



Turn on the Tap Education Resources Optional Impact Stories



Children in Africa

NOTE: These stories should be read in conjunction with the Bible lessons, [Taking Care of God's Gifts](#) or [A Small Part of Something BIG](#).

These stories are fictionalized accounts based on the lives of children in the developing world.

Ethiopia

Who: Ayana (aah-yana), 10 year-old girl
Where: Amhara region, Ethiopia

My older sister and I put our buckets into the river. I can hardly wait for them to fill so we can walk to school. I wasn't at school for long time, even though I love school. I was sick again – my belly hurt really bad. I couldn't eat anything or stand up. I just lay on my mat on the floor with sweat dripping off me.

My sister would sometimes help me out of our hut to get some fresh air. "Ayana," she would say, "you must get better. Be strong."

Thankfully, I am better now, so I can go to school, but my mother is worried about my baby brother, Zeke. He has been sick for a long time. He lies on his mat like I did. He makes noises like a small kitten.

Someone in our family is always sick. When my mother is sick, she can't work on the farm. If my mother can't work on the farm, we have no food to eat. Mostly, we kids are sick.

I know why our bellies hurt so much. The river water we drink makes us sick. It's brown and smells like cows. The mud taste makes me want to spit it out. But it's the only water we have.

My friend Miriam lives in another village down the river. People from Samaritan's Purse helped the village build tall cement boxes called "water filters." Miriam's father helped build a filter for her family. When Miriam pours the river water into the top of the filter, it comes out clean and clear – like rain on your tongue.

Samaritan's Purse taught Miriam and her family ways to not get sick – to only drink water that has been poured through the filter, not going to the bathroom in the bushes and always washing their hands. They also taught Miriam's family about Jesus.

Miriam's family changed after getting the water filter. Miriam doesn't get sick or miss school. Her

father and mother are strong and work in the fields every day. Her baby brother is not sick.

I want a filter for my family. I hope Samaritan's Purse comes to my village, too.

Liberia

Who: Famata (fah-mata), seven-year-old girl

Where: Bopolu county, Liberia

I haven't lived in my village for very long. We used to live in a big, noisy city, but one day we began a long trip into the jungle. My mama told me we were going to our old home, a village very far away. I had never been there before because of the war in our country. "Now the fighting is over and it's safe for us, Famata," said mama. "We can go back to our real home."

Bad men had burned down our old house, so my father built us a new one out of trees, mud and cow dung. We covered the roof with branches and leaves. Now, my job is to help carry water and feed the goats. I like our village; lots of families have come back and all the kids I play with feel safe, too.

The best part is our water filters. People called Samaritan's Purse came to the village and helped us build tall cement boxes filled with sand and rocks. When mama pours the water from the creek inside, it comes out the spout tasting good. We had never tasted water so good.

The people from Samaritan's Purse told us to always pour our water through the filter, and put clean buckets under the spout, and it would help stop our runny stomachs. Before, most everyone had runny stomachs and sometimes the kids in the village were so sick their parents would have to take them in a wheelbarrow to the hospital far away, because we have no cars.

Even my father carries filter water to the field each day, so he doesn't have to drink straight from the creek. Because of the water filters, I never get a runny stomach and no more kids have to go to the hospital in a wheelbarrow.

The water filter makes us feel very fine – we are so happy to have it.

Niger

Who: Miriamma, 10-year-old girl

Where: Firgoune, Niger

Miriamma is making changes in her family and her village and she is helping them live healthier. Miriamma lives in Firgoune, which is on an island in a river. She goes to school and spends most of her spare time helping out at home. Her mother and father are often busy working in the fields, trying to grow enough food for the family to eat.

Miriamma cooks meals, looks after her younger brothers and sisters, and hauls water from the

river to her home in a big bucket on her head. Young girls like Miriamma are hard workers and have very important roles in their families.

Besides these duties, Miriamma volunteers every week to attend health and hygiene classes at school. In these classes, she learns how to fight bad germs by washing her hands with soap, how to use a toilet dug in the ground, why it's important to drink and clean herself with safe water, why she should cover food to keep flies away, and the importance of sleeping under a mosquito net to keep away insects that could bite and give her malaria.

Many children die from diarrhea and malaria, so these classes are important for saving lives. In Firgoune, the only source of water is the river, which is polluted and can cause diarrhea.

Miriamma also learned about Oral Rehydration Solution. This mixture of water, sugar, and salt is easy to make at home and is very important for people who are sick with diarrhea. Drinking the solution helps you from getting too dehydrated when you have diarrhea and it can save people's lives.

Miriamma was able to share those lessons with her family. She knew having safe water wasn't enough to make her family as healthy as possible. So those lessons were very useful when the family began using a BioSand Water Filter in 2007. It was their first source of safe water and it is still helping to reduce sickness in her family.

As a result of her courage and excitement about what she was learning, Miriamma's one small voice was able to help improve the health of her family.