

Houston VBS teaches Haitian orphans, “Jesus loves you”

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HOUSTON—As a group of kindergarteners sat coloring, one small boy began to sing “Jesus loves me.” Soon, all the children in the Vacation Bible School class joined in.

The coloring pages included a note reading “Jesus loves you” in Creole—the common language of Haiti. It’s a personalized message the Houston children are including in kits of school supplies that will be sent to orphans in Haiti.

[Westbury Baptist Church](#) in Houston used its Vacation Bible School this year to partner with [Baptist Global Response](#), the Southern Baptist international relief and development organization, in a project to raise funds and assemble about 100 school-supply kits—sandwich bags containing pencils, erasers and crayons.



Among Haitian children affected by the earthquake, school supplies are badly needed—as is the good news that Jesus loves them. (PHOTO/Baptist Global Response)

The children wanted to include something personal in the kits and decided to include the decorated “Jesus loves you” notes. At first, they only had the French translation of the phrase, until one of the VBS workers mentioned he had family members who spoke Creole.

As the children colored the notes and sang “Jesus loves me,” it “was a moment I’ll never forget,” said Beverly McDaniel, a church member who has helped with VBS for the past three years.

The idea for a project focused on Haiti came about as Hope McNeil, children’s minister at Westbury Baptist Church, decided to do a mission project for VBS through Baptist Global Response.

The church had been involved with the relief agency over the past year, collecting money for Haiti relief and putting together three in-home care kits that contain supplies caregivers use to provide comfort for terminally ill patients.

McNeil believed the in-home care kits, with all their specific components, would be too difficult for the children to gather. So, she asked Baptist Global Response personnel in Haiti what would be most helpful. They suggested school supply kits, and the VBS team knew that was the answer for their children.

Each day at VBS, the children attended a worship rally and then rotated through crafts, recreation, snack time, Bible study and either a music or missions group. As the children in the missions group put together the school supply kits, they learned about Haiti and the January earthquake that ravaged the capital, Port-au-Prince. The children also viewed photos Baptist Global Response personnel sent from a recent visit to Haiti.

“The entire project certainly touched the hearts of those involved,” McDaniel said. The children “were mesmerized by the scenes they saw. Each day as we reviewed countries we had ‘visited’ as a part of our mission

stories, they always mentioned Haiti. ... Our Haiti project was the highlight of our missions rotation.”