Our thanks to Tim and Susan Reynolds for their vision and enthusiasm for this project. Their labor of love – countless hours spent to help develop these guides – will bear eternal fruit in the lives of families worldwide.
A Note from Marie

Synergy Groups – Learning Together!™

I’m excited to share something we designed to meet a need for community among MFW families – Synergy Groups. *Synergy* means “working together” and describes the multiplying results when we join together, creating something greater than our individual efforts.

Synergy Groups are simple. You don’t need a large group, or a lot of advance planning, or a huge time commitment. We want to make your life easier while providing friendship and encouragement. Our easy-to-teach *Synergy Group Guide* provides flexible structure with minimal preparation.

**What Is a Synergy Group™?**

- weekly groups of two or more families, all using the same year of MFW curriculum
- friendship and accountability with like-minded families
- science, history/geography, Bible memory, art, and music (all from your MFW Teacher’s Manual) – freeing up more of your time at home – as well as speech opportunities

**How Do I Begin a Synergy Group?**

It’s simple – just invite one or more of your friends to use the same year of curriculum as you. You can use MFW catalogs to share about the curriculum. Perhaps you can find a family at your church or in your local homeschool group. You might invite a new family to consider homeschooling, with your mentoring assistance and the encouragement of weekly group times.

Each family needs their own *Exploring Countries & Cultures* curriculum package to teach at home. The Group Leader and any other parents who are teaching will need a *Synergy Group Guide* to lead you through group activities that match your MFW curriculum, week by week. This guide uses the 4th Edition of *Properties of Ecosystems*.

If you’re new to homeschooling, *Synergy Group Guides* make it easy to partner with another family. If you’ve homeschooled before, these groups are an easy way to reach out and mentor other families just beginning the homeschool journey.

We hope you have a wonderful year learning together!

*Maria*
Hello, bonjour, ¡buenos dias!
G’day, guten Tag, kon nichi wa!
Ciao, shalom, dobrey dyen!

Welcome to an exciting year! *Exploring Countries and Cultures* is a unit study for students in grades 2-8. You will take a trip around the world and explore diverse cultures while learning geography and being challenged by true stories of missionaries. We hope and pray that you will see the world in a new way, and that God’s kingdom will be affected by what you learn this year.

**Overview**
*Synergy Group Guides* are written so that families using the same year of MFW curriculum can meet and participate in group activities. Activities are primarily those already scheduled in the MFW Teacher’s Manuals. We were careful not to increase the weekly time or work load for the parent and student. Group activities reinforce lessons learned during the week at home while also giving an opportunity for public speaking, public prayer, and group interaction.

*Synergy Group Guides* can be used with as few as two families. It’s best to split into smaller groups if more than five families join. Attendance of all group members every week is encouraged but not required; most missed activities can be completed at home.

**Schedule**
We encourage groups to meet **Thursday afternoon or any time Friday** because some group activities assume parents have already taught lessons from their MFW Teacher’s Manual for that week. We believe afternoon meetings are best so that valuable morning home teaching time is not lost. MFW lesson plans generally are much lighter on Friday, so Friday afternoon may be an ideal time to meet.

Groups meet for about **two hours a week**. Plan for quick transitions between activities and a short mid-meeting break. Actual time will vary from week to week.

- Opening Prayer – 3 minutes
- Recite Memory Verses (Current and Review) – 10 minutes
- Public Speaking Opportunity – 10 minutes
- Geography – 25 minutes
- Science – 25 minutes
- Music and Art – 25 minutes

The Group Leader can set a schedule for the year that works best for your group and distribute it to all families at the first group meeting. See the sample Synergy Group schedule page.

**Activities**
Groups work best with a defined, repeatable structure. In Synergy groups, activities change each week, but the structure remains the same, greatly reducing the Group Leader’s preparation time.
Activities are designed for grades 2-8. Often, older children can help younger ones with an activity or experiment for true group learning. Younger siblings may participate as they are able. Parents are expected to attend all group sessions with their children.

Families teach lessons at home from their MFW Teacher’s Manual for the same week being taught in the group. Weekly summary sheets list activities from your MFW Teacher’s Manual that will be completed in group and won’t need to be taught at home.

No homework is assigned, except for occasional minimal preparation for public speaking opportunities.

Leader
One person is the designated Group Leader, providing cohesive leadership for the year and teaching all activities. Your group can designate a second parent as a co-teacher, or divide tasks so that each parent teaches a specific activity all year, such as science. However, it is still important to designate one individual as the Group Leader. All teaching parents will need their own Synergy Group Guide.

Preparation
Fill out the top half of the Parent Handout page. Photocopy and distribute it and the Week 1 Summary to all participating families before your Week 1 meeting.

Begin to gather materials:
- The Synergy Group Guide lists materials each week for the Group Leader (or other parents) to provide. Each group will need to decide how to share the expense of any materials that are purchased. In addition, materials are listed for each family to bring.
- Leader Supply Box – Each week the leader will need to bring a Leader Supply Box with 9” x 12” colored construction paper (50-sheet pack, multicolored), one ream of white copy paper, 2-3 adult scissors (for fabric and other uses), and several rulers. These items will not be listed in the weekly supply lists; we will assume you have them on hand each week. Store the Leader Supply Box where you regularly meet or with someone who can bring it from place to place
- Currency Kit – Enough play money for four children is included in the ECC Deluxe Package. If families have not purchased this, it is available separately from My Father’s World.
- School Supply Box – Every week each child will need to bring a School Supply Box with several pens and pencils, kid-safe scissors, white school glue, and colored pencils. Also include crayons and/or markers. These items will not be listed in the weekly supply lists; we will assume you have them on hand each week.
Week 9 Summary
Synergy Group – Exploring Countries and Cultures
South America: Brazil

Mark the above activities in your Exploring Countries and Cultures TM so you do not do them at home.

Materials for each FAMILY to bring:
☐ ECC passport
☐ decorative materials such as fabric, felt, tiny leaves, beads, sequins, and feathers (small amounts)
☐ Wee Sing book
☐ School Supply Box

Materials for LEADER to bring:
☐ Window on the World
☐ Wee Sing book/CD and CD player
☐ Global Art
☐ plastic cups (2 for each student)
☐ radish seeds or bird seeds or grass seeds (several for each student)
☐ potting soil
☐ plastic wrap
☐ pineapple, plastic forks, and small disposable bowls for snack
☐ various colors carpet thread (or yarn)
☐ date stamp and ink pad
☐ colored pipe cleaners or thick bendable wire from hardware stores

Currency Kit:
☐ Brazilian reais (22 per student)
☐ U.S. dollars ($10 per student)

Photocopies:
☐ Week 10 Summary (one copy per family)

Note: Suggested minutes to complete activities are included this week as a reminder to help you stay on track. Actual times will vary; adjust to the needs of your group.

Memory Work (10 Minutes)

Matthew 1:23 – “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”— which means, “God with us.”

Matthew 4:4 – Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

Matthew 4:19 – “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”

Matthew 5:11-12 – “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Matthew 5:14 – “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Recite together. Let students recite individually as time allows.

Speech Opportunity (10 Minutes): Impromptu Speech

This week each child will be asked to contribute a sentence or two about Brazil (or South America). Ask each one to pretend they can visit anywhere in Brazil. What would they like to see or do? Why? They can use this format:

“On my trip to Brazil, I would _______ because _______.”

Geography (25 Minutes): Travel to Brazil!

Set up chairs and pretend to take a plane trip. Select a pilot, co-pilot, and attendant. Discuss your destination while you are on your flight.

Talk about how far you are traveling from the capital of Canada to the capital of Brazil, Brasília. (7,366km; 4,577mi)

While you are in the air, teach the children simple words in Portuguese. Write the words on a board or paper where the children can see them to use once they land.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Portuguese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hello</td>
<td>olá (OH-lah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good-bye</td>
<td>adeus (AH deh-oos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>please</td>
<td>por favor (poor fa-VOHR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thank you</td>
<td>obrigado (oh-bre-GAH-doh)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
yes – sim (seen)
no – não (nown)

Before the plane lands, give each child their passport and $10 U.S. currency. Once the plane lands, have the children line up to go through three areas: customs, currency exchange, and street vendor. Encourage all children and adults who are participating to greet each other and use a few other words in Portuguese as they converse in these three areas.

**Customs:** An adult, the Customs Examiner, sits behind a table. One by one, the children present their passport. The Customs Examiner asks questions such as:
- What is your name?
- Is this your first visit to our country?
- Do you have any fruit in your luggage?
- Are you a tourist?

The Customs Examiner writes the country name in each passport and stamps the page with the date stamp. (Add the appropriate large flag sticker from *Flags of the World* to each passport at home.)

**Currency Exchange:** An adult sits at a table and operates a currency exchange. The currency in Brazil is the real. Have each child in turn exchange $10 U.S. for 22 real. The Group Leader keeps the U.S. money; it is reused each time you take an airplane to a new country.

Note: We provide a suggested exchange rate for your convenience. If preferred, use the Internet to determine the current exchange rate. You may need to round up that amount, since smaller denominations may not be included in your Currency Kit.

**Street Vendor:** An adult (or older child) sits at a third location and sells pineapple in small disposable bowls. Children may use their money to purchase a snack. Remaining money may go home with each child for home activities.

**Break (5-10 minutes)** – Prepare for remaining activities.

**Science (25 Minutes):** Greenhouse Experiment

Plant radish seeds (or bird seed or grass seed) in two plastic disposable cups. Cover one cup with plastic. This will produce a warmer and more humid environment. Which plants grow more quickly?

The rain forest is a warm and humid environment and plants grow very quickly there.

**Music (5 Minutes):** *Wee Sing CD*, #9 – “Brown Girl in the Ring,” (page 19) and #10 – “Ciranda” (page 20)

**Art (20 Minutes):** *Global Art*, page 157 – Carnival Dancer

**LEADER NOTES:**

Give copies of Week 10 Summary to each family.