

Abundant Life 6th - 7th June 2009



When we pray for children at risk we can become overwhelmed by details and statistics. Over the last few years of mobilising prayer for children at risk, Viva have become more and more aware of the good news of the response of the body of Christ in making a difference in the lives of children. The focus of the prayer material for 2009 is on the abundance of life that Jesus came to bring according to John 10:10 and what this looks like in the wider context of children at risk in our world today. We read in Luke 2:52 that Jesus Himself grew in four key areas; wisdom, stature and favour with God and men. Be encouraged by the stories of how many Christians, like you, are helping children grow in these areas.

WISDOM

The Bible teaches us that wisdom is about knowing God. Jesus as a Jewish child was raised to know the word of God, to meditate on it and memorise it as part of His education.

INFO

Of an estimated 700 million primary-school-age children in the world today;
Around 121 million are not in school.
Most are children of ethnic minorities from remote regions, working children, children living in conflict zones, children affected by HIV/AIDS, or children with disabilities.
Nearly 75 per cent of children who do not attend school, live in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

GOOD NEWS

In Guatemala, there is a ministry that encourages the development of children with Fragile X syndrome and other disabilities. Mostly excluded from formal education and with low self image, the ministry has enabled the children to become self reliant. These children are learning to be independent, pray, read the bible and seek God's wisdom as they step out in life.

The Bethany Children's Trust have been working with a partner project in Northern Uganda in an area devastated by rebel fighting. Today people have new homes, clean water and pit latrines. Children attend school and, in partnership with Global Care, the children are involved with learning about agricultural issues and growing crops which improve their nutrition.

PRAYER

1. Think through the following reasons why children might not go to school and pray as led:
Working children, those living in conflict zones, those affected by HIV/AIDS or with disabilities.
2. Think about how education has empowered you. What have you learned in the past year? Pray for those who have no opportunity to finish or even begin primary school.

STATURE

When we only measure stature through physical attributes or social standing we fall short of the value God places on us. The fact Jesus grew in stature would indicate that he was free to grow to the full measure of His potential spirit, soul and body.

INFO

21 children die every minute worldwide through preventable diseases. (Main cause - Poverty.)
Africa is the world's poorest continent where one in three people are malnourished.
80% of brain development happens in the womb. Caring for pregnant women ensures the health and well being of future generations.

GOOD NEWS

Miguel is 12 and attends a project in Peru which provides nutritional breakfasts and guides children in the knowledge and wisdom of God. Miguel prays for his alcoholic father and is growing physically and spiritually, showing a maturity beyond his years.

Connect, Viva's network in Cape Town South Africa, reports that a mother came into the Pregnancy Counselling centre at 36 weeks pregnant. She decided to have the baby adopted. A consequent scan found the baby had no legs and a possible syndrome leaving her with little chance of living. Expected to die at birth, with no adoptive parents lined up. Baby Chloe was born ALIVE and beautiful but with no legs. She has since been adopted and now lives with her 'forever family'.

PRAYER

1. In the light of the statistics and stories, read through Psalm 139 and pray as you are led regarding the issues around stature.
2. Have a birthday cake with five candles and pray 5 five key things that would free children to grow in stature.

World Weekend of Prayer for Children at Risk

FAVOUR WITH GOD

Scripture is clear that obedience to God brings blessing and we know that Jesus' ultimate obedience made a way for the salvation of mankind. We are encouraged by stories from around the globe of children learning to walk in the ways of God, bringing transformation to their communities.

INFO

Psalm 133 1-3 How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity...

for there the Lord bestows blessing, even life forever more.

Viva has been mapping the Christian response to children at risk and we are encouraged at the results of projects and ministries becoming connected, coordinated, supported and joining together on behalf of children at risk.

GOOD NEWS

In a project in Ecuador children received some bed clothes as a symbol of how God covers them with His love. The children went on to reflect on people worse off than themselves and how it is more blessed to give than receive. Many went out that night and gave their bedclothes to others in worse situations! One boy gave his bedclothes to a handicapped man who was under the rain, telling the man it was a gift from God for his life. He was amazed at the happiness on the man's face. Over the last few years more than 40,000 children have been given the gift of a Christmas Party through the projects that Viva supports. These parties enable projects to meet children sometimes for the first time and find out what their needs are, enabling support and relationships which can often last for a lifetime and, we hope, for eternity.

PRAYER

Cut a picture into pieces and make a jigsaw and give each person a piece allowing the group to piece it together. Pray into how projects and organisations might come together for the bigger picture of helping children. Read Psalm 91 and pray the promises of God mentioned over projects and ministries known to you.

FAVOUR WITH MEN

Jesus grew up amongst relatives, neighbours and community. God designed us to live in families, raised in a loving environment to make sense of our world. There are many projects and organisations working to nurture and support children who find themselves alone and with no family unit of support.

INFO

Estimates are that worldwide more than 15 million children under 18 have been orphaned as a result of AIDS. 11.6 million of these children live in sub Saharan Africa.

'Gender equality will not only empower women to overcome poverty, but also their children, families, communities and countries. When seen in this light, gender equality is not only morally right – it is pivotal to human progress and sustainable development.' (UNICEF, State of the World's Children 2007).

GOOD NEWS

Chab Dai is a network of more than 20 groups working to end sexual abuse and trafficking in Cambodia. There are few opportunities for women and poverty leads many families to sell their children for labour and prostitution. In this situation the empowerment of women through alternative employment is critical to positive outcomes for children.

Mary who lives in Uganda, believes her daughter is a gift from God. Priscilla was found abandoned by the roadside as her mother died on the way to give birth. Rejected by the father Priscilla was placed in a baby home. Mary who was unable to have children and was rejected by her own husband has now adopted Priscilla.

PRAYER

Prepare a large bowl of water and place stones in it. Remove a stone from the liquid and place in a piece of coloured cloth as a prayer that children be rescued from being alone and be placed in loving families. Think of all the things that make women special and unique in our communities and spend time thanking God for these strengths, praying that children will grow up learning to appreciate what God designed women to be...do the same for men.