



**A kitchen table becomes a
mission station and a college**

An Eduventure

Leader Guide

201

Cookie Mountain

Introduction

Cookie Mountain is one of several eduventures that demonstrate how to easily turn your kitchen table into a mission station, reaching out to teens around you.

Cookie Mountain draws teen girls into small leadership opportunities plus developing their God-given skills. Their mission field grows from teen to teen and to silver haired seniors. Each find God's gold in the other.

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by
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#1 – Cookie Mountain Missionary

The police officer spied a light burning in the back room window of the Candi Curlers Beauty Shop hours after the shop had closed for the day. 'Badge' Jackson took a swipe across his uniform's badge with a coat sleeve and smiled. If it was any day but Thursday, he'd radio his dispatcher for backup before he started to investigate. But Thursday had been Candi's cookie day for as long as he could remember.

Badge gave the scene one more smile and continued on down the sidewalk remembering the long-ago taste of one of those cookies that'd make a grown man forget where his house was. He knew without a doubt what was going on in that back room each Thursday. In the center of the kitchen table was a mountain of fresh-baked cookies brightly decorated with about anything that silver-haired Candi could find in her rather understocked pantry above the beauty shop.

It would help to know that Candi Stiner thought of herself as a missionary with cookies and a curling iron. Even when her husband finally went home to be with the Lord three years ago, she never missed her Thursday night cookie days.

Though the beauty shop and Candi's upstairs apartment had door locks, the back room that was fondly referred to as the 'cookie corner' was never locked. About two weeks ago, Candi was making her final preparation for a well-earned night's sleep when she heard a young girl crying in the room beneath; in the cookie corner. Candi had learned long ago that missionaries have no time clock; you respond when God calls... especially to a teenage girl's voice.

She grabbed her housecoat and prayed with every

careful step around the curving staircase to the girl's sobbing heart. She'd learned from Badge to always scan the youngsters for any bruises or bodily harm. She saw no obvious ones.

Candy swiftly produced two medium-sized cups of milk, one in front of Tipper with wet red eyes and one in front of herself. As Candi pulled her chair over close to Tipper she uncovered the cookies and offered the sobbing girl one.

Candi slipped the paper napkin off the mountain of cookies, grabbed a cookie for Tipper and placed it next to the girl's cup of milk. Tipper reached for the heart-shaped cookie and then looked at it. Through the tears she broke it in two and laid it back down. She pointed at the broken heart cookie and told Candi, "That's me. Just as sure as that cookie can never be put back together, neither can my heart. It's ruined for good. And I'm sure it's my fault, too." Between sobs the bad situations at home ached to be gotten out and onto the table.

The cookie missionary placed a napkin near her own milk glass and said, "watch carefully." Making sure Tipper's attention was clearly on her, she slowly moved the broken heart cookie pieces onto her own napkin. She then reached into the cookie mountain and pulled out a brand new heart cookie and gently placed it on Tipper's napkin exactly where the broken cookie had been, seconds earlier.

Then Candi cupped her chin in her hands while resting her elbows on the table. With eyes of love she peered through those tired old glasses at the red swollen eyes in front of her for a few seconds and then questioned, "What did you just see?" "Well...you took my broken heart cookie for yourself and replaced it with a brand new heart for me. Is that what you did?" The cookie missionary put on her best 'yes' smile followed by a world-changin' huggin' session that turned on the sunshine in a teenage heart that proved to be just the first of many times around that cookie mountain. [~]

#2 – Cookie Mountain Missions

To this day, Candi doesn't know how it got started, but a while back, one of the teen girls from church brought in a cardboard box with a bag of flour in it. On the side of the box, in large bright letters were the words, "Cookie Mountain Missions". It was put in a place not far from the beauty shop window where all could see. Two days later, another teen girl brought in a container of those assorted colors sugar sprinkles.

"I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE!" was Beulah's shout from under the hair dryer. She stood up and walked over to Candi and demanded in no uncertain terms, what that Cookie Mountain box business was all about. Now anyone that knows Beulah 'the Broadcaster' knows that she does more blabbing faster and farther than any radio station could dream of.

Two days later, Toots the newspaper reporter had gotten so many telephone calls wanting to learn about the mountain that started in a box, he had to do a full report that even started on Tuesday's front page.

The Cookie Mountain Box news article was being enjoyed by everyone, as the box continued to fill. Tipper began inviting her school friends over to visit the cookie mountain as her enthusiasm spread.

The newspaper article, that Toots thought was his greatest work, explained how you build a cookie mountain. It really has mostly to do with the two main ingredients.

The cookies must be shaped like hearts, crosses, churches, and bibles. Also, the boy and girl cookies must have a little cross inscribed right where their cookie heart would be. Some special cross cookies had red sugar sprinkles on their four corners. Those were Candi's favorite missionary

tools. She made sure she always had a good supply of them to teach young ladies the real meaning of love; love that only comes from God.

But the most important ingredient each and every cookie contained was Love-Prayers, from the aching tired hands and a heart that ached even more for little ladies. Those ladies who'd someday become maybe a cookie missionary in their own way; to their own children, spouse, or community.

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#3 – Cookie Stable

Then there was that Saturday that changed everything. Candi was washing Beulah's hair that had to have come from a wire brush, suddenly, in the shop burst Tipper and her handicapped best friend, Daphne, code-named "Daph". The girls rushed up to Candi's hair washing task, and accidentally bumped Candi. In a flash Beulah's hair wash showered a good part of her favorite dress. Wanna guess what 'the broadcaster' had to say across town about that? Well, no you definitely don't!

The big rush ended with both girls excitedly telling Candi they wanted to help make a Cookie Mountain. Tipper and Daph weren't too clear about their wanting to make the mountain for a church event, or was it having to do with the nearby orphanage.

Then came a big surprise in a little brown bag. Because of the event just described, Candi didn't expect to ever see the broadcaster back in her shop again... I mean... Beulah's favorite dress ruined; a broken relationship down the drain... forever. Candi had her back to the shop door, dusting the beauty products shelves, when the door opened with the familiar little bell jingling to announce the entrance.

It surprised her because today's first appointment wasn't for another 45 minutes. In the mirror's reflection she saw the broadcaster walk in the door with the same determination as Toots on a hot story lead. Beulah walked straight to Candi and placed a small brown bag in front of her. A matter-of-fact index finger moved to her lips, "Shhhhh". And then she was gone.

The unexpected little brown bag was cautiously opened and a surprise you'd not guess with a computer. Only one small object was inside. The cookie missionary pulled out what seemed to be a simple cookie cutter. But an even bigger surprise awaited. Close examination proved the cutter to produce cookie shapes of a baby in a manger! (Like the long ago stable in Bethlehem.)

Do you want to be somebody? Do you want to do something important? Would you like to build a mountain? Or maybe be God's broadcaster with a burden? It doesn't take too much. Some prayer, plenty of ready hugs, and cookie-cutting Christians; young and old. But don't wait; Thursday's coming!
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#4 – Cookie Mountain Kids College

Toots, the local newspaper reporter entered The Candi Curlers Beauty Shop with a brisk step. The jingling door bell caught everyone's attention. His eyes were wide open like he was about to uncover a story that would be on the national TV news. Candi glanced up at him and said, "OH. Hi Toots. Have a seat in that next chair and I can start your perm shortly." Candi and most of the customers smiled at him like he was definitely in 'No-Mans-Land'.

Toots pulled a note pad out of his pocket with one hand and a pencil from behind his ear, with the other. "That was

cute Candi. But I'm here to find out what's with all the teen girls that have been coming to your cookie corner, out back, every Saturday afternoon." All the other customers stopped their conversations to hear Candi's explanation. Like it was nothing special, Candi replied in a casual tone, "OH that. That's the Kids College... uh... the Cookie Mountain Kids College." Toots was so excited about this hot lead, his hands were shaking.

It'll take a military code-breaker to decipher his sloppy notes. "What'd you say – college? Our little town doesn't have any college." All the customer's eyes switched from Toots to Candi, for further details. With a prideful expression she replied, "Well. We sure do now! And it's right on the other side of that door over there. For right now, the only thing I'll tell you is that all our college students are teen girls. The college uses just one text book, but lots of cookies and toothpicks.

Candi smiled big within herself. She knew Toots would be awake most of the night trying to figure how you teach college with cookies and toothpicks. And if that wasn't enough, how can you teach college with one textbook and what would it be about? Would you choose math, or history, or English, or geography? What would your choice be?

Barb and Danny Falon were not happy about Toots' preoccupation with the college and toothpicks thing. Toots' article included a couple of the wedding pictures in full color. But instead of the article talking about the blue ribbon in Barb's hair, it said, "blue toothpicks in her hair." Toots thought about bombs, bullets, poison, a car accident, or falling out of a building... there's lots of ways to go. But it looks like I'm gonna be done in with... toothpicks.

"Toots. I'll make a deal with ya, then I gotta get Nancy's hair washed before it turns orange. Here's the deal – pay attention, we've got lots of witnesses here. You show up

at 8 am sharp, next Thursday with three bags of gum drops you'll donate to the college, and I'll give you the full low-down. OK? On his way out the door he said, "It's a deal – see ya 8 am Thursday." He could already visualize the headlines: OUR TOWN'S TOOTHPICK COLLEGE.

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#5 – Toots at Toothpick College

At five minutes to eight, Toots was already pacing back and forth in front of Candi's beauty shop, like an expectant father. The front door was unlocked and Toots Jeffers – ace reporter, followed Candi in through the shop.

The door leading to the back room previously called The Cookie Corner, now displayed a sign that declared, "COOKIE MOUNTAIN KIDS COLLEGE."

As he took a seat at the round kitchen table, he produced the agreed-upon three bags of gum drops. Candi began, "Tipper is our teacher. We have 4 teen girl students... 5, if you count Daphne and her wheelchair. The college has a mascot, named DAWG. DAWG, that's D-A-W-G, is actually a lazy calico cat that could sleep straight through the loudest air raid. My late husband always was a joker when giving people and pets nicknames and such. So DAWG is a cat."

"Toots. Right there's our one and only textbook," she said, pointing his attention to the always open well-worn Bible in the center of the table. "It has more than all the history, science, math, geography, and such, we'll ever need. And there isn't another book on the planet that has more details of what real love and joy actually is. For our college how-to manual, we're goin' with the best – right off... the Bible."

On a nearby table the ace reporter spied the pile; the ever present, at the ready, cookie mountain with a cake cover over the top of them. If Toots only realized that mountain, under the cake cover, is a teenage hospital for broken hearts and a partner to Heaven's How-To Manual with its well-worn ragged edges. Those Heaven-inspired Bible pages of truths that never grow old.

The lesson for the newspaper began.

The gum drops are used to join the toothpicks to form what you might at first call a sweet tower. Four toothpicks and four gum drops are assembled to form a square. Four more toothpicks are stabbed upright into the gum drops. On top of them are joined another square of drops and picks. The process is repeated three times. The top four toothpicks are sloped inward to meet in a point and joined by one gum drop. (In place of the gum drops, modeling clay or partially dried mud balls would work.)

Part of the college lessons describe alternative ways to build the tower, using materials available in a jungle clearing or on the moon. This drop and pick construction is far more important than even the Statue of Liberty. Toots' attention was directed to an important tower construction principle in Luke 14:28, 29:

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

Toots easily saw the points to be made (1) Preparation and (2) People are always watching. The importance of the quartets of picks and drops could be made to represent the 4

gospels describing God's Only Son. Another could be the 4 purposes of scripture in 2nd Timothy 3:16 (rules, testing, discipline, and learning). And another quartet are the areas of Jesus' life defined in Luke 2:52 (Mental, Physical, Spiritual, and Social). The top-most gum drop represents the one and only way of eternal salvation, which is in Jesus Christ. The uncomplicated sweet tower assembly and lessons can be used in nursing homes, and the world over.

The ace reporter knew it'd take a miracle for him to decode his hastily scribbled notes. But then he asked, "Candi, this is all interesting. Now I fail to see how this is all connected with cookies or the Cookie Mountain Kids College."

"Toots. It's actually pretty straight forward. If we're counseling one teen, say through the week, we use those shaped decorated cookies in the cookie mountain under that cover over there. But the college uses square cookies that begin as the very ho-hum plain cookies we keep in this metal bread box. After the towers are assembled, the next lesson is to see how God takes the plain ordinary things of life, like these square ones and teaches lessons of love, hope and forgiveness. A square cookie is laid flat on each 'floor' of the tower with just the cookie corners resting on the toothpicks."

"We want a lesson that teaches how plain and ordinary girls become beautiful in God's plan and purpose. While the tower structure speaks of God's order and structure, the plain square cookies are decorated with words LOVE, PRAY, WORK, WAIT, etc.

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#6 – Wheelchair Graphics College Class

Toots made all sorts of adjustments to his camera to get clear close-ups of the cookie towers in various stages of construction. A couple wall posters showed easy-to-remember Bible directives like “Let all things be done decently and in order,” and others.

His pencil was making notes that looked like they belonged on the inside walls of an Egyptian pyramid, not what'll be painfully deciphered for a front page news article. He almost dropped his camera a couple times, trying to get shots that would put WOW in his reporting.

Candi glanced at her watch and replied, “We gotta move quicker. My shop opens in about 20 minutes, and trust me, you don't want to be accused of holding up Beulah's cut and trim.” Silver-haired Candi had Toots move from where he was sitting, to a chair near one corner of the Cookie Mountain Kids College room. Sitting where he was told, he tried to see what was wrong with the chair he was in. No broken legs or anything.

The reason came with her next words. With a bit of a grin, they were, “Having only moved about 8 feet, into this chair, you have entered the college Graphics Department. Here we're seeing some wonderful methods God uses in the lives of those that love and trust Him.”

“Toots. Our loving all powerful God has seen fit to limit any use of her legs and has confined Daphne to her wheelchair. But what He has done is provided our college with a teen that has artist skills that'd bless a football player. No. Her feet and legs will probably never dance this side of heaven. But wait till you see her hands dance on an empty page in a way that inspires others to try to draw.”

“The other thing, is that Babs Martin is in Daph's

drawing class, learning how to train her hands by tracing magazine pictures of teens with computers etc.” Candi looked straight at the town's ace reporter and said, “We have all but the last \$30. to purchase the old high school opaque projector. Our college graphics course wants to begin doing painted posters that are spirit builders in boys, girls, and nursing home residents.” Hardly had her sentence finish than Toots felt a burning in his pocket. That \$5. for his lunch-time hamburger knew where it had to be. Without hesitation, the \$5 was placed on the table in front of Candi for the projector fund. Even then, his heart was asking God for another \$25. Surely he could find 5 or 6 others that wouldn't miss their lunch-time hamburgers. Further, Toots decided he was going to have his part-time cub reporter begin working on a piece that asked the question, 'What skills are being squandered by our town thinking that people with canes, wheelchairs, or maybe even white hair, have nothing to offer?'

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#7 – Gum Drop College Research Lab

Toots. The research lab is something we've just started. So we're feeling our way through, at the present. The research has to do with gum drops and silver hair.”

“The way it works is that Tina Hutton, one of our teens, and a helper are interviewing two silver hair folks to see how we can expand the use of the cookie tower construction. We want to see how we can make the tower become a construction project that teach lovely things about God and also plant self esteem in the nursing home residents. Then next month, we want to learn how we can make tower kits, that include some stories, that we can send to missionaries. We'd begin with missionaries that reach out to

big city youth.”

At the moment, only God knew that one of the silver hair 'consultants' had been a short-term missionary to rural Mexico. That'll put a WOW in everyone's step and service.

“Candi, what is this Prime Contractor Poster all about?” “I'm glad you asked. Barry Goldman was our second silver haired 'consultant' the teens have been learning from. He was quick to tell us that being 83 yrs old has not slowed him down from making cheerful bird houses for outside the nursing home. The second time he came in, he brought that poster and donated it to the college... and we love it. The way he tells it, the first of the two most important construction statements in the Bible is “In the beginning God created...” He says that God's Son, Jesus, created, starting with nothing – nothing except His all-powerful spoken word.

Then the second important construction statement describes the skills God gave to the prime contractor of the most famous building. That building was the Tabernacle. The prime contractor was Bezaleel. Well, Barry gave us this poster that describes the tools needed by every leader, as he, or she, builds for God. Hey Toots, I gotta go! Here comes Beulah now. You can linger a little and read the whole poster. See ya.”

The poster Toots read:

Prime Contractor for the Most Famous Building.

The most famous of all of man's building projects is the tabernacle of Exodus 31. The five “contractor tools” God gave Bezaleel to train others in building the tabernacle were Wisdom, Knowledge, Manner of Workmanship, Understanding, and Aholiab the helper.

We'll save Wisdom for last because it's so crucial to the whole training process.

Knowledge is the data, the size, the color, the placement of all the parts of this tabernacle that is beyond the expertise of any human architect. Knowledge is no more productive than the garden seeds purchased but left in the package, or the engine bolts left in the box.

Manner of Workmanship gives the workers or the students the techniques, procedures, and how to use tools to progress the work in a safe efficient manner.

Understanding is the gift God gave to Bezaleel to best help the workers internalize what they were to do with the materials and tools. Some workers can take verbal direction. Other workers may need recipes of commands or blueprints. “Understanding” teaches the instructor that youth learn differently than adults. It shows the teacher that women absorb different facts of the project than men do.

Wisdom is mentioned first as the gifts God gave to Bezaleel and therefore is almost sure to be the most important (according to the “Law of first mention”). Wisdom is the desire to feel the WHY of the training or project. It contains the passion; the fire within the teacher to train regardless of compensation. It carries the burden to prepare lesson plans, organize the teaching arena, and be burdened for good follow-up.

Helper, Aholiab was his name. For a host of reasons, every teacher needs a helper. Paul had helpers deliver his lessons(letters) to the churches. Pastor/teachers need helpers in the form of church staff and other teachers. Quite often, helpers are really On-the-Job trainees for becoming future teachers. Helpers can “guard the flock” against intrusion and disruption of the training.

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, To devise cunning works, to work in

gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee;” Exodus 31:1-6.

[~] end of poster [~]

#8 – Mustard Mountain, For Sure

D*on't touch that!”* Then in a softer tone, Candi repeated her caution, as Toots took a quick step backwards, dropping his notepad in the process. “Sorry Candi. I didn't mean no harm – just gonna flick this spec off this here poster.” But Candi explained, “You'll want to read what the poster is all about, before touching it; especially that one.”

He picked up his notepad, all newspaper reporters have, and began scribbling his customary hard-to-decipher notes for tomorrow's second page. The cautioned reporter's eyes quickly scanned the remaining posters on the walls around him.

They told a rich two-part story, about teens and their up-hill, or better, up-mountain struggle toward maturity and understanding their questions about life. The second part of the Cookie Mountain Kids College story seemed to touch on the loneliness of not having anyone older to care for and care about the teens and their world. A nearby poster showed a large cold commanding hand, pointing at a teen and dishing out orders, like an Army Drill Sergeant. Toots even got a shiver looking at that poster. His eyes fixed on the image of the scared lonely teen in that nearby poster. No words came from Toots' pencil to describe the reporter's feelings the teen

must have.

By contrast the poster in front of Toots was just flooded with loving words and Bible promises of provision, purpose, and especially lasting peace, offered to every young person. It was clearly felt the poster's words were written by Jesus Christ, Himself – as He was maturing through His teenage years.

An image on this poster was of a silver-haired couple, as the nearby words referred to them, and their powerful mentoring skills and experience needed; no rocket-science needed. The newspaper reporter put his pad and pen in his pocket and lightly touched the edge of the poster as its call to service seemed to flow through his hand and arm. The words were speaking directly to his heart as boldly as any large headline ever could.

Most of the room's posters mentioned a mountain – a cookie mountain in some way. This poster showed the image of a mountain with that spec nearby. That was the spec Toots thought should be removed. The words spoke of Bible faith. Not faith in mountains, or our ability to climb them – but faith in the Bible's promises of victory and joy to those who place each day – each moment – each part of themselves, into God's loving watch care.

The poster's words focused on the monstrous intimidating feeling of a cold hard immovable mountain of challenges every teen faces, that are never meant to be traveled alone. God wants to share in the journey of the teen. This is done through His written promises, and so often through the hands and hearts of silver-haired people who've made much of the journey already. The verse next to a seed on this Mustard Mountain poster says: Matthew 17:20
... If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. [~]