

SUMMER BIBLE CAMP

2022 REPORT



A SUMMER OF HOPE LIKE NO OTHER

As war continues to devastate lives and lands, Mission Eurasia's summer Bible camps have never been more powerful—or more needed. Read the heartfelt testimonies [here](#) and see how your support is changing Eurasia's youth for good.

“God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.” – Psalm 46:1, ESV



SUMMER BIBLE CAMPS PROVIDE A REFUGE OF SAFETY IN 2022

*Bringing hope and healing
from the trauma of war*

Our summer Bible camps have always served as a welcome respite for children living in troubled environments. But in the past year, they have become more important than ever, as we ministered to thousands of children escaping the horrors of war in Ukraine.

God is truly at work in the midst of this ongoing tragedy. As you read the testimonies from children, parents, and staff members, I hope you'll rejoice with me in the many lives that have been changed for good. And remember, it is all possible because of your generous support. To see the impact that our Summer of Hope Bible camps have made on the hurting children of Ukraine, please visit this link:

<https://youtu.be/EddxtMvDJ18>

Thank you for standing with Mission Eurasia at this critical time.



Sergey Rakhuba
President,
Mission Eurasia

The staggering number of war refugees made this an exceptional year for our Summer of Hope Bible camps. Through our iCare refugee assistance program, we conducted special camps in Ukraine, Poland, and Moldova, ministering to refugee children and their mothers.

Bible Camps

620

Children reached

29,830

*Children who
accepted Christ*

4,498

Summer Bible Camps for Refugees
through iCare Program

Country	Camps	Children
Ukraine	297	18,950
Poland	36	2,140
Moldova	11	450
TOTAL	344	21,540

Country	Camps	Children
Azerbaijan	3	146
Armenia	15	900
Belarus	8	483
Georgia	7	480
Israel	4	200
Kazakhstan	4	150
Kyrgyzstan	180	3,500
Mongolia	5	431
Russia	21	710
Tajikistan	25	1,160
Uzbekistan	4	130
Totals	276	8,290

In addition, our regular summer Bible camps were in full swing throughout the rest of Eurasia:

REACHING YOUNG ONES FOR GOD

“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” – Matthew 18:3, ESV

Jesus knew that children are wonderfully open to receiving God’s love. But as people age, they sometimes become hardened and cynical. This is why it’s so important to reach children with the gospel early, while their hearts are receptive. That’s what our summer Bible camps are about. We provide the kids with a safe, fun, healthy environment under the careful supervision of our trained staff. They learn Bible stories and experience God’s love firsthand. As the testimonies here illustrate, they are responding with faith and enthusiasm.

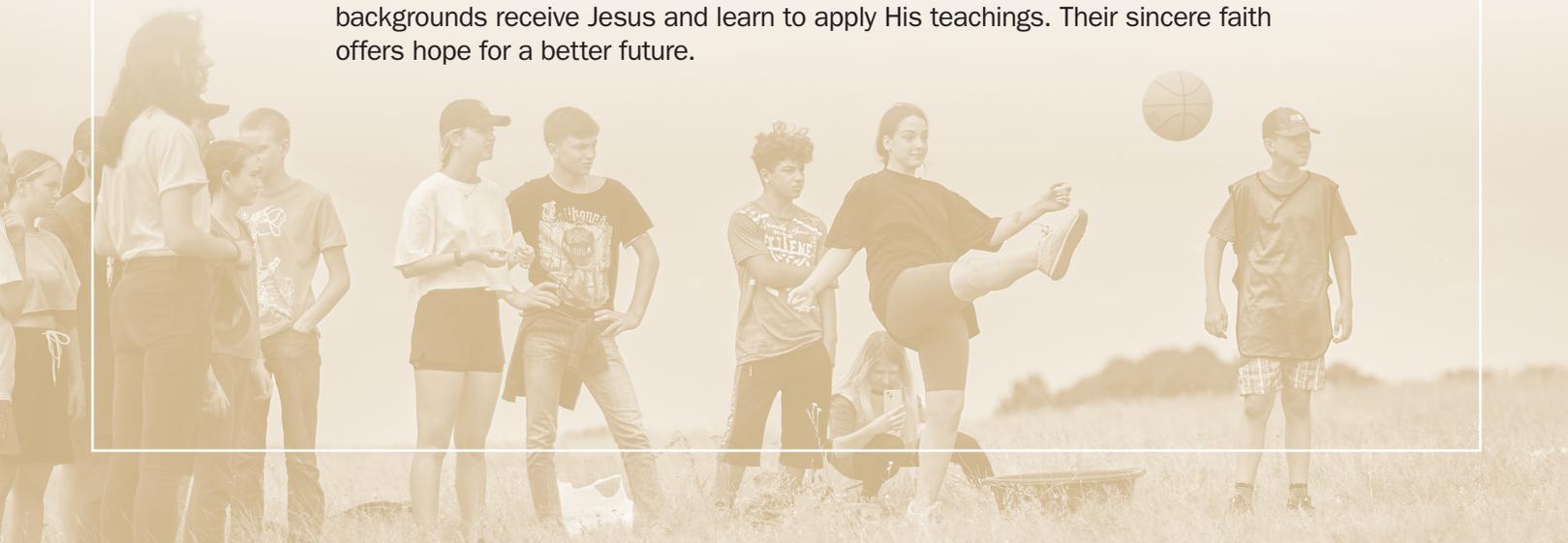
WAR REFUGEES FIND RELIEF IN THE SAFETY OF CHRISTIAN CAMP



The long-running conflict between **Russia and Ukraine** entered a deadly new phase with Russia’s invasion in February of 2022. As a result, an estimated **7 million refugees** fled from the war zones in eastern Ukraine to neighboring Poland, Moldova, and the relatively peaceful western part of Ukraine.

While men remained to defend their homeland, many women fled with their children. Mission Eurasia was there to help them. They found comfort and safety through our iCare refugee assistance program—and the summer Bible Camps that your gifts made possible.

The decades-old dispute between **Armenia and Azerbaijan** has also exploded into deadly violence again. Mission Eurasia’s summer Bible camps offer a respite for war-weary residents of this troubled region. At camp, young people from all backgrounds receive Jesus and learn to apply His teachings. Their sincere faith offers hope for a better future.



UKRAINE

A Boy's Journey from Fear to Faith



Fedir is just 13. But he has already known a lifetime's worth of tragedy. *"My family lived in Mariupol when the bombardment started,"* he shares. *"My dog was killed the first day by the shrapnel. Our neighbors were injured, too, so we went to the basement and stayed there all the time. Sometimes my brother and I went to get some water from the water pipes of other houses. My parents received food from the military guys, but not every day. My parents divided the food between all of us. We tried to leave the city twice, and I saw many dead people on the streets."*

On their third attempt, Fedir and his family managed to escape. At Dnipro, they boarded an evacuation bus provided by the Mission Eurasia refugee assistance center. They were taken to relative safety in the western city of Chernivtsi. But the trauma of war had taken its toll: *"My parents, my brother, and I weren't able to sleep many nights. I felt fear all the time, and sometimes I was mad and fought with other boys."*

Things changed when Fedir got an opportunity to go to summer Bible camp. *"When my mom told me we could go to a children's camp, I didn't want to go,"* Fedir says. *"But I dreamed of seeing the mountains, so I went. There were older guys there, our leaders, who played sports with us, prayed for me, and talked a lot about what was happening to me and how God could help me. I felt as if something bad left my heart; Jesus' love filled me and stayed with me. They invited us to church after the camp. We heard about the church before from the volunteers of the center, but now we'll definitely go there. I know for sure there is hope with God."*

At Last, Laughter—and Hope

Yekaterina experienced the terrors of war firsthand. While her husband remained on the frontlines in eastern Ukraine, she fled westward with their two children. At a refugee camp near Chernivtsi, they discovered the summer Bible camp being sponsored by Mission Eurasia. *"We were very happy to learn about this camp,"* she says. *"These days [of camp] have changed us. My children laugh again. I was able to completely rest. We have hope again, and together with other mothers, we pray for our husbands and children every day. Thank you so much for this camp. It really brought us back to life, and faith that God loves us."*

As camp ended, Natalia, the camp leader, wrote about what she had witnessed: *"The parents and children left with huge gratitude and tears in their eyes. They didn't want to leave... They had thrown off their burdens of negative emotions. Their stories are painful. The war left deep scars on them, and together with you, we were able to put healing band-aids, heal their wounds, and support them."*

MOLDOVA

Bringing Jesus to Skeptical Hearts

Deep in the woods of Moldova, Mission Eurasia has been holding its Veritas camp for the past 18 years. To reach as many young people as possible, we held two camps in 2022—one for ages 13 through 16, and another for ages 17 through 20.

Among the 24 young people that attended the first camp, eight were refugees from the neighboring country of Ukraine. Some who came to camp as professing atheists ended up sharing their deepest thoughts and asking for prayer. As always, God did His wonderful work in those who opened their hearts to receive Him.



God's Love Breaks Through

Vera came to camp with an air of confidence that disguised her deep unhappiness. Just 16, her life in Odesa, Ukraine, had been marked by trauma. After two of her relatives were killed in the war, she fled with her family to Moldova.

Her experiences had left Vera feeling cold toward God. But the love and kindness of the people at camp had an irresistible impact on her. Finally, in a meeting with her camp counselor, Vera's façade broke. As the tears flowed, she confessed her deep insecurity. Now Vera is finding new meaning and answers as she reads God's Word.



POLAND

A Story of Loss and Renewal

Natalia had a happy life in her hometown of Bucha, Ukraine, running her kindergarten and playing music. But it was shattered in the early morning hours of February 24, 2022. That's when she and her terrified children heard the sound of missiles falling. In the attack that followed, hundreds of Ukrainian civilians were massacred. Natalia and her family fled to western Ukraine. But they weren't completely safe there either, as Russian missiles kept falling nearby.

So, in March Natalia made the decision to take her two young daughters and young son to Krakow, Poland—leaving her husband behind to care for his elderly parents. In a new country far from home, Natalia spent lonely months worrying about her husband and wondering about her future.



Then Natalia heard about the three-day camps that the local iCare team was holding for refugee moms and children. She signed her kids up, but soon realized this was a wonderful opportunity for her as well. Using her talent and experience as an educator, Natalia began helping with various aspects of the camp, organizing activities for the preschoolers and conducting musical activities. Suddenly, she felt needed again. And for the first time in a long while, a normal, happy life seemed within reach.

*This is how God uses summer camps
to bring healing and renewal to hurting hearts.*

Children Say Yes to God

A few hours north of Warsaw is the Polish town of Lubawa, where a Mission Eurasia team welcomed 11 young refugee children to a neighborhood camp. After some games and fun on a trampoline, the group had a devotional time with Bible study and prayer. When the children were invited to pray the prayer of repentance, all 11 raised their hands. The team is now starting a regular Sunday school—and all the children are expecting to come.



ARMENIA

Learning the Deep Lessons of the Faith

Karine is just 12 years old—but not too young to apply Bible lessons to her daily life. Her faith was deepened as she attended summer Bible camp. “I’ve learned more about God here and made many good friends,” she says.

As someone familiar with ethnic conflict, Karine was especially touched by Jesus’ parable of the story of the Good Samaritan. “For the first time, I learned that a person from a hostile nation can help a representative of another nation. I realized that I must do the same in order to become a godly person. This is only possible with God’s help. After watching the animated show, my friends and I discussed the act of the Good Samaritan, who, as our teachers told us, is a prototype of Jesus Christ. And we came to the conclusion that Jesus gave this example for us to follow.”



AZERBAIJAN

A Troubled Boy’s Transformation



When Abdulkhaliq, 10, arrived at summer Bible camp, he was troubled and antisocial. His dysfunctional family background had caused him to have a negative view of life. But the camp leaders had to address his aggressive behavior. So, they gathered with him and the other kids for a time of prayer. In that encounter, the Lord touched Abdulkhaliq and he burst into tears. With his burden lifted, he became peaceful and affable.

Abdulkhaliq’s transformation was amazing. But it was not unusual—for children who encounter the living God at summer Bible camp.

RUSSIA

Experiencing God's Love

“My name is Valya ... I was happy to go to the camp because I knew there would be many Christian people there and it would be interesting, but faith in God wasn't something I wanted to know more about. But something special happened on the last day during a prayer meeting. I started feeling God's love for me, so I went to the pastor's wife and asked her to pray for me. When she was praying, I started crying, and I knew that God loved me, and that He forgave me. It was an incredible evening when I realized that God loved me and felt that love. I am so happy. Praise God!”



Getting Serious with God

Masha had a Christian background but didn't take it very seriously. “My heart wasn't there,” she confesses now. But everything changed when she attended camp in 2022.

“We had an amazing time there,” Masha says.” She took part in lots of fun activities. “But something very special happened on the last day ... We had a gathering for everyone like always, but at the end they told us that there would be a prayer meeting ... and whoever wanted someone to pray for them could stay. And I stayed. At first one girl shared her testimony of how she experienced God's love ... And then, standing there with all the people who were praying and worshipping Him, I asked Him, ‘Please show me Your love so that I could feel it, too.’ And then His presence filled me, and I experienced His love. My life started changing after that. I came back home and realized that I didn't want to do the things that I did before. Those things didn't interest me anymore. I know that this is just the beginning and God will do even greater work in my heart.”



THE CAMP COUNSELOR'S PERSPECTIVE:

One Boy's Transformation

“Slavik was abandoned by his parents as a baby, and that impacted him greatly. A foster family took him in and cared for him with love. Starting from the first day of the camp, Slavik misbehaved, bullied other boys, and didn't pay any attention to what the camp counselors said. We've seen in the past that very often these kind of guys become really great helpers.

“We were not mistaken. As soon as he realized his sinful nature, he quickly made a decision to cry out to Jesus. He began to change in the plain view of the whole camp, was very attentive during classes, and took our every word in. God's Word made big changes in his heart. At the end of the camp, he even started crying because he didn't want to leave. But when we told him that his whole foster family would be coming to the campground tomorrow for a few days, he quickly went to pack his things to be ready for the new adventure.

“When our leaders got together after the camp to analyze everything, we were all talking about this young guy and the big changes we saw in him. We were especially touched when his parents noticed a huge difference in him, too, and thanked our staff for having found a way to his heart. They also shared that he'd been to a few other camps before, and he was always kicked out of the camps because nobody could manage him. So, this year they waited for the phone call to come and get him. But instead, they received a text message saying that our church felt led to invite their whole big family to stay for a few days ... so that they could spend time together as a family. They were overwhelmed with joy.”



MONGOLIA

Learning Forgiveness



“My name is Basyndarch, and I am 14.”

Coming from a dysfunctional family, Basyndarch dreamed of escaping—especially when his father would drink and become abusive. “I have a few guys in my class who go to church,” he says, “so they invited me to a Christian summer camp. Going somewhere was an amazing opportunity to leave home and not see my drunk father, although I was not specifically interested in Christianity, and I never planned to learn more about it. There was one Bible class in the camp, and it really impacted me. It was about forgiveness. We read a story from the Bible that talked about God being a caring Father who forgives His children. I thought about it a lot, and understood that He forgives my father, too, and I don’t need to be angry at him. I felt relief and joy in my heart. My Christian friends from the camp invited me to the youth club at the church. I am sure it will be interesting, and I am definitely going!”

DISCOVERING THE BIBLE—AND ETERNAL LIFE



“My name is Gereltuya. I am 14.”

“I have a great family. My father is a car mechanic, and my mother is a doctor. My older brother lives separately. My parents and I live in an apartment, but we usually live in a yurt all summer long (it’s on the outskirts of the city). I take private English classes. Nobody goes to church in my family.

“My aunt, who is a Christian, invited me to the camp. I really enjoyed spending time with the young people there and camp leaders. I made new friends. I really liked that we played a lot of interesting games, and we also had some free time to talk to our new friends.

“The Bible stories were absolutely new to me. We talked about who our neighbor is, about love, and eternal life. I will definitely stay in touch with my new Christian friends that I met here and will most probably go with them to church.”

KAZAKHSTAN

Finding God for the First Time



Lisa was enjoying her time at summer Bible camp. “We had a lot of fun,” she recalls. “They fed us really well—better than at school! I especially liked the art classes that our camp leader Dina taught.” But Lisa’s experience deepened one evening when she found some fellow campers praying and crying together. She had never encountered anything like this before and was surprised. Her counselor explained that sometimes people cry when God touches their hearts.

“But how does God touch hearts?” Lisa asked. And that was the beginning of a spiritual journey that is still continuing today. On the last day of camp, the group was sitting by the campfire and praying. Lisa joined in with a prayer of her own—for the first time.

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF FRIENDSHIP

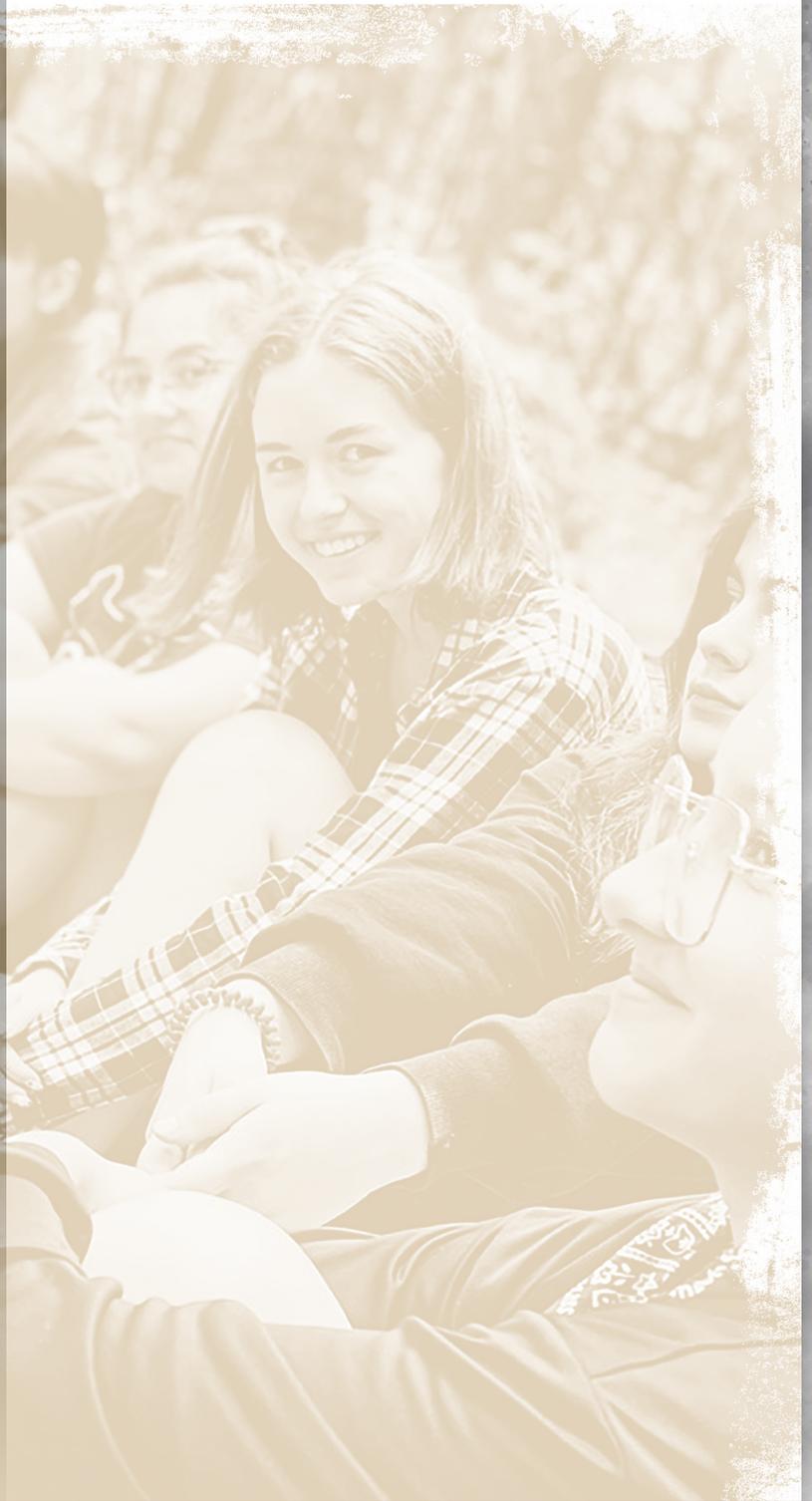
Roman wasn’t interested in going to camp. And when he finally did, he felt like an outsider. But his counselor, Ulyana, found a way to draw him in. She put Roman in charge of gathering the kids for morning exercises. Before long, he was interacting with the others and even found a deep friendship with one of the other boys. Abandoning his aloof attitude, Roman revealed himself as a thoughtful, cheerful, and funny person who was drawn to prayer and worship.

Roman’s experience is typical of many youngsters who come to camp feeling alienated. When they experience real love and fellowship, they begin to thrive.



Thank you for supporting Mission Eurasia's summer Bible camps, which are bringing hope and joy to so many young, hurting lives. Your gifts make their life-changing experiences possible.

The testimonies included here are but a small representation of the dramatic work God is doing among young people throughout Eurasia. With your steadfast partnership, it will continue and grow.



“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” – Matthew 19:14

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