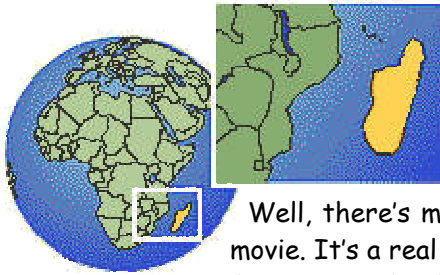


World Champions

OM New Zealand's newsletter for children who want to make a difference in God's World!



Country focus: Madagascar

"Madagascar! You mean that movie with the lion, giraffe, lemurs and penguins? Of course I've heard about Madagascar!"

Well, there's much more to Madagascar than is shown in the movie. It's a real place, with real people living there.

Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world, and is home to about 18 million people. Nearly half of them are Christians, which is wonderful, but that still means millions of people on the island don't know about God's love for them. Madagascar really needs World Champions to Pray, Give and Go For It!



Pirates, Missionaries, Queens & Buried Treasure...

The history of Madagascar sounds like it could make an interesting movie all by itself!



About 300 years ago, Madagascar became a favourite place for pirates to land. They liked the fresh water and good hiding places for their ships. They also liked the fact that there were no rules and they could make the local people do whatever they liked. Some pirates made themselves kings of Madagascar. They were cruel and made many people their slaves. After many years, the last pirates left the island, knowing that the people had had enough, and would soon fight back.

Not long afterwards, two missionaries, both called David, arrived in Madagascar with their families to tell the people there about Jesus. They set up a little school and the king sent his son to be one of the first students! There were no books because nobody had ever written down the language of Madagascar before. So the two Davids put the language into writing, as well as teaching people how to read and write. All the time they told people about Jesus and even worked on translating the whole Bible into their language!



Then the king died and his wife became queen. She didn't like Christians and wanted her people to follow their old tradition and worship their dead kings and queens. She made it illegal for people to be Christians and banned all Christian books!

But there were still 15 books of the Bible left to be translated. The missionaries refused to leave the island until the whole Bible was completed, even though it meant they were risking their lives. Then, in 1835, when it was finally finished, the missionaries secretly handed them out to the Christians. They also buried 70 Bibles for people to find once they left the island - just like buried treasure!

Over the next years, the Christians in Madagascar had a very difficult time. They had to meet in secret. When they were caught, they were hurt and their Bibles were burnt. Many were even killed by the queen. But they still worshipped God and studied from the buried Bibles they dug up. Life was hard, but they knew that nothing was too difficult for God.



By the time the queen died, there were more Christians in Madagascar than before! The new queen, her daughter, had even become a Christian! She invited the missionaries back so they could teach even more people there about God's love. Because of them, there are so many Christians in Madagascar today!

Topic:
Nothing is too difficult for God!

Bible reading:

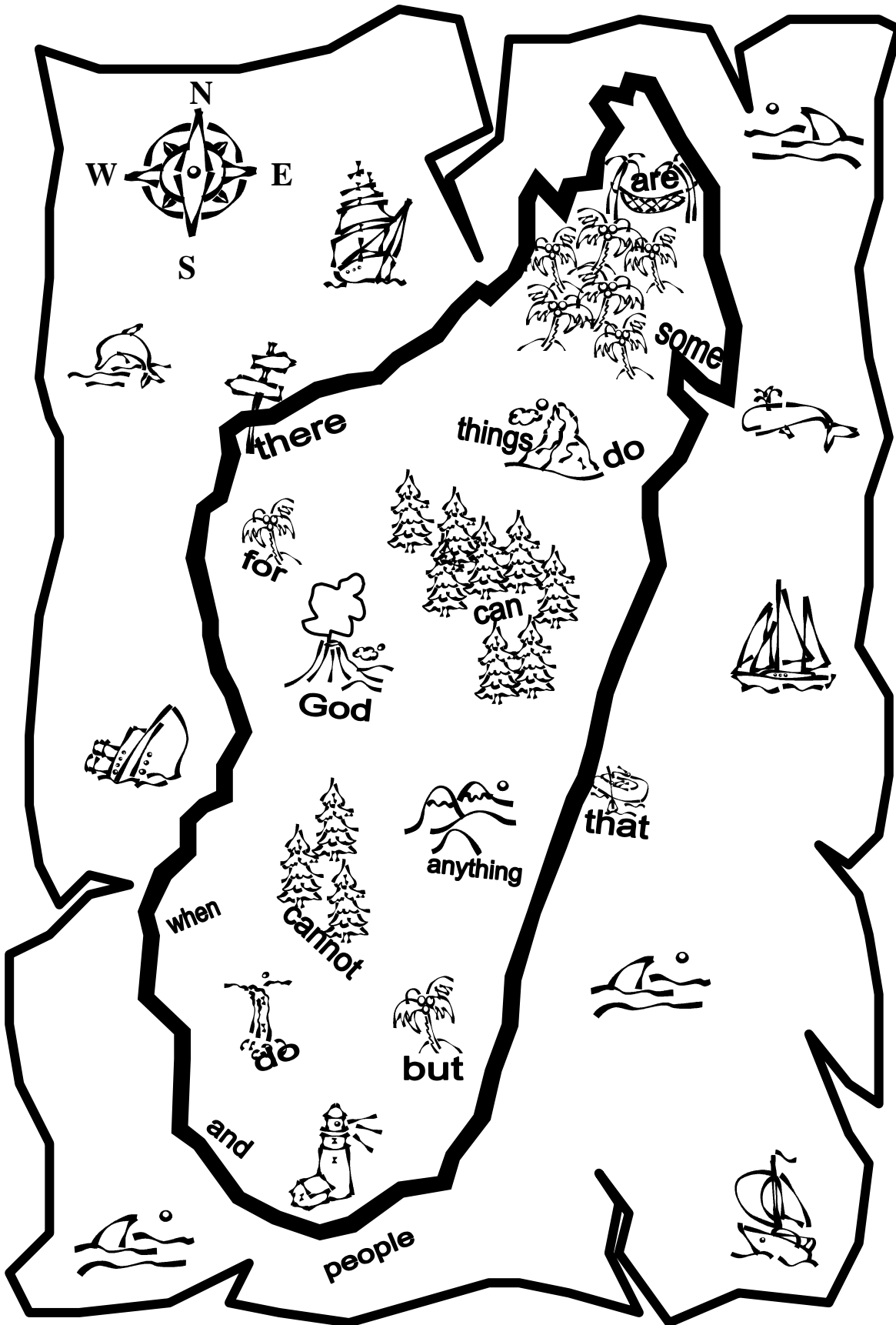
When an army was surrounding them, it looked like Elisha and his servant were in trouble! But nothing is too difficult for God, and He showed His power in an amazing way!

2 Kings 6:8-23



This month's memory verse:

Can you follow the treasure map to figure out the memory verse? Write down the words as you find them. Be careful to follow the instructions carefully, or you might be shark bait with a verse that makes no sense!



Start at Signpost point.

Go North-East through the Palm forest to relax in the hammock.

Follow the East coast down to the Whale look-out.

Head South-West to Lonely Mountain and only stop on the West side.

Head South-East to the rowboat without going through Pine woods.

Row to the South Point lighthouse. Watch out for sharks!

Go North to the small forest.

Head South-West to the waterfall.

Find the lonely palm tree to the East.

Head North-West to the volcano. Stay away from the small forest and snowy hills.

Go North-East through Pine woods to the East side of Lonely Mountain.

Head down along the East coast to the snowy hills.

Have you got the verse?

Jesus replied, “ _____

_____ ,

_____ .” Luke 18:27

(CEV translation)

The Doulos - World Champions in Madagascar:

In September and October 2005, the ship Doulos visited Madagascar for the second time. Nearly half the people in Madagascar can't read or write very well, and there are not many places to get books from in Madagascar, so when the ship came full of good books for them to learn from, it was very exciting!

In one weekend, over 18,000 people crowded onto the Doulos to buy cheap books and delicious ice-creams!

As well as providing books for the people, the crew of the Doulos were able to share with them the story of Jesus and how God loves people around the world. Thousands of people came to meetings on board, and many teams went out into other parts of the country to share God's love with people there.



Long queues of people waiting to get on the Doulos in Madagascar.



Students from a school for the deaf performing a dance for a Doulos team.

The governor from one area said that his time on the ship had changed him. He also said that he hoped the people in his country would learn from the ship members:

"There is no place for strife and fighting on board and that's what we want to see in us."

Who would have imagined a few hundred years ago that in a country where there was so much trouble and fighting, people would now welcome missionaries and see how God changes people's lives. Nothing is too difficult for God!

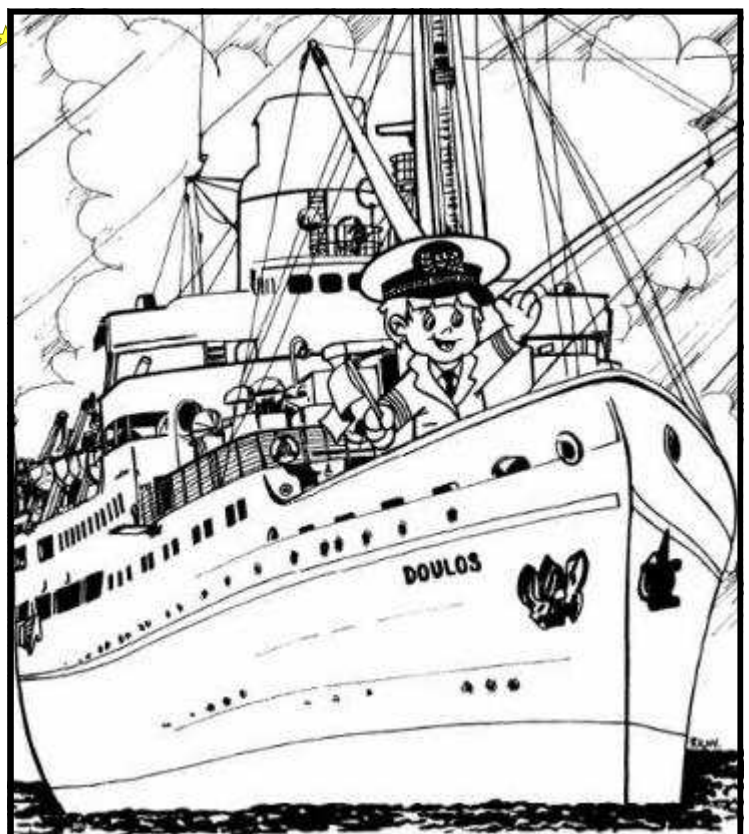


World Champions... Pray!

You can be a World Champion by praying for people in Madagascar.

- Thank God that nothing is too difficult for Him, and that He has been changing people's lives in Madagascar. The history was so violent but there are now many Christians there.
- Thank God for the recent Doulos visit to Madagascar. Pray that people will turn more to God as a result of the visit.
- Many people in Madagascar are poor. Pray that they will trust God for everything, because nothing is too difficult for Him.

How can you remember to pray for Madagascar? Easy! Every time you see something from the movie, or pirates, or missionaries, or anything that reminds you of Madagascar, PRAY!





Children on the Doulos in Madagascar.



World Champions... Give!

You can also be a World Champion by giving. OM doesn't work all the time in Madagascar, but our ships, like the Doulos, visit there sometimes.

It's quite expensive to run a big ship like Doulos. We have to buy fuel to get the ship from country to country, and it's a LOT more than what a car uses!

If you would like to help with some money towards fuel costs, you can ask an adult to help you send some to us. We will make sure the ship gets it, as well as sending you a special thank you surprise!



Did you know...

Just like New Zealand has unique creatures such as the tuatara and kiwi, Madagascar also has some animals that can be found nowhere else in the world. Because both countries are islands, animals can't travel over land to other parts of the world.

Madagascar's unique creatures

include:

Lemurs

There are over 30 species of these furry tree hoppers in Madagascar. They can reach up to 8 metres in one jump!



Fossa

With the body of a cat and the face of a dog, these predators like eating lemurs.



World Champions... Go for it!

Nothing is too difficult for God. He can change people's lives and even use bad situations for good, just like He did in Madagascar. This is the same in our lives.

We can trust God with every situation. When something looks too difficult for us to handle, we can pray to God to handle it Himself. When we know we cannot do something by ourselves, we can be certain that if God wants to do it, He will.

That doesn't mean He always does what we want Him to. Remember that God allowed the people in Madagascar to have a difficult time, but many years later, He used that to let many more know about His love.

That's the same with our lives. Sometimes God allows things to happen to us that we don't like. We can be sure that He still loves us though, and we can trust Him to do what is best.

So next time you're in a tough situation, remember that God can do anything and nothing is too difficult for Him.

Trust Him with everything.



'World Champions' is made by OM New Zealand, where we want people of all ages to be a part of the wonderful things God is doing around the world. Why not contact us and see how else you can get involved?

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