How Do You Eat an Elephant?
A Cooperative Program Children’s Sermon
By Robert Reeves, Kentucky Baptist Convention

Author’s Note: The following is a brief children’s sermon that can be used to help the children of your church learn the concept of cooperation and understand that Southern Baptists cooperate to tell the world about Jesus through the Cooperative Program.

As the children gather around, say:

“I’ve got a riddle for you. How do you eat an elephant?”

Allow the children time to respond. Some, especially if you have older children, may already know the answer, which is quite all right. If so, praise the child who answers and repeat the response to make sure the congregation heard the answer. If the children stop guessing without coming up with the answer, tell them:

“One bite at a time, of course!

“Any time you have a big job to do, a good way to complete it is to bite it off in small chunks.”

Pantomime taking a bite out of an elephant here!

“Okay, now another riddle. How do you eat an elephant fast?”

Again allow the children to guess. It’s not as likely that the children will come up with the answer you’re looking for this time but if so, praise that child, repeat his answer for the congregation and move on. If you don’t get a correct response, say:

“Have an elephant-eating party with lots of friends! Let everyone take a bite! Come on help me out.”

At this point, you and all the children should pantomime taking a bite out of the elephant. (The noisier and more boisterous the better!)

“When you have an elephant-eating party, that’s called cooperation. Cooperation is when everyone works together to get something done.

“Did you know that we have elephant-eating parties right here at church?”

Allow the kids to shake their heads “no.”

“Well, we do in a way because we’re all involved in cooperating to tackle a big problem.
“The problem is that there are still lots of people in the world who don’t know about Jesus and how much He loves them. And the world is big…even bigger than an elephant!

“So what we in our church are doing is helping to take a bite out of this big problem by cooperating with Baptists all over the world through something called the Cooperative Program. Get it? Cooperation – Cooperative Program.

“Every time any of us puts money in the offering plate here at church, some of it goes to help people tell the world about Jesus – here in Kentucky, across North America and all over the world!

“But giving money isn’t the only way we help take a bite out of the elephant. We all can also be a part of the Cooperative Program by praying for missionaries and by getting involved ourselves in telling people about Jesus. Sometimes telling about Jesus means going on a partnership missions trip to a faraway land or being a disaster relief volunteer which are things for grown-up Christians. But more often, telling about Jesus just means talking to our friends about Him, which is something we all can do – both kids and grown-ups!

“Let’s have a prayer about the Cooperative Program! And then when I say ‘Amen’ after the prayer, let’s all take one more bite out the elephant before we go.”

*Lead the prayer and then pantomime with the kids one more time to conclude the sermon time.*