

CHAPTER 1

The Call to Calabar

What do you want to be when you grow up? (*Allow response.*) This week we're going to hear about a girl who wanted to do something really big for God.

Every Saturday night in the 1850s, a young girl named Mary Slessor sat shivering by the fireplace in her home in Dundee, Scotland. Her siblings were already asleep in another part of their small, dirty apartment. But Mary and her mother were waiting. Can you pretend to yawn like you're tired from staying up late? (*Do with children.*) Every Saturday night they stayed up, waiting for Mary's father to come home from work. Sometimes Mary and her mother would knit or mend their worn-out clothes as they waited. Other times they would pray together or read. One thing was the same about every Saturday night—Mr. Slessor would be late. This night wasn't any different.

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Mary and her mother were sitting in silence when suddenly the door flew open and an angry, drunk man stumbled in. It was Mary's father. He dropped one coin onto the table and stared blankly at Mary and her mother. This was all he had left for his family; he had spent the rest of the money he had made that week drinking alcohol. Neither Mary nor her mother was surprised. They didn't cry or say anything to Mary's father. Mary just looked at him, disappointed. They would go another week in their cold, damp apartment without money to pay rent—another week without money to buy food or clothes for her younger siblings. Mary shivered just thinking about it. In a drunken rage her father threw the dinner they had so carefully saved for him into the fire. Even though Mary had done nothing wrong, her father slapped her and threw her outside, slamming the door and locking it behind her. She began to cry as she shivered in the freezing night air. "Please let me in! Let me in!" Mary cried as she pounded on the door. Show me how your face would look if that happened to you. (*Do with children.*) Mary curled up in a dark alley, shivering, crying and waiting for the sun to come up.

When dawn arrived, Mary's father left for work. She watched him walk down the street toward the factory before she rushed inside and hugged her mother.

Mr. Slessor continued to use his money to buy alcohol instead of what his family needed. The Slessors sold all their furniture so they could buy food and clothing until that money ran out too. But Mary's mother continued to pray and trust God to provide everything they needed.

Slide 2

When Mary was a little girl, she didn't always live her life to please God. She called herself a "wild lassie" (girl) because she and her friends would sometimes get into trouble. An older lady saw Mary and her friends running around the streets. She knew they needed to know Jesus! One winter day she invited them into her house and told them about God's punishment for sin. Mary realized that because of her sin she deserved to be separated from God forever! Mary decided that day to put all her trust in Jesus as the only one who could save her from sin. Mary began to love spending time with God by reading the Bible and praying. Turn to the person next to you and tell them something you think Mary read about in the Bible. (*Do with children.*) Jesus was very real to Mary and she loved Him with all her heart. Even though Mary's life was still very difficult, she knew God was with her every day—even when things were hard.

One very hard time came when Mary was 11 years old. Her father was unable to keep a job because he drank so much. There was no one to provide money for the family. Mrs. Slessor went to work at the mill but it still wasn't enough money. Mrs. Slessor didn't want Mary and her brother to have to go to work but they had no choice. Mary would work for half a day then go to school for the other half.

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By the time Mary was 14 years old she was getting up at 5:00 every morning and helping her mother with housework. By 6:00 she was at the factory. For 12 hours she ran a loom, making fabric. Even though Mary had to work all day now instead of going to school, she still loved to learn. Mary propped open a book by her workstation and read every spare moment. When the bell rang at 6:00 pm, Mary returned home to help her mother cook and do more housework. Quick, let's pretend to help do the chores like Mary did! (*Do with children.*) Finally, she went to bed, only to do it all over again the next morning. For a while, Mary's mother worked at the mill, but then she had another baby and couldn't work anymore. Later Mary's father died and Mary was the only one providing for the family.

Mary had one day off every week—Sunday. It was her favorite day of the week because she would get to go to church. Often at church she heard the missionary reports from faraway places like China, India, Japan and a place called Calabar (*CAL-uh-bar*) in West Africa. Can you whisper that with me three times? (*Say with children.*)

Slide 4

Sometimes the missionaries themselves came to visit the church. One Sunday missionary William Anderson came to Mary's church and spoke about Calabar. He said the tribes that lived in Calabar didn't know about Jesus but believed in false gods and evil spirits instead. They would often go to war, hurting and killing other tribes. They killed twin babies because the people thought twins brought bad luck.

Mary and her mother often talked about and prayed for Calabar and the missionaries there. Turn to the person next to you and quickly say one thing you just learned about Calabar. (*Do with children.*) Mary wanted to go there and help others come to know Jesus. But how could she do that when she needed to provide for her family?

Queen Street was the worst alley in the city. Boys and girls formed gangs and fought in the streets. Mary's church rented a little building there and held Sunday school classes to teach the boys and girls to read and write. Mary asked to be able to go and teach there, even though it was dangerous. Mary walked there and taught a Bible club for the children.

Some of the boys caused lots of trouble. They threw rocks and mud at Mary as she invited children to come to the Bible club. They even beat up the boys and girls who chose to attend.

One night Mary was walking along Queen Street after dark. There were no streetlights and Mary could barely see. Let's all pretend to walk quietly and carefully in the dark. (*Do with children.*) As Mary walked she didn't notice a gang of boys coming toward her. Suddenly she was surrounded! There was nowhere for her to run.

Slide 5

One of the boys was holding a string with a large piece of metal tied to the end of it. He lifted it above his head and began swinging it around and around and around. Mary stood still, watching as the piece of metal swung around and came closer and closer to her. "Stop teaching the Bible club or we'll see how brave you really are," the boy threatened. But Mary kept standing there, looking him straight in the eye. The metal swung closer and closer. Suddenly she felt a sting of pain as the metal scraped across her forehead! But Mary barely blinked. She kept staring right at the boy.

Suddenly the swinging stopped. The boy looked at Mary and said, "You're brave! You can walk anywhere in these streets and we won't let anyone hurt you!"

"Then come listen to the Bible teaching!" Mary said boldly.

Slide 6

Sure enough, the boys came into the Bible club that day! Several of them eventually believed in Jesus too!

Mary loved the children she taught in Bible club. She was thankful that God let her tell people about Jesus right there in Dundee. But she never forgot about Calabar. Mary continued to read magazines from her church with stories about missionaries in Calabar. When Mary was about 26 years old, she realized God wanted her to go to Calabar as a missionary! Her sisters were old enough to work and provide for themselves and their mother. Mary talked to her mother about becoming a missionary. What do you think her mother said? If you think she wanted Mary to go, touch your nose. If you think she wanted Mary to stay in Scotland, wiggle your ears. (*Allow response.*) If you touched your nose, you are correct! Mary's mother was so excited Mary was going to be a missionary. But not everyone was as excited.

"It's too dangerous!" people said. "You're already telling people about Jesus here in Scotland. Why do you want to go to Africa? Most missionaries die after only a few years of being in Africa!"

Cliffhanger

Do you think Mary got scared or changed her mind? Did she go to Calabar? You'll have to come back to find out!

Review Questions

1. Where was Mary from? (*Scotland.*)
2. What was one of the things Mary had to do when she was 14? (*Help her mother with the housework early in the morning, work for 12 hours a day before leaving to work at the factory.*)
3. A missionary came to Mary's church to talk about sharing Jesus with people in Calabar. What was one of the bad things he said the people in Calabar did because they didn't know about Jesus? (*They believed in false gods and evil spirits, they would often go to war—hurting and killing other tribes; they killed twin babies.*)
4. What did Mary do after the boy hit her with the piece of metal? (*Mary stood her ground and kept staring at the boy; she invited the boy to come to her Bible classes.*)
5. How did Mary's mother react when Mary told her she wanted to be a missionary? (*Her mother was excited and wanted Mary to be a missionary.*)

CHAPTER 2

Duke Town to Old Town

What has been the most exciting day of your life? *(Allow response.)* Maybe it was your birthday. Maybe your family went on a really fun vacation, or maybe it was your first day of school. Mary Slessor was about to experience the most exciting day of her life. *(Briefly, review what was taught in Chapter 1.)*

Slide 1

Mary had been dreaming her whole life of becoming a missionary in Calabar, Africa. *(Show Calabar on map.)* Some people thought it was foolish for her to go. But Mary decided to obey God. She trained to be a teacher and talked to people about what she would do as a missionary. Finally the day came when she boarded a really big boat called the *SS Ethiopia*. Let's all pretend to get on the boat. *(Do with children.)* This was the day she had been waiting for since she was a little girl. She was finally going to Calabar!

It was cold in Scotland the day she left. But as the ship traveled further and further south, Mary felt the air getting warmer and warmer until it was finally very hot! Pretend to fan yourself like you're getting really hot. *(Do with children.)* She watched the sky go from a dreary gray in Scotland to vibrant blue in the tropics of Africa. Finally she saw Africa! The ship sailed along the coast for a while then entered one of the rivers before coming to Calabar. Along the shore she saw plants and animals that didn't live in Scotland. What types of animals do you think she may have seen? *(Allow response. Some animals that live in Nigeria are crocodiles, parrots, hippos, leopards, etc.)* Can you make some noises she may have heard some of these animals make? *(Do with children.)* As they neared their destination, Mary saw the people of Calabar for the first time. They were paddling canoes up and down the river. Everything was new and exciting. She was finally a missionary—like she had dreamed her whole life!

After five weeks of sailing, the ship stopped at a place called Duke Town. That's where Mary began her life as a missionary. Soon she began to teach a class of boys at a school the missionaries had started in Duke Town. The boys were kind and respectful as they listened to Mary teach each day.

Mary's life in Calabar was completely different than her life in Scotland! She worked hard to learn the language so she could talk to people and tell them about Jesus. She learned how to travel in a canoe and she even dressed differently! Instead of wearing the fancy clothes people wore in Scotland, Mary wore a simple, loose fitting dress and didn't wear any shoes or socks. Mary had long, curly red hair but in Calabar she cut it all off so it was easier to care for.

Many of the people who lived near Duke Town had already heard about Jesus because lots of missionaries lived there. But occasionally Mary traveled into the jungle with one or two other missionaries to meet the people who had never heard about Jesus. She met a lot of people and realized how many people needed to know Jesus for themselves—not just know some things *about* Him.

Slide 2

As Mary learned more and more of the language, she hiked through the thick jungles and visited different villages. She learned so much about how people lived and what they believed during these trips. In one village another missionary, John Baillie, preached a sermon about Jesus. After he spoke he asked Mary if she would like to say a few words. She asked him to read from John chapter 5 about a man who was healed by Jesus. Then, with the words she knew in the Efik language, she tried to tell the people that Jesus could heal them from their problem of sin. Let's all pretend to travel through the jungle with Mary, stopping to teach people at different villages. *(Do with children.)*

Slide 3

Mary taught school and helped at the mission house in Duke Town. She also visited the local women in their homes. Here she got to know them and learned about their lives, customs and language. She got better and better at speaking Efik.

After Mary had visited more and more villages, she was no longer satisfied to stay in Duke Town. Mary wanted to go live among the people who had never heard about Jesus. She was determined to travel to the villages where missionaries had never gone, even though many people said it wasn't a good idea. "It's too dangerous!" people would say. "A woman can't travel alone. You'll be killed!"

Mary kept praying and trusting God to guide her further into the jungle when the time was right. But then, much to her dismay, she became very sick with malaria. Use your face to show me how you would look if you were very sick. *(Do with children.)* After three years in Africa, she had to return to Scotland to get better. Many people wondered if she would live to return to Calabar.

But Mary recovered! After some time in Scotland, she returned to Calabar. When she arrived in Duke Town, the missionaries told her she would not be staying there—Mary’s dream to go further into the jungle to tell people about Jesus was coming true! They were sending her to Old Town, which was further into the jungle! She would be the only missionary at Old Town.

When Mary first arrived in Old Town, the first thing she saw was a pole with bones hanging from it set up in front of the meeting house. This was definitely different than the mission houses and church that had welcomed her in Duke Town! But Mary knew she was in Old Town for a reason. These people needed to know about Jesus!

The people did many evil things. But one of the things that disturbed Mary the most was how people treated twin babies. They believed a lie that twin babies brought bad luck. If twins were born, they were killed or abandoned in the jungle and the mother was kicked out of the village. This made Mary very sad and angry. The people did not realize that every life, no matter how small or weak, is precious to God.

Slide 4

One day a baby was left on Mary’s doorstep! He was crying and no one would tell her where the baby had come from. Mary took the baby boy to live with her. Can you pretend to rock a baby very gently? (*Do with children.*) Soon, Mary had several more abandoned babies living with her.

One day Mary rescued her first set of twins, a boy and a girl. The boy did not survive but Mary named the girl Janie after her youngest sister. Janie became one of Mary’s daughters. Some of the children Mary rescued became her adopted children.

Slide 5

Rescuing and taking care of twin babies was a big job, but that’s not all Mary did. She traveled from village to village, helping people who were sick. She gave them medicine and prayed for them. Mary became famous among the villages in Calabar. People started calling her “Ma” because she took care of them like a mother. Chiefs and leaders from all over Calabar asked for Mary to help them when someone was sick or there was a big argument. When there was an emergency, people yelled, “Run, Ma, Run!” Can you shout that with me? (*Say with children.*)

Slide 6

A chief in another village 30 miles away heard of Mary and wanted her to visit him. She agreed and traveled there by canoe with several of her children. While they were there, a big tornado came through! Tornadoes are common in that area but that doesn’t make them less scary. Mary and the children were very afraid! Let’s pretend to make sounds like a storm. (*Do with children.*) Trees and canoes and roofs were flying through the air as the wind swirled and screamed around the hut. Mary gathered her children around her and said, “Come, let us sing to the Lord!” and they started to sing together. The storm was bad and it even blew the roof off the hut while they were in it! But finally, it passed by. Everyone was safe but they were all soaking wet because the roof blew off. This caused Mary to come down with a fever and it was several days before she was better.

But storms didn’t stop Mary from wanting to tell more people about Jesus! She knew there were more villages where the Good News of Jesus had never been shared. She was determined to go to the Okoyong (*oh-KOH-yung*) people next. Can you say that with me in a very slow voice? (*Say with children.*) But the Okoyong people were even worse than the people in Old Town had been. “Don’t go, Ma!” her friends in Old Town begged. “Those people are so evil! They will hurt you and your children.”

Cliffhanger

Did Mary go? Was she safe? How would the Okoyong people treat Mary? You’ll have to come back tomorrow to find out.

Review Questions

1. What is one way Mary’s life was different in Calabar than in Scotland? (*She had to learn the language; she had to learn how to travel in a canoe; she dressed differently; she cut off her hair to make it easier to take care of; the weather, plants and animals were different.*)
2. Why did Mary not want to stay in Duke Town? (*She wanted to go live among the people who had never heard about Jesus.*)
3. The people in Old Town did many evil things, but what was one of the things that disturbed Mary the most? (*The people thought twin babies brought bad luck and would kill or abandon them and kick the mother out of the village.*)
4. What did Mary and her children do when they were scared because of the tornado? (*They sang together.*)
5. What did the people start calling Mary? Why? (*They called her Ma because she took care of them like a mother.*)

CHAPTER 3

Off to the Okoyong

How many of you like to go on really long trips? What is the longest trip you've ever been on? (*Allow response.*) Mary Slessor took lots of long, scary trips in the jungles of Calabar.

God had done amazing things through Mary Slessor when she worked in Duke Town and Old Town. Many twin babies were rescued. A whole village was changed because of God and His Word. Mary knew it was time for her to move on to a different place in Calabar. She wanted to tell the Okoyong (*oh-KOH-yung*) people about Jesus. Everyone knew that the Okoyong people were wicked. But Mary knew this was where she was supposed to go. These people needed to know about God's love for them!

Slide 1

When Mary decided to move to the Okoyong, a chief who had become a good friend of Mary's loaned her his nicest canoe and 30 men to paddle it down the river. It was a wet, rainy morning when Mary climbed into the canoe with five of her children and Mr. Bishop, another missionary, who volunteered to help her move. The 30 men paddled the canoe all day long and all day it rained. Let's pretend to help them paddle the canoe. (*Do with children.*) Finally, as night was falling, the men steered the canoe toward the shore. The long trip down the river was finally over! But Mary and her children still had to walk another three miles through the jungle to get to the village of Ekenge. Mary was determined to get there...that night!

"Why don't we wait until morning, Ma?" one of the rowers said. "We're all tired and it's dark and wet and we don't want to go into the jungle at night. There are all kinds of wild animals!"

But the next day was Sunday and Mary did not want anyone to work or travel then. So Mary told her oldest boy, who was 11 years old, to lead the way into the dark, thick jungle. Behind him walked the rest of her children, then Mary, who was carrying a baby on her back and lugging a large package of supplies. Mr. Bishop and the paddlers carrying the rest of the supplies would come a little later.

Everyone stand up, close your eyes really tight and walk in place. Now imagine that you've been out in the rain all day so your clothes are soaking wet. You're exhausted from a long day of travel but you keep walking. You hear the sounds of wild animals all around you. You can see their eyes shining in the darkness. The trail you're walking on is rough—full of ruts and big rocks. You may open your eyes and sit down.

Slide 2

That's what it was like for Mary and her family walking through the jungles at night. Mary's children cried because they were hungry, wet and tired. But Mary sang silly songs to cheer them up and finally they made it!

The other times Mary had visited the village the people had come out to greet her with a lot of noise and excitement. But this night everything was strangely quiet. There were just a few slaves in the huts. One of them helped Mary find a hut to stay in, another one ran to tell the chief that Mary had arrived. She found out the entire village was away at a funeral and no one knew when they would get back.

Mary and her children settled into the hut, but the clean clothes were with the paddlers coming later. Mary sang to the children and put them to bed. She wondered where Mr. Bishop and the paddlers were.

She didn't have to wait long. Mr. Bishop arrived and told her the paddlers had refused to walk through the jungle at night because they were scared. Mr. Bishop had brought as many supplies as he could carry with him, including dry clothes for the children.

Mary was angry that the paddlers had refused to come. Even though she was wet and tired and couldn't fit her feet into her boots, she trudged barefoot all the way back to the canoe. Sure enough, there were the men, sound asleep. Mary woke them up. Let's all shout, "Wake up!" (*Say with children.*) She and the men marched the three miles into the village together. Mary went to sleep in the hut, wondering when the chief would come back.

Slide 3

Mary awoke the next morning hurting all over. But she couldn't stay in bed all day! Today was Sunday. There were children to dress and feed and a church service to hold. Mary got the children ready for the day and she, the children and Mr. Bishop went outside to hold a church service. Several curious slaves stood in the background wondering what this strange woman was doing.

A few days later people started returning from the funeral. Chief Edem was not particularly pleased to see Mary but he gave her a larger hut to stay in. Mary began to learn how this tribe lived and learn their language.

Things weren't easy in Ekenge. Many of these people were drunk all the time. Instead of using money to buy things, they traded for bottles of alcohol. They got so drunk they did all kinds of terrible things to one another. Use your face to show me how you think this made Mary feel. (*Allow response.*)

The Okoyong people believed in witchcraft. When someone important got sick or died, they thought it was because another tribe cast a spell on them. Often wars started when one tribe tried to get even with another tribe for casting spells. Mary knew this violence had to stop. She met someone who would help her with this big job!

Slide 4

Soon after moving to Ekenge, Mary made friends with a woman named Ma Eme (*Mah-AY-mee*). Can you say that with me? (*Say with children.*) Do any of you have secret codes you use with your friends? Mary and Ma Eme had a secret code they used. Ma Eme had a messenger deliver an empty medicine bottle to Mary whenever she needed Mary to come quickly. The messenger would tell Mary, “Ma Eme needs medicine.” When Mary heard that, she ran as quickly as she could to wherever the trouble was. Let’s stand up and pretend to run with Mary. (*Do with children.*) Good job. You may sit down.

There were many times when a war was about to start, but Ma Eme would send Mary their secret message and Mary would come just in time to stop the war. She would make all the chiefs sit down and talk about what the problem was. God used Mary to save the lives of many Okoyong people.

Mary began to adjust to life in the Ekenge village. She got to know people, told them about Jesus and tried to help them when they were sick.

Slide 5

One day Mary got this message from another village: “A chief is very sick and about to die. He wants you to come and take care of him.” Mary knew that if he died, hundreds of slaves would be killed according to their custom.

When Mary told Chief Edem what she was going to do, he said, “Don’t go! I can’t protect you if you go to that village.”

Mary went to her hut and prayed. “God, do you want me to go to this chief?” After Mary had prayed, she knew what she must do. She put together a bag of supplies and began walking.

She and a helper struggled through the rainy jungle. Mary thought about the wild animals she would need to avoid and the deep rivers she would need to cross. Let’s pretend to cross a river and hold our supplies above our heads so they don’t get wet. (*Do with children.*)

Finally, she arrived at the village.

She examined the chief and almost immediately knew what to do. She gave him some medicine and prayed for him. After a few days the chief got better. The chief’s life was saved! Not only that, hundreds of slaves’ lives were saved too!

The people in that village were amazed. How could Mary heal people like that? They thought she had magical powers. But Mary told the people about God—that He is the one who heals and He sent His only Son to die on the cross for their sins! Mary returned to Ekenge, rescued many people and helped them see that God knows the best way to live.

Before Mary went to Ekenge to live, Chief Edem promised her a house and mission headquarters of her own. But every time she asked him about it, he came up

with a reason why he couldn’t start building it. Mary waited and prayed. Then one day, for reasons she never knew, the village started building her a house!

Slide 6

It was a wonderful house with a wonderful yard! Mary was quite comfortable. The only thing she really wanted that it didn’t have was windows and doors. Mary wrote to her friends in Scotland, asking if someone could come and install them for her.

Some time later Mary heard an unusual noise coming from the jungle. It was a man singing—in a Scottish accent! Charles Ovens had come all the way from Scotland to put windows and doors in her house!

As they talked, Charles realized Mary needed a bigger and better house. He decided to build it for her! It took a while but finally her two-story house was finished, complete with windows and doors! The villagers were amazed at Mary’s lovely house. The new house could hold all the people who came to her—babies, sick people, students and others. Now she could help even more people and tell them about Jesus.

God used Mary to help so many people! She helped sick people get better and she stopped many wars before they had a chance to begin. But even though Mary was doing many amazing things, her life wasn’t easy. She was sick a lot of the time. Once again she became so sick that she had to leave Calabar. Can you pretend to wave goodbye to Mary as she sails away on a ship? (*Do with children.*)

Cliffhanger

Did Mary ever come back to this country she loved? You’ll have to come back next time to find out.

Review Questions

1. Why didn’t the men who brought Mary in the canoe to the Okoyong people want to walk the last three miles to the village of Ekenge with Mary? (*Because it was dark; they were afraid; they were tired.*)
2. What was the secret code Ma Eme used to let Mary know she needed to come quickly? (*Ma Eme would send a messenger with an empty bottle and say, “Ma Eme needs medicine.”*)
3. What would happen if the chief from the other village died? (*Hundreds of slaves would be killed according to their custom.*)
4. What happened after Mary examined the sick chief? (*She gave him medicine and prayed for him; he got better.*)
5. What did Chief Edem promise to give Mary? (*He promised to build her a house and mission headquarters of her own.*)

CHAPTER 4

Nurse, Teacher, Judge

Knowing and loving God is the very best way to live! Sometimes when you are following God things happen that you don't understand or even like. Then, later on, you find out why God allowed those things to happen. Things like that happened to Mary Slessor. Sometimes she must have wondered "why?" But then through those things, she saw God working!

When Mary became so sick she had to leave Calabar; she took eight-year-old Janie with her. Do you remember who Janie was? (*Allow response.*) Janie was one of the first little girls Mary adopted. Mary and Janie boarded a ship and headed for Scotland.

Slide 1

Even though Mary had grown up in Dundee, Scotland, she didn't fit in there anymore. Her hair was cut short while all the Scottish women's hair was long and done in fancy styles. The people in Scotland had soft, fair skin but Mary's was tan and rough from working in the African sun. Mary and Janie must have gotten lots of strange looks as they walked the streets of Scotland. They were used to sleeping in huts and walking through the jungle. In Scotland there were fancy houses everywhere and people drove fancy carriages and there were hardly any trees in the city. Things looked, felt and sounded very different. The city was different but Mary had an important job to do there.

Slide 2

Mary went to many churches to talk about what God was doing in Calabar. Can you remember something God was doing in Calabar? Whisper it to someone next to you. (*Do with children.*) She would ask the people to give money and she would challenge them to go and become missionaries themselves.

After a time of rest, it was time to return to Calabar! Mary and Janie boarded a ship and started the long journey. Mary must have been very relieved to get back to the country she loved.

Slide 3

The Okoyong people had begun to change. Now they understood how special life is and that God was not pleased with their violent way of life. God was changing these people! News of this spread all the way to the British government but they didn't think the change was good enough. They sent someone to Calabar to investigate. He was an important soldier named Sir Claude MacDonald. Can you stand up straight like a soldier and say that with me? (*Say with children.*) Sir Claude talked with Mary about the Okoyong people.

"The British Army is planning to send soldiers to the Okoyong people," he said. "We still hear rumors of much fighting and killing. This needs to stop."

"Oh, please don't do that!" Mary responded. "The people aren't ready for that yet. They have made so much progress. If you send in soldiers, the people will go right back to fighting and killing one another."

"Well," Sir Claude said seriously, "I have orders to send a government official to be in charge of the Okoyong people."

Oh no! If the British government sent someone to be in charge of the Okoyong people, all the hard work Mary had done would be for nothing. The people might fight back and kill the official. They would have to send just the right person.

A huge smile spread across Sir Claude's face, "We're sending you, Mary!" he said. "The British government would like to hire you to be an official over the Okoyong people."

What do you think Mary did? (*Allow response.*) She said yes! Now Mary could continue to do exactly what she had already been doing, except now she would be paid by the British government!

Slide 4

Mary was respected as the one who could make decisions. When she was needed to settle an argument or stop a war she marched through the jungle with her bag of knitting in hand. She often found many village chiefs sitting in a circle and hundreds of warriors ready to fight. Mary would walk up to the chiefs and sit down in their circle. No one would say a word. Mary knew the fighting could start any moment if one of the chiefs got too angry. She greeted each of the chiefs then took out her knitting needles and began to knit. Can you pretend to knit like Mary did? (*Do with children.*)

On the outside Mary looked calm but on the inside she was sometimes very nervous. That's why she brought her bag of knitting. If she kept her hands moving, no one would be able to see them shaking. Mary calmly asked the chiefs questions, figuring out exactly what the problem was. Every so often she would say something funny to make the chiefs laugh. Even when things seemed to be going well, Mary was still nervous on the inside. She listened and knitted and prayed. God helped her solve many difficult problems and prevent many wars.

Slide 5

Mary had a rocking chair in front of her house that she would sit in when she was acting as the judge. Can you pretend to rock in a rocking chair? (*Do with children.*) She would have a lace shawl draped over her head and shoulders and many times she had a baby in her lap as she rocked back and forth, listening to people tell their problems. Often many people from a village would gather around to hear Mary's decision. She always worked to be fair in each situation. God helped her know what was true and what was right.

Mary worked with the Okoyong people for almost 15 years, praying for them, taking care of the sick and showing them how much God loves them. She and Charles Ovens built churches and schools. Let's pretend to use hammers and saws to build things like Mary did. (*Do with children.*) She taught people how to make things to sell and helped them buy and sell food and supplies from other tribes. Mary was also the official vice-consul for the British government! If one person was accusing another person of something, they would go to Mary. If someone was afraid of being hurt because of something they did, they would go to Mary.

Slide 6

Because the people who lived in Ekenge were trading and making things, many of them decided to start a new village closer to the river. There they could more easily trade and grow food. Slowly more and more people moved there. Chief Edem chose to stay in Ekenge. But then something terrible happened—a disease called smallpox made people very sick and many of them died. Mary ran back and forth between several villages, treating people and giving them the medicine for smallpox. Let's pretend to help sick people and give them medicine like Mary did. (*Do with children.*) But still many died. Even Chief Edem became ill. Very few people were left in Ekenge so Mary tried to help him get better. But he also died. Mary had to bury him herself.

Mary was exhausted. She became sick again because of how hard she had been working. She needed to go back to Scotland for another rest.

She and Janie and three of her other children went to Scotland.

When Mary and the children arrived back in Calabar sometime later, she found out several missionaries had died from illnesses. People were discouraged because it didn't seem possible to go further into Africa and reach more people with the Gospel.

Cliffhanger

But Mary had heard of another tribe that needed to know Jesus. They were the Aros (*AY-rohss*) tribe and they were very fierce. They were known for attacking and killing hundreds of people. Will she be able to go to them? We'll find out next time!

Review Questions

1. Where did Mary go when she became very sick? (*Back to Scotland.*)
2. What did Mary do while she was in Scotland? (*She talked at churches about what God was doing in Calabar; she asked for money to help and she would challenge people to become missionaries themselves.*)
3. Who did the British government decide to be the official in charge of the Okoyong people? (*Mary.*)
4. When Mary met with the chiefs to stop the wars from starting, why would she bring her knitting? (*She brought her knitting so the chiefs wouldn't see how scared and nervous she really was.*)
5. What did Mary do when the smallpox sickness started spreading? (*She went from village to village helping people and giving them medicine.*)

CHAPTER 5

Aros: The Final Stop

Have you ever wanted to do something so big that you knew only God could do it? That's how Mary felt—she wanted to do something she knew only God could help her do!

Slide 1

When Mary and the children returned to Calabar, she immediately got back to work. She was older now and got sick more often. But she still worked very hard. Because Jesus was changing people's lives, not as many twins were being killed. But babies would still be brought to Mary or need to be rescued. When Mary didn't feel well, she would lie in bed and pull the strings attached to the babies' beds to rock them when they were crying. Let's pretend to do that too. When I make a sound like a crying baby, you pretend to gently pull a string to rock the baby's bed. (*Do with children.*) Janie would help her take care of the babies and would help her get around in the jungle too.

Mary knew that whole tribes had never heard of Jesus and His power to save from sin and death. So she began praying about the most difficult tribe yet—the Aros (*AY-rohss*) tribe. Can you say that with me? (*Say with children.*) These people were known for all the terrible things they would do to one another and the tribes around them. Because they were so violent, Mary couldn't just go to the Aros people any time she wanted. If she went to them at the wrong time, she could be killed! Mary began praying that God would give her the perfect time to go help the Aros people know about Jesus.

Slide 2

Time passed and the Aros tribe became so violent that the British government sent thousands of soldiers to stop the fighting. A man named Sir Ralph Moor was the leader of the soldiers. He sat down with the chiefs and had a very long conversation with them. By the end of the day, the Aros willingly gave up thousands of their weapons and guns.

Mary was one of the most famous people in that area of Africa. The people trusted her and knew her decisions would be good for everyone. She wasn't there to be selfish or trick the people. She loved Jesus and wanted the people to know Jesus' love too. Finally, God had made a way for Mary to show Jesus' love to the Aros people.

Mary moved to Aros country. Many people were amazed that she would move to such a dangerous place with people who had been so violent. But little by little God was changing their hearts and helping them to know Him and love Him!

Something happened during this time that many people talked about for years to come. Mary was sitting in a canoe, traveling downriver with her children and a few of the village men. Imagine the peaceful sound of water lapping against the side of the canoe as the men dipped their paddles into the water on a steady beat. Let's pretend to paddle the canoe too. (*Do with children.*) Mary may have been taking this time to relax before they reached yet another village that needed her help. But the relaxing ride turned not-so-relaxing in an instant.

Slide 3

Suddenly the canoe jerked to one side. It almost tipped over! Mary and the men knew about the hungry crocodiles that lived in these rivers. If the boat tipped over, they would be in big trouble! Show me on your face how you think they felt. (*Allow response.*) Suddenly a huge hippopotamus came out of the water, mouth open wide and ready to chomp down on the side of the canoe and take it under the water. The men panicked! But Mary grabbed a long bamboo pole and whacked the hippopotamus on the head! Can you pretend to do that? (*Do with children.*) She yelled, "Go away! Go away!" to the hippo. And the hippo went away! Mary and everyone saw God's power protect them that day!

This is only one of the many dangerous adventures Mary had on her trips from village to village. Mary had been in Africa for many years now. She had worked and worked and worked, acting as nurse, teacher, judge, mother and friend to thousands of African people.

Slide 4

God helped Mary do many things. Mary had never been trained in constructing buildings, but she trusted God to show her what to do. There is a very specific recipe that most people use when they mix cement. Mary didn't have that recipe, so she just poured in a little bit of the cement mix, a little bit of sand and some water. Let's pretend to do that with Mary. (*Do with children.*) She would stir the goop until it looked like porridge and pour it wherever it needed to be. Mary would pray, asking God to make it set just right. And do you know what? It did—every time! God helped Mary in everything she did—helping sick people get better, solving arguments, teaching, mixing cement and building houses.

By the time Mary began working in the Aros tribe, many of the twins she had rescued were all grown up. Some became pastors, others teachers and government workers. Many of the children Mary raised grew up to continue the work she had begun. Janie was Mary's constant companion in the last years of Mary's life. Mary was very sick and Janie was always by her side to help her in any way she could. But even though she was sick, Mary continued to work.

Slide 5

When Mary wasn't teaching, she did her best to travel from village to village, helping the sick and settling arguments. But because Mary was getting older, it became more and more difficult for her to travel. She could only walk one mile at a time and the hot jungle trails were too rough for her to use anymore. So instead of walking everywhere, someone gave Mary a bicycle. She would pedal herself through the jungle. Can you pedal your feet like you're riding a bike? (*Do with children.*) But eventually, even the bike was too difficult for her to use. Do you think Mary just gave up? (*Allow response.*) No! Mary's friends got her a cart to sit in and Janie pushed Mary wherever she needed to go.

Throughout her time in Africa, Mary made occasional visits back to Duke Town and the Okoyong tribe. She looked a lot different now than she did when she was excitedly climbing off the SS *Ethiopia* so many years ago. But Mary's heart was still full of joy.

One of these trips to Duke Town was to get on a ship headed for the Canary Islands. This was the first vacation Mary had ever been on. When she traveled back to Scotland she got to rest a bit. But she spent a lot of her time speaking at churches. Now, it was time for Mary to rest—just rest. Let's close our eyes and rest quietly while I count to three. (*Do with children.*)

She stayed at a beautiful hotel and was visited by many British government officials. She was honored like a queen because that's who she was to so many people in Calabar. Mary cherished her time of rest but knew there was more work to be done. Her health returned and her doctor told her she would probably live to work a few more years.

She traveled back to the Aros people and continued her work. Mary lived there for two more years before she got very sick one last time.

Slide 6

On January 13, 1915, Mary's life on Earth ended. But the impact she had has lasted even until today! Calabar is a large city in what we now call Nigeria. If you were to travel to Nigeria today, you wouldn't see twin babies being killed. God used Mary to show the people that twin babies are special—just like other babies. Every life is precious to God. There are many churches in Nigeria today and many people know Jesus as their Savior. God used Mary to spread the Good News about Jesus all over that country. The people who heard about Jesus from Mary told more people, and those people told other people and now thousands and thousands of people in Nigeria have heard and believed in Jesus as their Savior.

God used Mary Slessor in a very special way, but remember that at one time she was just a little girl whose father treated her and her family very poorly. She had to work 12 hours every day in order to get money for her family to have food and clothing. But God used all those hard experiences when Mary was a little girl to prepare her for being a missionary in a very hard place. When Mary was just a little girl, she knew that God wanted her to be a missionary in Calabar.

What about you? If you have believed in Jesus as your Savior, maybe you are thinking God wants you to be a missionary. Maybe you are going through some really hard times and wonder why God would allow these things to happen. If you give your whole self to God, He can take those hard parts of your life and use them for good. He can use you like He used Mary Slessor. Maybe God will use you to tell people in your neighborhood about Jesus. Or maybe someday you'll go to another country as a missionary. No matter what, it is important to do whatever God tells you to do. I'm going to pray right now, asking God to use you to help others know Jesus. (*Pray with children.*)

Review Questions

1. How would Mary rock the babies when she wasn't feeling well? (*She would tie a string to the babies' beds and pull the strings to rock them to sleep.*)
2. What happened as Mary was traveling down the river? What did Mary do? (*A huge hippopotamus attacked the canoe. She whacked it with a bamboo stick and yelled, "Go away!"*)
3. When Mary was too old to walk the long distances between villages, how did she travel? (*She rode a bicycle until that was too hard then she traveled in a cart pulled by Janie [her daughter].*)
4. What was special about Mary's trip to the Canary Islands? (*It was the first vacation Mary had ever been on; she was treated really well; she was able to rest.*)
5. God used Mary to do some pretty amazing things. What was one thing that changed in Calabar because of the work Mary did there with God's help? (*Twin babies stopped being killed; the Gospel was spread; now there are many churches where people can learn about God.*)