

THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH
Children's Service Project

**Real help, real
hope, for the world's
poorest children**



**BACK TO
SCHOOL**

**A new start for Congolese
refugee children living in Kenya**





BACK TO SCHOOL

Children's Service Project
THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

Love your neighbor as yourself.

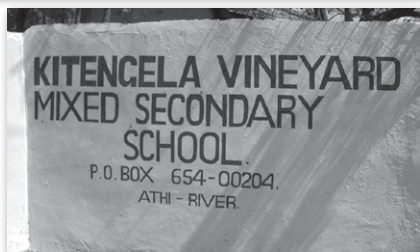
—Mark 12:31 (TNIV)

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE PROJECT enables us to partner with children on their spiritual journey to:

- fulfill Christ's commandment to love God and our neighbor
- foster a larger kingdom view
- offer an opportunity to serve and obey God
- provide a shared faith experience to build community

Over the past ten years, the Children's Service Project has enabled children in North America to offer hope and opportunity to children in some of the world's most destitute places. The lives of children in these areas are marked by poverty, little or no access to education, and small hope for a bright future.

This year, the children in your church will be able to make a difference in the lives of Congolese refugee children and youth living in Kenya. These children had to flee their homes in Congo and are now trying to get a new start in Kenya. But it's not easy, because the children have suffered the effects of war in their home country and now must adapt to life in a new country. Fortunately, the Kenya Covenant Church is committed to helping Congolese children and youth receive the education they need in order to succeed in this new environment. Your participation in this year's Children's Service Project will provide these children the needed funds to pay for school fees, uniforms, books, and even the salaries of English teachers. English is the primary language in Kenya and is necessary for children to learn if they are to succeed in school.



Contained in this booklet are twenty-four stories of children who have benefited or will benefit from the ministries of the Covenant Church and the church's efforts to provide them with educational opportunities. Before taking your offering each week, please read one of the stories and take some time to pray for the children and youth of Congo. In this way, your children will connect with a bigger picture of God's kingdom and provide a tangible reflection of Christ's light in the world.

Over the years, children throughout the Covenant denomination have reflected Christ's love to others and have made a significant life-altering difference through their giving and their prayers. Thank you for joining us this year in helping the Congolese children in Kenya.

Steve Burger
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This project is co-sponsored by: Covenant World Relief, Covenant World Mission, and the Department of Christian Formation. See contact information on back cover.

Day 1

GOD LOVES US and shows his love for us in so many ways! Most of us know how much God loves us, but how do we show our love for God? The Bible tells us that one of the best ways we can show our love for God is by loving others. There are so many ways that we can love others! We can encourage people with kind words, offer help to someone in need, and pray for a friend, or even someone we've never met. Through your offering and prayers, you can show your love for God by helping the children in Kenya. Many of these children were forced to leave their homes in one country to start a new life in another, Kenya. As you give your money and pray for the children, you are loving them in the name of Jesus. Today, as you give your offerings, pray for the children in Kenya, that they would experience God's love.

Day 2

DO YOU KNOW where in the world Kenya is? Can you find it on the map? Kenya is located in Africa. It is on the Eastern Coast, near Somalia and Tanzania. In Kenya there are mountains, desserts, and a coastline along the Indian Ocean. The Covenant Church of Kenya is committed to sharing Jesus' love with people in need. Right now, one of the ways they are helping people who are very poor is by providing them with the resources they need to go to school. Many families have come from another country, called Congo, and the children don't have money to go to school. Your offerings will help the Covenant Church of Kenya pay school fees and provide the children with uniforms so they can study at school. As you give your offerings, pray for the many children who want to study, but can't afford to pay.



DAY 3

DO YOU KNOW who a refugee is? A refugee is a person who has had to leave their home, even their country, in order to escape danger. Many people have had to leave Congo because of the civil war. They are forced to walk many miles in order to find a safer place to live. Many people from Congo have moved all the way to Kenya, looking for safety. Refugees are usually very poor because they have had to leave behind everything they own. In order for these refugees to make a better future in their new country, they must go to school. Your offering today will help a child receive a school uniform and books. To provide one child with a school uniform costs \$45. Thank God for the opportunity you have to go to school and pray that many more students in Kenya would have the same opportunity.



DAY 4

PENDO IS A REFUGEE from Congo. Like many other children and youth, she is an orphan. She was separated from her parents and doesn't know if they are alive or dead. She had to leave Congo, sometimes walking, sometimes riding on trucks until she made it to Kenya. Can you imagine walking for days without anything to eat or drink? This is what many refugee children experience. It is a very difficult life. Praise God Pendo received help from the Covenant Church in Kenya and is now in school. She says that this is a miracle from God, because the school fee is \$300. Pray that Pendo would be able to finish her studies and help take care of her younger brothers and sisters.

DAY 5

MUTONI IS 14 YEARS OLD and has 10 brothers and sisters. He used to live in Congo, but had to leave his country with his family. Now that they are in Kenya, they wash people's clothes to earn money. They don't earn very much money and Mutoni doesn't have enough to pay the school fee to go to school. But the Covenant Church of Kenya has helped to pay his school fee and he is now able to study. He said that without this gift his future would be hopeless. Your offering will help children like Mutoni. Pray that other children will have the opportunity to study.

DAY 6

EXCELLENT IS 7 YEARS OLD and was born in Congo. His family had to leave Congo because it was too dangerous to live there. Excellent's family is very poor and spent many days and nights sleeping alongside the road without anything to eat. Since they have come to Kenya they have been able to live in a house, but it is a one room house and there are 10 people in the family. Excellent is in first grade and needs school books, which cost \$20. Your offering will allow Excellent and his brothers and sisters the opportunity to go to school. Pray that Excellent would do well in school and have hope for a better future.



DAY 7

SCHOOLS IN KENYA are different than schools where you live. Many times there are no desks, only chairs. Sometimes there are cement floors, other times they are mud floors. Still, children love to learn. Samanta is 11 years old and would love to go to school. Your offering will allow children like Samanta pay the school fee in order to start studying. For grade school, the fee is \$120. That's only \$10 a month but Samanta will never be able to make that much money. Pray for Samanta and children like her who want to go to school and study.

DAY 8

DO YOU KNOW what language they speak in Kenya? Believe it or not, most children in school speak and learn English. This is difficult for many of the refugees from Congo, as they speak French. The Covenant Church of Kenya is doing its best to provide teachers who teach English to the refugees. This is so important to help them do well in school. With just \$1.70 a day, we can pay one English teacher for one year! This is one way we can show the children in Kenya the love of God. Pray that through your offerings more children will be able to learn English and do well in school.



DAY 9

ERIC IS 7 YEARS OLD and is in 1st grade. He has constantly been moving from one place to another as his family looked for a safe place to live. They have found peace in Kenya and have been welcomed with love from the Covenant Church. He lives with his parents and 5 brothers and sisters, plus another 5 children who lost their parents in the war. Right now there are 13 people in his family. You can show God's love to Eric by giving your offering today. Your offering will help Eric and his brothers and sisters receive school supplies like crayons and colored pencils. With just 30 cents we can provide them with a box of crayons. Pray for Eric and his brothers and sisters, today.

DAY 10

WHEN FRANCINE ARRIVED in Congo, she had to work to help her parents earn money. She would wash clothes, but she made very little money. It was not a good situation as many times the people she worked for were not kind. She is now in school and thanks God for the opportunity to study. She received funds from the Covenant Church to start school and says that it is a gift from God. Just think, with your offering today you can help other children go to school. This is a gift! Thank God for the opportunity Francine has to study. Ask God to always make us thankful for the good gifts he provides.



DAY 11

LIFE HAS BEEN VERY HARD for Nicholas. His father was killed during the war in Congo and he and his mother had to move to Kenya. In addition to his 3 brothers and sisters, Nicholas' family has chosen to care for another child they met on their way to Kenya. Nicholas and his family have shown God's love to a child, who was all alone. How can we show Nicholas and his family our love? One way is to give our offering. We can help Nicholas receive the uniform and school books he needs to study. Nicholas is enrolled at Noonkopil elementary school. Please pray for Nicholas and his brothers and sisters.

DAY 12

SHALOM IS 13 YEARS OLD. He says that it is only by God's grace that he is alive. In Congo and on his way to Kenya he saw all sorts of terrible things. Thank God Shalom feels safe and at peace now that he is in Kenya. He wants to study to be able to help his family in the future. Shalom needs to learn English and the Covenant Church is helping students like him to learn this new language. Your offering will help pay an English teacher who will help Shalom and other students learn the language they need to speak in school. It's not easy to learn a new language. Please pray for Shalom and others like him, that they would not get frustrated as they learn English, but that they would keep studying even when it's hard.



DAY 13

MOST OF THE PEOPLE who worship at the Covenant church in Kitengela, Kenya, are refugees from Congo. The church building is small and is supposed to only fit 100 people, but more than 400 people come to worship there. They have two services on Sunday morning and they are filled with much joy and love. The church always takes a love offering for the families that have the most need. Today we can take a love offering and help the Covenant church provide more boys and girls with the books they need to study in school. \$20 will provide books for one child. Thank God today for the many gifts he has given us and for the opportunity to share them with others.



DAY 14

WHAT DOES WORSHIP LOOK LIKE at your church? What types of instruments are played? What do you think worship is like in Kenya? You might be surprised at the similarities. They read the Bible, sing songs, dance, pray, take an offering. Children are very active in the Sunday service, singing and dancing and sharing their joy with others. Parents thank God for the new start they have been given in Kenya and for the opportunity their children have to study. Many of the people at the church have adopted children, whose parents were killed in the war in Congo. Pray that the offering you take today will help more children go to school. Imagine the joy these parents will experience as they watch their children learn to read and write.

DAY 15

WHAT LANGUAGE DO YOU SPEAK? Can you imagine what it would be like to move to a new country, learn a new language and then study math or science in that language? That is what life is like for children like Richard. It is not easy to learn a new language. Thank goodness the Covenant Church of Kenya is providing extra English classes to help students learn this new language. We can show God's love today by giving an offering that will help the church pay its English teachers. Pray for Richard and all of his classmates as they have to work so hard to learn a new language.

DAY 16

WHAT IS LIFE LIKE FOR A REFUGEE? Imagine having to walk for days and never knowing if you will make it safely to your destination. Imagine going to bed at night hungry because there was not enough food to eat during the day. It is a very hard life. Thank God many have found a new life in Kenya. The children are so happy that they can go to school and learn because they know this will enable them to have a good job in the future. One girl prays, "God give me the chance to serve the needy, just as I have been served." Your offering today will bring a smile to the face of a boy or girl in Kenya. Pray that we would always be willing to serve others in Jesus' name.



DAY 17

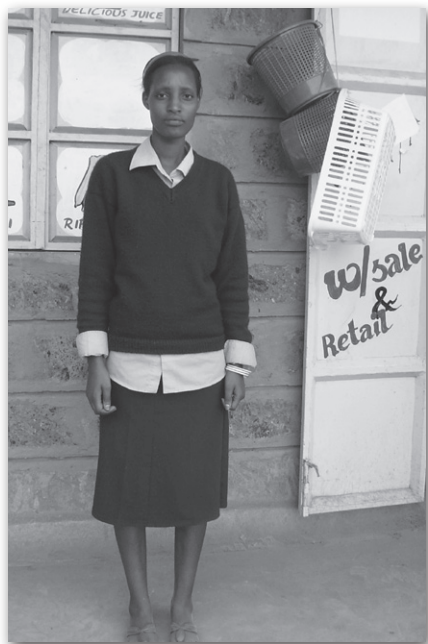
BENJAMIN USED TO SELL THINGS on the street to try and help his family earn money. Benjamin's family is very poor and needed money to buy food. The Covenant Church found out about Benjamin and helped pay his school fee and he is now in school. This makes his parents so happy, because they know that he will have a better future and more opportunities to find good work when he graduates.

Benjamin wrote this note, "To all those who have given to help me go to school, God bless you mightily. You have transformed my life." With just \$10 a month we can help other children like Benjamin go to school. As you give your offering, pray that God would transform the lives of other children.

DAY 18

MANY OF US DON'T THINK ABOUT how expensive it is to study in school. We receive books free from the school and many times we don't have to wear uniforms. Things are a little different in Kenya.

Children are required to wear uniforms and pay for their books. Most of the refugee children from Congo don't have enough money to eat, let alone pay for a school book. As you give your offering today, just think, with just \$20 you can help a child like Beza receive the books she needs to study in school. Pray that God would always remind us of the ways we can share his love with others, even through something as simple as helping a child buy school books.



DAY 19

ZANINKA IS SO EXCITED to go back to school again. She was studying in Congo, but for many years wasn't able to go to school because her family was fleeing danger. They spent years trying to get from Congo to Kenya. Now in Kenya, Zaninka is happy to have a place to call home! In a letter she writes, "My future is bright...I will live to tell others what God can do to help a hopeless person, just like he did for me!" Your offering will help others like Zaninka go back to school. Praise God for Zaninka's faith and desire to share God's love with others.

DAY 20

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE when you are grown up? Do you dream about being a teacher, a police officer, a pastor? Francine wants to be a nurse when she grows up. She is so excited that she has a new school uniform and can

go to school. With just \$45 we can help more children like Francine receive a school uniform so they can study. With your offering, you are helping make other children's dreams come true. Pray that God would continue to encourage Francine and others as they go to school and dream about the future.



DAY 21

ONE REFUGEE BOY WRITES, "God is the only parent I have." His parents were killed in Congo and he is an orphan. Still, he has experienced the love and care of God, through the people of the Covenant Church of Kenya. They have helped him go to school and have helped him with his basic needs. How does God show his love to you? As you give your offering today, pray for the boys and girls who have lost their parents. Pray that they would feel God's love and care today.

DAY 22

JONAS IS A PASTOR FROM CONGO living in Kenya. He lost his children in the war in Congo and is now taking care of his grandchildren. He has prayed that his grandchildren would be able to go to school, but he does not have the money to pay for their school fees. Your offerings today will help children pay the school fees so they can go back to school. Pray for Pastor Jonas and his family.



DAY 23

MARK IS 12 YEARS OLD. He lives with his mother, but doesn't know where his father is. He prays that one day he will be able to see his father again. For many years Mark was not able to go to school. Now he is in fifth grade and loves to study! Mark's life has been filled with so much pain and he is so thankful for this new opportunity to go to school. Your offering will help Mark pay for his school books. Let's pray thanking God for the Covenant Church of Kenya, which helps children like Mark go to school.

DAY 24

TODAY, REMEMBER HOW MUCH GOD LOVES YOU and how much God loves the children in Kenya. How awesome that we can share God's love with others, even though they live far away in another country. You have made a difference in the lives of Benjamin, Francine and Shalom. Your offerings will help them go to school and prepare for a better life. Continue to pray for the children in Kenya and the Kenya Covenant Church. They have shown us what it means to faithfully love God and others even in very difficult times.







Donation Information

Make offering checks out to Evangelical Covenant Church.
Include *Children's Service Project – Back to School* in the memo line.

Please send donations to:
Covenant World Relief
8303 W. Higgins Rd.
Chicago, IL 60631



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The Evangelical Covenant Church
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