

Healing the Children of War

Children of war—Who are they?

(Child may belong to more than one group.)

(There may be other children in many of these categories as well as children of war.)

(They are often victims of wars, sometimes generations-long, you hear little about.)

- **Orphans**
- **Refugees & IDP’s (Internally Displaced Persons)**
- **Uprooted children (like “Invisible children or night commuters of northern Uganda”**
- **Abducted children**
- **Child soldiers**
- **Child mothers & “wives”**
- **Maimed & wounded children**
- **Traumatized children**
(what they saw, experienced, & lost, how others react to them afterwards)
- **Homeless & street children**
- **Child prostitutes**
- **Destitute children (extreme poverty induced or exacerbated by war)**
- **AIDS children, sick & malnourished children**

Children of war-- What are some of their common characteristics?

- **Devastated, hurting emotionally & spiritually**

- Loss of hope & vision for the future
- Loss of moral standards & societal guidelines
- Aloof, distant, living behind emotional barriers
- Feelings of not fitting in anywhere
- Untrusting
- Feelings of guilt & shame
- Angry, aggressive & destructive behavior
- Nightmares, flashbacks, bad memories that won't go away
- Fearful
- Numb, unfeeling, unresponsive
- Loss of parents, family life, understanding of family values
- Rejection by society, social stigmatization
- Poor nutrition & health, poor hygiene & health habits, substance abuse
- Diminished mental capacity, attention deficit

Children of war –How can we minister to them?

- **Lamentations 2:19**
- **Matthew 18:14**
- Provision for orphans—homes, families, education
- Vocational training, self-support opportunities
- Spiritual & personal ministry in camps

- Educational programs & assistance
- Re-entry & rehabilitation programs
- Counseling & therapy programs
- Liberation, rescue & repatriation programs
- Medical programs
- Street ministry programs
- Sponsorship programs

Children of war –How can you prepare for ministry to them?

- Investigate which agencies provide services to children of war, what kinds of services they provide
- Find out qualifications required by agencies or specialized ministries in which you are interested
- General guidelines—Spiritual preparation—At least one year of Bible (good basic working understanding of the Bible)
- Courses in counseling from a Biblical perspective
- Courses in practical & holistic subjects
- Seminar training by Crisis Care Training Int’l (Dept. of WEC)
- Career ministry? Majors in cross-cultural sociology, psychology (Biblical viewpoint), counseling, Christian education, Bible
- Character qualities more important even than qualifications
- (Thanks to AIM): Spirit of humility & service, Willing to learn as well as to contribute, Strong head-Ability to stand back from a situation and analyze it objectively, Soft heart-Compassionate, persevering, flexible, relationally oriented, able to work alone or in a team, initiator, creative, strong personal faith & able to share it and apply it.
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- (Thanks to AIM): Spiritual Preparation—Scripture memory, Ability to study Bible on your own
- Preparation of Experience: Language learning, working with children in crisis or in transition, cross-cultural experience in developing world
- (Thanks to AIM): Preparation of learning about a specific culture
- Preparation of mind & heart (Thanks to AIM): “Christ is the Savior, not me & not us. It’s about Him, not about me.”

Children of war –How can you help if you can’t go to them?

- Choose a ministry to support in any way you can—prayer, financial support, volunteering, acting as their rep at events, getting others on their team, etc.
- Sponsor a child from a war-affected area, or sponsor a child’s education.
- Contribute to special projects.
- Collect & send relief supplies. (See handout for ideas.)
- Be an advocate.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share with you. Please know that I have prayed for you. May God guide you to the place of service and blessing He desires for you! -----Lorella Rouster