



Leader's Guide: Introduction

God's Heart for Orphans is a six-week, study developed by the Orphan Care Ministry of Cherrydale Baptist Church, Arlington, VA. (cherrydale.org/orphan)

This biblically-centered *God's Heart for Orphans* study was pivotal in the creation of the original Orphan Care Ministry at Cherrydale, and has been instrumental in inspiring church attendees to pursue adoptions, foster care training, full-time orphan care ministry and more. Most importantly, this study points us to Scripture to learn of God's deep and abiding love for the orphaned child.

It is our hope that this resource will bless your church as it has blessed ours. If you have questions about implementing this study in your church, or how to use it to start an orphan and foster care ministry, contact us at orphancare@cherrydale.org

The three key components of this study are:

1. Examining what Scripture says about God's heart for orphans
2. Assessing the Church's response to needs of orphans/foster children worldwide
3. Exploring how your church, and course attendees, can respond to God's call, living out James 1:27 to make a difference in the lives of orphans and foster children.

Alongside our six-week study we read a book together, and discuss insights from that book during each class. We have traditionally utilized *Fields of the Fatherless* by C. Thomas Davis, (David C Cook, 2008) – See Appendix A. We also are considering using, *Orphan Justice* by Johnny Carr, (B&H Publishing Group). Your church or ministry may find other books that could be utilized alongside the study.

Overview of the Six-Week Study:

Week One:	Defining the Problem: The big picture
Week Two:	Discerning God's Heart for Orphans: A journey through Scripture
Week Three:	Discovering the Needs of Orphans and Foster Children
Week Four:	Designed for Family: God's Plan of Adoption
Week Five:	Discerning the role of the Church: Case studies for success
Week Six:	Determining our Response: As a church, and as individuals

Each class is divided into these four sections:

1. Scripture Memory
2. Book: Questions/Discussion
3. Lesson and Discussion
4. Video or Guest presenter

Week One- Defining the Problem: The big picture

Leaders: If we hope to fix a problem, we need to recognize that there is a problem first. In this first week of the study, our job is to help the participants see that there is a problem. It is also important to see that the problem is not in a distant land, far away from us, but in our towns, neighborhoods, schools and families.

Agenda

15 min	Opening Prayer/Intro/Overview
10 min	Overview of the book that the group will be reading
10 min	Statistics quiz
10 min	Bible verse discussion
10 min	Video
5 min	Closing Prayer

Opening Prayer

Introductions

Leaders: Have all attendees introduce themselves and answer the one of the following questions: Why did you join this Bible study? What do you hope to learn through this study? How has God been working in your life to develop a heart for orphans already?

It might be good to notate the answers, so in the last week it can be reviewed.

Overview of the study

What is God's heart for orphans? How can we make our hearts line up with God's in this area? What are the needs of orphans? What can I do?

In this six week Bible study, our goal is to answer these questions together and discover our part in the equation. It is our prayer that we will end this short time with changed hearts.

Throughout the study, we will learn from several sources. Our first and primary source will be Scripture. We will also learn about the needs of orphans around the world using information from the many groups ministering to orphans. Finally, we will read a portion of a book and discuss it and learn about how others have become involved by hearing testimonies.

Warning: Some of the videos and topics may be disturbing. This is not meant to "guilt" you into service, but to help you become aware of what is happening today around the world in regards to the orphan, the widow and the stranger.

Each week we will have a memory verse (see Appendix B) and a “homework” assignment to read a small portion of the book and be prepared to discuss the ideas in the class the next week.

During the rest of our time today, we will get the “big picture” overview of our six-week class with a description of the topics we will cover each week.

Week one – *Defining the Problem: The Big Picture*

This week, in addition to this overview we will test your knowledge of the issues facing orphans today.

Week two – *Discerning God's Heart for Orphans: A Journey through Scripture*

What does Scripture say about God's heart for orphans? What do these passages tell us about God's view of orphans? What do these passages tell us about what God wants to do through his people on behalf of orphans?

Week three – *Discovering the Needs of Orphans and Foster Children*

This week we will look at orphans in the Bible, what their needs were and how God met those needs.

Week four – *Designed for Family: God's Plan of Adoption*

What does God think about adoption and about the adopted child? During this session, we will learn from Scripture about God's heart for adoption.

Week five – *Discerning the Role of the Church: Compassionate Giving*

How does God want his children to respond? During this session, we will learn about how many in the church are responding to God's Heart for Orphans.

Week six – *Determining our Response: As a Church, and as Individuals*

What does God want me to do? What can I do with limited time and resources? How can we work together as the body of Christ and as a local fellowship? During this session, we will discuss our personal response and how we can support each other in pursuing it

Overview of the book that will be the companion study to this study

Leaders: As mentioned earlier we have used a book, *Fields of the Fatherless* by C. Thomas Davis, (David C Cook, 2008) for the book review portion of the study – See Appendix A for a list of sample discussion questions. We are also considering using *Orphan Justice* by Johnny Carr, (B&H Publishing Group).

Statistics quiz to illustrate need

Leaders: *This will take some preparation time on your part. We have found reliable sources of data for the quiz that you can give the attendees. The data may be updated on an annual basis so we did not have a quiz included in the study. This allows you the flexibility to focus questions on areas of specific ministry (Orphans, Adoption, and/or Foster Care). Additionally, you can obtain the most up to date information available.*

Statistical sources:

UNICEF (<http://www.unicef.org/sowc/index.html>),

Christian Alliance for Orphans (<http://www.christianalliancefororphans.org/>)

Dave Thomas Foundation (<https://www.davethomasfoundation.org/>)

Below are some sample quiz questions that you can use. You can create multiple choice answers or just discuss the answers as a group.

- *According to reliable sources, there are approximately how many orphans (children who have lost both parents) in the world today?*

(On the above question, we like to take the time to discuss: what is the difference between a single orphan and a double orphan. A single orphan is a child who has lost one parent and is included in the popular 156 million figure widely used. You may also discuss why it is important for us to be concerned for both groups.)

- *Number of children under the age of five who die of malnutrition every day*
- *Number of children living in forced prostitution*
- *Number of children afflicted with AIDS*
- *Number of children involved in child labor*
- *How many orphans are there worldwide by age groups:*
- *Orphans worldwide, ages 0-5*
- *Orphans worldwide, ages 6-11*
- *Orphans worldwide, ages 12-17*
- *What % of evangelicals planned to give to AIDS-related charities, compared to % of non-Christians?*
- *How many children are in the US foster care system today?*
- *For children who “age out” of orphanages, what are their % for the following:*
- *% fall into a high-risk category*
- *% become drug users*
- *% commit crimes*
- *% commits suicide.*
- *How many children would each church in the U.S. need to adopt to empty the current foster care system?*

Ask participants what questions were the most surprising to them? How do they feel about the answers after the quiz, now that they have the answers?

Bible Verse Discussion

Leaders: Read Deuteronomy 10:14-20, printed below and discuss the passage together with the class. Here are a few discussion questions for the group to answer.

- *According to the above passage, whom does God defend?*
- *What do these people have in common?*
- *What does God desire his people to do for these needy ones?*

¹⁴ To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. ¹⁵ Yet the LORD set his affection on your forefathers and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations, as it is today. ¹⁶ Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. ¹⁷ For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. ¹⁸ He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹ And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt. ²⁰ Fear the LORD your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name.

Video

Children's HopeChest 9 min, 57 sec - pull from <http://vimeo.com/hopechest/videos/sort:duration/format:thumbnail> (One Orphan)

Homework: Reading and Memory Verse

James 1:27

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Closing Prayer

Week Two- Discerning God's Heart for Orphans: A Journey through Scripture

***Leaders:** What is God's heart for orphans? Today, we will look in greater detail at God's heart for orphans. The Scriptures will be our guide to knowing God's heart in this area. Prior to this study, what was your experience in hearing Bible teaching or participating in Bible study on the topics of orphans?*

Agenda

5 min	Opening Prayer/Introduction/Memory Verse
15 min	Questions about Fields of the Fatherless reading
25 min	Bible Study and Discussion
10 min	Video and Speaker
5 min	Closing Prayer

Opening Prayer/Memory Verse

James 1:27

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Bible Study and Discussion

God's Heart for the Fatherless

In the Scriptures, we are told about the special relationship God has towards orphans (as well as widows and aliens). Using the verses below, answer the following questions:

- What is God's heart for the fatherless?
- How does he relate to them?

Psalm 68:5-6⁵ A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. ⁶ God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

Psalm 146:9⁹ The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

Proverbs 23:10-11¹⁰ Do not move an ancient boundary stone or encroach on the fields of the fatherless, ¹¹ for their Defender is strong; he will take up their case against you.

God's Heart through the Hands of His People

One indication of the heart of God for orphans is the things He does to care for them through his people. Using the verses below, answer the following questions:

- What does God call on his people to do for orphans?
- What does that indicate about the heart of God for orphans?
- What do these verses mean to you personally?

Deuteronomy 24:17-22 ¹⁷ Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. ¹⁸ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this. ¹⁹ When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. ²¹ When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. ²² Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29 ²⁸ At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, ²⁹ so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

James 1:27 ²⁷ Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Blessings and Curses

Another indication of the heart of God for orphans is the blessings he promises for those who care for them (along with the rest of the poor and needy). We can also learn about God's heart from noticing the curses he promises for those who fail to care for the fatherless, and for those who take advantage of them. Using the verses below, answer the following questions:

- What blessings and curses are given based on our treatment of orphans (the poor and needy)?
- What does that indicate about the heart of God for orphans?

Exodus 22:22-24 ²² "Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless. ²³ If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. ²⁴ My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless.

Deuteronomy 27:19 ¹⁹ “Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow.”

Proverbs 19:17 ¹⁷ Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.

Isaiah 10:1-2 ¹ Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, ² to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless.

Malachi 3:5 ⁵ “So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty.

1 Peter 3:8-9 ⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

My Heart

What steps can I take to make my heart more like God's with regard to orphans?

Video or Speaker

Buckner Orphan Care (5min 23sec) www.buckner.org Community Transformation Centers – Buckner International video

Homework: Reading and Memory Verse

Deuteronomy 10:18

He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.

Closing Prayer

Week Three- Discovering the Needs of Orphans and Foster Children

Leaders: What are the needs of orphans? Today, we will look in greater detail at orphans in the Scriptures and in our world today, and try to understand their needs.

Agenda

5 min	Opening Prayer/Introduction/Memory Verse
15 min	Questions about Fields of the Fatherless reading
25 min	Bible Study and Discussion
10 min	Video and Speaker
5 min	Closing Prayer

Opening Prayer/Memory Verse

Deuteronomy 10:18

He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.

Bible Study and Discussion

Orphans of the Bible

Who are the orphans...

- Of the Bible?
 - “The Fatherless-” to be lonely, a bereaved person, an orphan
 - Occurs 41 times
 - Frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, generally associated w. widow, stranger, unprotected, specially subject to oppression (Deuteronomy 10:14-20; International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)
 - Orphans were generally “true orphans,” having no parents, like children in Africa (Lamentations 5:3)
 - Frequency of war, famine, and disease insured a large number of orphans, which is why God took special care of them (Jeremiah 7:6)

Leaders: Have the attendees split into groups & discuss child scenarios. Use the Biblical examples below to see the need of orphans and how God met those needs. For each section, note the needs of the person in the first column and then how God met those needs in the second column.

What are the needs of the children under the following categories?



Have chart/board in front of class with the categories: physical, emotional, spiritual and educational. The class will brainstorm for each category. Use below list for assistance.

- *Physical*
 - o *Food, medical care (various ailments like jiardia, rickets), clothes, developmental delays (for every 3 mos. a child is institutionalized, there's a 1 mo. delay), dangers of street life (drugs, prostitution, violence)*
- *Emotional*
 - o *Attachment, lack of affection/touch (rocking himself to sleep), basic sense of trust, feelings of rejection, stigma from world*
- *Spiritual*
 - o *Lack of the Gospel, lack of hope, no Biblical resources, lack of discipleship*
- *Educational*
 - o *Lack of schooling or job skills, lack of employment (Russian teens due to stigma), cognitive/developmental delay*

Ruth

[Passage\(s\)](#)

Ruth 2:2-15; 4:13

[Needs](#)

[How God Met the Needs](#)

Moses

[Passage\(s\)](#)

Exodus 2:3
Acts 7:22

[Needs](#)

[How God Met the Needs](#)

Joseph

[Passage\(s\)](#)

Genesis 45:3-8; 50:15-21

[Needs](#)

[How God Met the Needs](#)

Esther

[Passage\(s\)](#)

Esther 2:10, 20
Esther 2:11, 19; 4:6-16

[Needs](#)

[How God Met the Needs](#)

How would you describe the general categories of needs of orphans?

Orphans Today

Leaders: Have the class consider the needs of orphans today. Have those needs changed? There are case studies in Appendix C that have modern stories of orphans that can assist you if needed.





- Still the vulnerable, unprotected- maybe more than the stereotyped orphans from Africa, but for the purpose of the study we will be focusing on children who are orphaned for various reasons.
- Children in other countries are orphaned due to poverty. Often the parents make the hard choice of giving up the child, or he/she is abandoned. Sometimes families sell their children or children are “lured” into slavery under the pretense of getting a “good job” in another country.
- In the US- most kids in foster care are there because of abuse/neglect.
- Many older children/sibling groups

Video or Speaker

Share pictures & stories from a ministry serving orphans

Homework: Reading and Memory Verse

Psalm 10:16 - 18

The Lord is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from the land. You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.

Closing Prayer

Week Four- Designed for Family: God's Plan of Adoption

Leaders: Today, we look at what the Bible says about adoption. What was adoption like in Biblical times? What does it mean for us today?

Agenda

5 min	Opening Prayer/Introduction/Memory Verse
15 min	Questions about Fields of the Fatherless reading
25 min	Bible Study and Discussion
10 min	Video and Speaker
5 min	Closing Prayer

Opening Prayer/Memory Verse

Psalm 10:16 - 18

The Lord is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from the land. You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.

Bible Study and Discussion

God's Plan for Adoption

Definition of covenant:

Genesis 15:8-12 A covenant is a promise or an agreement between God and man. A covenant may be conditional or unconditional.

Adoption is a covenant. It is more than a legal contract; it's a relationship of promise.

Definition of adopt:

1. To choose or take as one's own; make one's own by selection or assent: *to adopt a nickname*.
2. To take and rear (the child of other parents) as one's own child, specifically by a formal legal act.

Adoption: God's Covenant with Man

The Bible uses the idea of adoption to illustrate our relationship to God the Father. From the following passages, answer the questions. What does God say about our spiritual adoption? What spiritual reality is illustrated by adoption?

- God's covenant with Abraham includes more than just biological descendants
 - Genesis 17: 1-14
 - Gen. 17:12. It isn't bio descendants, but those in Abraham's home

- Galatians 3:6-7; 29.
 - “They of faith are the children of Abraham... and if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”
- John 14:1-3, 18
 - We are no longer orphans
- Ephesians 1:3-7
 - “He predestined us to be adopted as His sons thru Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will.”
- Romans 8:15-17; 22-23
 - “We are children of God”
 - “We wait eagerly for our adoption as sons”
- Galatians 4:4-7
 - “We might receive full rights of sons...God has made you also an heir.”

According to Roman-Syrian law book written in Paul’s era, a man could disown his own biological son if he had good reason, but he could never disown his adopted son. The adoption analogy used by Paul was a strong one indeed.

Last week we discussed people in the Bible who were adopted. Did you notice that there were a few people that were not listed?

- Samuel 1:1-2;10-11;19-28
 - Eli raises him and teaches and guides him. Later Samuel becomes a prophet of the Lord
- Jesus’ adoption by Joseph in the Gospels (prophesy in Matt. 1:1-17)
 - Joseph names him, protects him, teaches him carpentry
 - This is a crucial example that God models for us thru Joseph

Homework: Reading and Memory Verse...

***Leaders:** In addition to the homework above, have the participants research a ministry that is working on the front lines of orphan care. This can be a missionary or organization their church works with today or they can use the Christian Alliance for Orphans website for a listing of different organizations. Have a few participants share with the whole group over the final two weeks of the study.*

Proverbs 31:8 - 9

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Closing Prayer

Week Five- Discerning the Role of the Church: Compassionate Giving

Leaders: How should we respond to the heart of God by meeting the needs of orphans? Today, we look at what the Scripture says about our giving? We will also share how God has moved those in our group and other believers to give.

Agenda

5 min	Opening Prayer/Introduction/Memory Verse
15 min	Book review
30 min	Bible Study and Discussion
5 min	Video and/or presenters
5 min	Closing Prayer

Opening Prayer/Memory Verse

Proverbs 31:8 - 9

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Leaders: Have people share how the church as a whole has been reaching out to the orphan (this was the homework from last week). Pick a few volunteers to share what different ministries are doing on the "front line." Some of class can share next week if you need extra time.

Bible Study and Discussion

Leaders: Read James 2:14-17

One cannot just say "peace be well" without giving tangible help. What do our actions say about our faith? Have the class members read the following verses (you can pass out verses for people to read aloud to the class) and have the class answer the questions below.

The Heart of Compassion

Read the following passage about Jesus' compassion from Matthew 9.

³⁵Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

What was the context in which Jesus was filled with compassion?

What were the reasons for his compassion?

What was the response to his compassion?

The Heart of Giving

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

⁶*Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

⁹*As it is written:*

*"He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever."*

¹⁰*Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.*

¹¹*You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*

What principles apply to our giving?

How should we give?

How does God respond to our giving?

Describe how you have seen these principles revealed in your life.

What keeps you from doing more to help orphans?

Video

Depraved Indifference (this is a powerful 8 minute video from Pastor Eric Luddy)

Homework: Reading and Memory Verse

Psalm 68:5 - 6

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

Closing Prayer – Ask how God might involve you!

Week Six- Determining our Response: As a Church, and as Individuals

Leaders: *On this last day of the study we are going to continue to see how Christian should respond to the heart of God by meeting the needs of orphans. Today, we will look at what our church has been doing. We go through the ministry searches that we did and will share how God has moved those in our group and other believers to speak up for the orphan, widow and stranger.*

Agenda

5 min	Opening Prayer/Introduction/Memory Verse
15 min	Book review
20 min	Our local church's response
20 min	Closing Prayer

Opening Prayer/Introduction/Memory Verse

Leaders: *In the previous week, we listed the reasons that cause us to avoid helping others. This week we want to pray through those reasons and ask God to help us overcome our fears, doubts and sinfulness that prevent us from helping those in need. (Use list from previous week)*

Psalm 68:5 - 6

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

Leaders: *In the first week, we listed the reasons why we came to the study. Ask the participants to share what they have learned over the study.*

Our Local Church

Leaders: *Using the below outline, discuss the different ways in which your church responds to orphans or use this as a guide to determine ways your church can begin to meet the needs of orphans:*

1. Financial- general fund or donating to adoptive families
 - a. Benevolent fund
 - b. Clothing exchange
 - c. Food drives
 - d. Baby Bottle Campaign
 - e. Adoption Support fund
2. Humanitarian efforts- shoe or clothing drives
3. Sponsorship- sponsoring an orphanage



- a. Child sponsorship
- b. US Missionaries
- c. Global Missionaries
4. Go on a mission trip to an orphanage
5. Adoption and Foster Care
 - a. Adoption and Foster Care Support Group
 - b. Short-term hosting programs
 - c. Have families trained to become foster parents
6. Continue to share this Bible study
7. Start an Orphan Ministry Small Group: weekly or bi-weekly group to meet for prayer, Bible study, and ministry; helping at events, promoting awareness, assisting with sponsorship

Video

Go to <http://www.christianalliancefororphans.org> for a video)

Leaders: Ask the class, what they are going to do next with the knowledge they have acquired during this study.

Closing Prayer



Appendix A

Sample Discussion Questions for Fields of the Fatherless Book Review

Fields of the Fatherless - Chapter 1

Discussion questions:

Who are the stranger, widow and orphan today? Will anyone share a time, when they have felt the love of Christ through His body?

Imagine yourself in the shoes of an orphan child.

Fields of the Fatherless – Chapter 2

Discussion questions:

- 1) ? Jesus said...? You will always have the poor?
- 2) How can I see the world differently than I have before?

Fields of the Fatherless - Chapter 3 and 4

Discussion questions:

Fields of the Fatherless - Chapter 5 and 6

Discussion questions:

What stood out to you from reading Chapters 5 and 6 of *Fields of the Fatherless*?

What does God look like?

Fields of the Fatherless - Chapter 7 and 8

Discussion questions:

Appendix B

Memory Verses

(NIV)

Week Two

James 1:27

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Week Three

Deuteronomy 10:18

He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.

Week Four

Psalms 10:16 - 18

The Lord is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from the land. You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.

Week Five

Proverbs 31:8 - 9

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Week Six

Psalms 68:5 - 6

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

Appendix C

Case Studies

In week 3 we discuss several basic needs of orphans. Those needs were physical, emotional, educational and spiritual. Below are modern stories of orphans. See the different needs of orphans in each of the categories (physical, emotional, educational and spiritual) and how the church met those needs.

Katie:

"I was put in the foster care system when I was three. Everyone loved me when I was small. I took joy in life. Then the years started going faster and faster. I am now a big girl. Good days are always over at some point. Everyone left me, my brothers, my sisters. I am alone and life has stopped. I don't see my relatives in my dreams anymore. I don't feeling anything, I don't play the guitar anymore, and I don't do anything I used to like."

Lister from Zambia:

"Lister lost both parents as an infant. She lives with her grandparents. Her grandfather is terminally ill, thus the burden for providing for the family falls on her grandmother who grumbles and complains about keeping dependents."

Dang Xiao Le (Avenel):

"She was abandoned at the doorsteps of [the Orphan Care Center] in November of 2004 only a month after her October 17 birth. When the staff found her at the gate, Avenel had huge lump on her head and inflamed rashes from irritation. The ayis (nannies) that first saw her cried at the poor condition of the very thin, dark-skinned little girl. Later, the medical staff discovered that Avenel also had heart problems. Avenel has dextrocardia or a right-sided heart rather than the normal position on the left."

The Rest of the Story

Katie (from *Fields of the Fatherless*)

"But then you came into my life. It always puts a smile on my face to think of the days when I met you. Most of all I remember the moment when you told us about the Lord, I know if He helped you, He'll help me too. When you told me about Jesus I came back to life... I think God will help me find my sister. I pray He'll help me to get to know Him better."

Lister Hamajele (from the *Zambian Orphan Choir*)

*"[As part of the *Zambian Orphan Choir*] much healing from the pain of the past has happened...Much of this has occurred as a result of their relationship with choir director, Richman Symbbamba, who has helped them face their situations with wisdom and empathy...Lister enjoys school and is often first in her class. She is in 6th grade. Her dream is to become a nurse and help those who are sick."*



Dang Xiao Le, English name Avenal (from the Philip Hayden Foundation):

"We would all hope to earn a nickname like Avenal, who has been dubbed Le Le, or Happy, by her ayis because of her cheerful disposition. She greets visitors with a huge smile and is brimming with energy. She shouts loudly and almost bounces off the walls as she runs around the room in hope of receiving the spotlight of attention."

[Her heart problem] is position often is associated with congenital heart disease but in her case the tests have been normal. She does have a lung abnormality that causes her to have a chronic respiratory problem. Her ayi is happy for Avenal's complete adaptation into a normal life in the House of Peace, although she often has problems with breathing."



"She is now two years old, and so independent as to even refuse the ayis' attempts to feed her. Avenal bounces up and down in her high chair, kicking her feet wildly, happy when people have come to her dining hall. Her upturned face widened by her smile meets the glance of visitors every time."