b. Once a month.
- c. Once a week.
- d. Once or more a day.

2. When it comes to my physical health, I ...

- a. Wish I had a different body.
- b. Feel annoyed when adults tell me to eat vegetables or be active.
- c. Thank God for my health about once a week.
- d. Thank God for my health every day.

3. When I think about other kids my age, I think ...

- a. Most of them have better lives than me because they get everything they want.
- b. I have an OK life, but I wish I had more of the things they have.
- c. I have a better life than many of them.
- d. I’m very blessed, and I ask God to bless them too.

4. I thank God that I have basics like food, clothes and shelter ...

- a. Never.
- b. Only when I get a letter from my sponsored child.
- c. Once a week.
- d. More than once a week.

5. I don’t have everything I want, but I am thankful for what I have.

- a. I totally disagree.
- b. I mostly disagree.
- c. I mostly agree.
- d. I totally agree.

6. When I hear about kids who don’t have as much as I do, I ...

- a. Think their parents just need to work harder.
- b. Change the subject so I don’t have to think about it.
- c. Feel sad about it and realize that my life could be much worse.
- d. Thank God for all I have and pray for ways I can help them.

7. When someone points out that I’m not acting grateful, I think ...

- a. That’s because I have nothing to be grateful for.
- b. It might be true, but I don’t want to admit it.
- c. It’s mostly true, and I feel embarrassed that I forgot. I’ll try to do better.
- d. I was definitely acting ungrateful, so I’ll ask God to help change my attitude.



To find your results:

Give yourself
 1 acorn for every (a) you chose;
 2 acorns for every (b);
 3 acorns for every (c);
 4 acorns for every (d).

Q1___ Q5___
 Q2___ Q6___
 Q3___ Q7___
 Q4___
 Total acorns___

7-16
acorns

17-20
acorns

21-24
acorns

25-28
acorns

Measly Mound

To feel happier, try to build up more gratitude. Sponsored children thank God for what little they have, and you can follow their example! Instead of focusing on what you don’t have, thank God for what you do have. Write a hopeful Bible verse to the child you sponsor to remind him or her that you care.

Short Stack

You sometimes feel thankful for all you have. If you want to feel happier, remind yourself to focus on gratitude more. How? Each time you catch yourself thinking about things you don’t have, pause and shift your thoughts to things you do have. Keeping a gratitude journal and praying are great ways to do this.

Healthy Heap

You forget to count your blessings sometimes, but you usually feel thankful. When you think about people in need, like the child you sponsor, it usually makes you feel grateful for all you have. One way to stay focused on your blessings even in hard times is to pray. At least once a day, thank God for people you love, your home and other blessings.

Sweet Stockpile

You’re a very grateful squirrel — er, kid. Instead of focusing on what you don’t have, you almost always focus on what you do have. When you think of people in need, like the child you sponsor, you realize that your life could be harder. You thank God often. Because of your thankfulness, you are probably healthier and happier than many people.

Tips for Building Up Gratitude

1. **Keep a gratitude journal.** Every day write down three good things that happened. Learn to make your own mini gratitude journal on the next page!
2. **Use your imagination.** Picture how life would be without your favorite people and things. How would it feel? Think about kids who are so poor they hardly have anything. Then compare your life to theirs.
3. **Write a note of thanks.** Think of people who have done nice things for you or given you something special. Write them a note telling why they are important to you and that you feel thankful for them. Then send or hand them the note.
4. **Pause the pleasure.** Giving up something you enjoy for a period of time will make you more thankful for it. For example, go without your favorite drink or food for a month. Or give up TV for a week.
5. **Take a sense walk.** Invite a family member to go on a walk to appreciate your senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste. When you see something beautiful, thank God that you can see it. Take a snack, and when you eat it, thank God for your sense of taste.



Craft

Thanks a Million

Writing down your thoughts can help you learn more about yourself, figure out how you feel, and help you make lasting memories. Writing down the people and things you're thankful for can help you grow in happiness. Make this mini gratitude journal to remember to give thanks for all the awesomeness in your life — and show off your crafty side too!

Basic Supplies

blank 8"x11" sheet of paper
scissors
pencil

Creative Supplies

The way you decorate your journal is up to you. Here are some ideas for decorative supplies:

- markers
- colored pencils
- crayons
- washi tape
- stickers
- old magazines
- watercolors
- envelopes
- ribbon
- glue stick

Directions

- 1** *Adult help needed.* Place the paper in front of you with the shorter edges on top and bottom, longer edges on the left and right. Fold it in half, bringing the top edge to meet the bottom edge. Fold in half again, bringing the left edge to meet the right edge. Finally, fold the top edge to meet the bottom edge.
- 2** Unfold one fold. Then unfold one more. One of the long edges will have an opening, and the other will be closed along the fold. Starting at the closed edge, cut halfway across along the middle crease. Unfold the whole sheet of paper. It should have a slit in the middle.
- 3** Fold the paper lengthwise along the crease with the slit. Then hold the paper at both ends and push inward. The sections should fold in to form an eight-page mini-book.
- 4** Now it's time to get creative! Think of a title for your mini gratitude journal, and write it on the cover. Use craft supplies to decorate the cover how you want. Then write a "thought starter" at the top of each page (examples below). Leave space to write or draw beneath it.
- 5** Fill it in! Write about, draw, or glue magazine clippings on the pages. You could fill out your journal all at once, or maybe just once or twice a week until it's full. Then make another one! You could start a whole collection, or include one for your sponsored child next time you write to him or her.

Thought Starters

1. A person who I'm thankful for today is _____ because ...
2. If I were born in my sponsored child's town, here are some things I might not have ...
3. I thank God that I have enough food, and I pray for kids who don't. Here are some foods I'm grateful for ...
4. If I suddenly had no home to live in, my day might go like this ...
5. I'm thankful that my family sponsors _____ because ...
6. I thank God for _____ because ...
7. Sometimes I forget to thank God for ...
8. My favorite Bible verse about thankfulness is ...
9. I pray for people who are sick with _____. If I had that sickness, I would feel ...

Download a template at explorer.compassion.com/gratitudejournal.



Care



Up for the Challenge

What would you do if your parents challenged you to raise \$500 for a good cause? That's the question two California sisters faced after their family became Compassion sponsors!

Allison and Josephine's family sponsored their first child after touring the Compassion Experience exhibit that stopped in their city. They entered the exhibit and started a slow walk through rooms that looked like the humble places where Compassion works. Through headphones they listened to the true story of a child who grew up in need and received help from a sponsor. It made Allison and Josephine wish they could become sponsors to give a child a happy ending like the one they heard.

"We were touched by how Compassion helps people," says Allison, 11.

So the sisters were excited when their parents said they could sponsor a child at the end of the event! They chose a boy named Thierry from Rwanda. Josephine, 8, says she wanted "to help Thierry buy shoes and stuff that he needs in the future."

Then their parents surprised them with the challenge to raise \$500 for Compassion. The sisters were excited because it meant they'd be able to help even more kids living in poverty. They



decided that a garage sale seemed like a good idea, but they weren't sure they had \$500 worth of stuff to sell. So they invited family friends to donate toys, games and books to the sale. They also invited neighbors to host garage sales on the same day and give the money to Compassion.

Thanks to so many families coming together, Allison and Josephine raised \$600! Their mom's company pitched in money too, so their final donation ended up being \$1,200.

"Don't be scared if you feel like you can't make a difference," Allison says, "because little things you can do can have a big impact on other people."

The sisters keep writing to Thierry, drawing him pictures, and praying for him.

"Little things you can do can have a big impact on other people."
— Allison

GROW



Fold A and B together to make a stand-up devotional!

After Jesus was born, a group of wise men set out to find Him. The wise men were also called Magi — people who studied stars and dreams. They believed that when they saw a certain star rise in the sky, it would lead them to the savior. So after spotting the star one night, they left their homes to follow it.

It probably took a lot of courage to begin the journey. In those days, most people rode on camels and donkeys, or they walked. Many experts who study the Bible think the journey might have taken up to two years. The Bible doesn't say, but there might have been times when the Magi wondered if they would ever find the baby. Maybe they wondered whether following a star was crazy.

But the Magi had so much hope that the star would lead them to their savior that they kept following it "until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed" (Matthew 2:9-10). They gave Jesus three gifts and worshiped Him.

Like the Magi, children living in the countries Compassion works in today need hope to keep going. Their lives are not easy. Many children, especially in Africa, have to walk hours each day just to get water. Some don't get enough to eat, and their parents can't afford to send them to school. It would be easy to feel hopeless when you can't even go to school or dream about what you want to be when you grow up.

What do you hope for? Have you ever hoped for something you didn't get? How did it feel? At Compassion centers around the world, teachers tell sponsored kids that God loves them and has a special plan for them. Sponsors give them even more hope by sending them letters and drawings. Hope in Jesus gives them joy even though their lives are hard.

Matthew 2:1-12



Make a list or draw a picture of things you hope for — maybe what you want to be when you grow up, or a present you want. Talk to your family about how hope feels.



Thank God for sending His Son to be your savior. Ask God to give hope to children around the world who need it most.



Parents and teachers, we've got a new website!



explorer.compassion.com



Explore your sponsored child's world in our new **geography** section!



Learn more about how your family helps your sponsored child in our just-added **Compassion 101** section!



Get lesson plans and connect to family activities in our new section for **parents and teachers**!

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COMPASSION
explorer

IN922 [11/18]

About the cover

Jarwin, a 6-year-old who lives in Colombia, likes to play with his toy dump truck. His family can't afford toys. Since Jarwin is sponsored, he got the truck as a Christmas present at his Compassion center!

Answers for page 9: Haiti — straw; Mexico — prizes; Indonesia — feathers; Ethiopia — calendar; Brazil — shoes; El Salvador — firecrackers.

