



## Tug of War

**Description:** A team contest with audience participation

**Aim:** To demonstrate difficulties of Bible translation, the need for a team, and God's power

**Audience:** Primary, ten or more children

**Time:** 10–15 minutes

**Equipment:** A rope and costumes (signs could replace costumes)

**Scriptures to study:** 2 Chronicles 32:7–8; Jeremiah 17:5–8; 1 Samuel 17:45–47; Galatians 6:12

### Leader's instructions:

1. Stretch a rope out on the floor at the front of the room. (No one touches it yet.) Ask a volunteer to stand at one end of the rope and play the part of a missionary. (You could dress them up to look like an intrepid explorer with a Bible or just hang a sign around their neck that says 'missionary'.)
2. Ask the audience what challenges/difficulties the missionary will face. As they think of some of these below, choose a different child to represent each difficulty. (It works best if they are larger than the 'missionary'.) Have each 'difficulty' take his or her place along the rope to form an opposing team for a tug of war. Give each an appropriate prop or sound effect:
  - **Learning a new language** (stuff mouth with large marshmallow and recite John 3:16)
  - **Money** (hat with toy/Monopoly monetary notes taped on)
  - **Diseases** (balance an ice pack on the child's head)
  - **Travel to remote areas** (put a heavy backpack on the child's back)
  - **Rebel uprisings and war** (camouflage clothing)
  - **Fitting into a new culture's way of dressing and behaving** (ethnic dress of your choosing)
  - **Wild animals** (soft toys/plastic insects)
  - **Spiritual warfare** may or may not come up (scary costume, mask or suit of armour)



3. Now ask the audience if the missionary can win. They'll likely shout, 'No way!' Even so, let the two teams play tug of war. The missionary will easily be pulled over the line. Ask the audience what the missionary needs. Yes! Some help – a team of their own. Ask what kind of help they need? Eg for the problem of learning a new language?
4. Call up a volunteer for each of the following. Try and choose slightly smaller or weaker members for the missionary's team. (You are making sure that the missionary still can't win.)
  - **Language school teacher** (this child could repeat 'un, deux, trois' endlessly, without drowning you out!)
  - **Financial supporters** (purse, credit card, piggy bank)
  - **Medical worker** (stethoscope, lab coat, or a needle-less syringe!)
  - **Two or more prayer partners** (hands clasped to pray – unless pulling)
  - **Pilot** (toy aeroplane, dark glasses, captain's hat)



5. Play tug of war again, and the missionary's team still loses. Suggest that problems on the mission field are just TOO BIG! Even with one more person on his team, the missionary still could not win. Maybe it's hopeless? Someone in the audience should challenge you on the point. If not, ask them if anything is too difficult for God?



6. Declare, 'What the missionary needs is power!' From the back, call your big strong man who has been hiding the sign (included on the last page) around his neck all this time. As he strides to the front, flexing his muscles, the children will see 'Holy Spirit' written in bold letters.
7. Now play tug of war again and the missionary team wins! Applause!

## **Discussion and application**

1. Ask, 'Can a missionary get the job done all by themselves?' Emphasise that missionaries need a team to get the job done.
2. Ask, 'Can people, if they're a big enough team, get the job done by themselves?' No, we need the Holy Spirit. God's power puts us on the winning side even when the problems are too big!
3. Ask the kids which of these jobs on the missionary's team they could do right now? Children may be too young to be pilots, nurses or teachers just yet but



they can pray for missionaries supported by their church, give financially, or write letters to keep them from being homesick. They CAN be part of the team right now!

4. Encourage them to discuss this in class with their teachers and form a plan of action. Kids really want to DO MISSIONS, instead of just being entertained. Give them a chance to join a missionary team.

**Closing song:** 'Jesus Loves Me' (We are weak, but he is strong!)



**HOLY**

**Spirit**