

## **Better Together: Teaching Children About the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program**

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### **Purpose:**

To help children understand how Southern Baptist churches work together through the Cooperative Program to share Jesus and help people around the world.

### **Key Phrase:**

*We Are Better Together!*

**Key Passage:** Acts 11:29-30 “Each of the disciples, according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brothers and sisters who lived in Judea. They did this, sending it to the elders by means of Barnabas and Saul.”

### **Supplies Needed:**

- Print the lesson resources
- 6 inflated balloons (non-helium)
- Black Permanent Marker
- \$20, \$50, or \$100 bill
- Scissors
- Tape
- One drawing sheet per child (optional)
- Crayons or colored pencils (optional)

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### **Opening Activity: Balloon Challenge**

1. Inflate six balloons (non-helium). Using a black permanent marker, write one of these words/phrases on each balloon: International Missionaries, Church Planting, College Campus Ministry, Protecting Children, Helping Churches and Disaster Relief.
  2. Pick one child. Toss all the inflated balloons into the air and tell them to keep them floating. (Use enough balloons so it's impossible!) Once a balloon hits the ground, the turn ends.
  3. Try it again — but this time let all the children work together in keeping the balloons afloat. Suddenly, it's much easier!
  4. Ask: “*Which was easier — one person or everyone working together?*”
  5. Teach the key phrase: “*We Are Better Together!*” The teacher says “We Are” and have the class respond, “Better Together!” Repeat several times
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### Application Activity: The Giving Dilemma

1. Show the \$50 bill (or whatever denomination of money you choose).
2. Say: "Our church needs your help in deciding where we send our missions money. We have a \$50 bill and can only give it to one mission activity. I will explain all five options and need you to decide together which one we support."
3. Share the five options (have kids hang signs around the room as you read them):
  - Send a missionary to India
  - Build a church in an area of the United States where there are few churches
  - Provide homes for children in foster care
  - Tell college students about Jesus through Baptist Campus Ministry
  - Help people recover from a massive hurricane
4. Let kids discuss. Eventually, they will struggle to decide on one.
5. Suggest to the kids that since we only have one \$50 bill, perhaps we should cut it up into 5 pieces. Bring out scissors and prepare to cut the bill. Kids will shout "No!" Say: "You're right. We can't cut it up. But what if other churches joined us? If all the churches gave together, we could support all five!"
6. Explain: That's exactly what happens in the **Southern Baptist Convention**. More than **47,000 churches** (that's more churches than all the McDonald's and Starbucks combined!) give together through something called the **Cooperative Program**. When we give, our money joins with theirs. Each year, our church and thousands of churches like ours, combine to give over **\$400 million to fund missions!**
7. Lead in the Key Phrase. Teacher "We Are" and class "Better Together!"

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### How the Cooperative Program Works

Share with the class how the Cooperative Program works.

1. Each week, church members give a portion of their earnings to the church offering
2. Church gives a portion of its offerings to missions through the Cooperative Program.
3. About one half of the money funds missions in their state.
4. The other half funds missions in our nation and around the world.

Because of this, we don't have to pick just one mission. We can support **all kinds of ministries** at once.

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### **Examples of What our Cooperative Program Giving Supports**

(Show pictures and let kids hold them up while you read the caption and explain each one)

- **International Mission Board:** Our church's Cooperative Program giving supports over 3,500 International Mission Board Missionaries and 3,000 missionary kids. (That's enough to fill 115 school buses!)
- **Disaster Relief:** Our church's Cooperative Program giving provides meals and repairs after hurricanes, tornadoes and floods through Southern Baptist Disaster Relief. When natural disasters strike, trained teams serve hurting people by feeding them, providing showers, laundry services, removing trees and mud, and much more.
- **College Ministry:** Our church's Cooperative Program giving helps college students hear the gospel.
- **Seminaries:** Our church's Cooperative Program giving provides theological education for ministers and missionaries.
- **Helping Churches:** Our church's Cooperative Program giving helps our state convention train churches in leading ministries like Vacation Bible School.
- **Summer Camps:** Our church's Cooperative Program giving supports camps for kids and teens.
- **Evangelism Events:** Our church's Cooperative Program giving funds evangelistic crusades to tell people about Jesus.
- **Church Planting:** Our church's Cooperative Program giving helps start new churches all over the U.S.
- **Children's Choirs:** Our church's Cooperative Program giving helps lead children's choir events.
- **Multi-Language Ministries:** Our church's Cooperative Program giving helps people learn about Jesus in many languages.
- **Foster Care:** Our church's Cooperative Program giving helps care for children in difficult situations.

8. Tell the class: *“This is all possible because our church cooperates with other Southern Baptist churches. We don’t have to choose just one need*
  9. Repeat the Key Phrase. Teacher “We Are” and class “Better Together!”
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### **Circle Back**

1. Remind the kids of the opening activity.
  2. Ask: “Did anyone notice something unique about the balloons?” Point out that each balloon listed a ministry supported by the Cooperative Program.
  3. Point out that because churches work together through the Cooperative Program, all of these ministries, and more, can thrive.
  4. Repeat the key phrase “We are Better Together!”
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### **Prayer Time**

Option 1: Pray for the Cooperative Program to grow so more people can hear about Jesus.  
Option 2: Give each child one of the missions pictures and ask them pray for that ministry aloud.

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### **Optional Activity**

Give each child a drawing sheet. Ask them to draw one ministry that the Cooperative Program supports.