

The Church: A Refuge



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Definition of ***refuge***: Shelter and protection from danger and distress *or* a place that provides shelter or protection

Share in small groups – what are some ways that the church can be a refuge for children?

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"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."

Nelson Mandela

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Child Safety and Protection

- To effectively share the gospel of Christ and to disciple children, they must be shown the love of Christ and must understand how important they are to God.
- Rules for safety may not be appreciated by all children, but if they know you truly care about them it will help them understand why there must be rules.



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Child Safety and Protection

- Refer to Child Safety and Protection Guidelines (Notebook p. 133)



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Child Protection

Preventing abuse

Risk assessment using two factors:

✓ *Isolation*

✓ *Accountability*

The goal is always *minimizing risk* for children!

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Abuse Prevention – Risk Assessment

Risk Decreases ↓ ***as Isolation Decreases*** ↓

- Location
- Physical arrangements (rooms, windows, door placement, visibility, accessibility)
- Number of people present (2-adult rule; three or more children)

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Abuse Prevention - Risk Assessment

Risk Decreases ↓ ***as Accountability Increases*** ↑

- References/Screening
- Two-adult rule



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Dig in...

As a team team, choose and read any two Case Studies beginning on p. 135 of your Notebook
Consider the ***Discuss*** statements and write down some thoughts for:

- ***Possible Problems***
- ***Possible Solutions***

Then talk about these together...

The Church: A Refuge Children and the Disabled Community



Are children like these valuable to God and our Lord Jesus Christ?

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- Who are the Disabled?

What is your current personal definition and/or understanding of *disability*?

[Share with a neighbor]

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- **Who are the Disabled?**

...a *disabled person* is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term* adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

*meaning it has lasted for 12 months, or is likely to last for more than 12 months or for the rest of the person's life.

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- **Who are the Disabled?**

“Disability” means a physical, sensory, mental or other impairment, including any visual, hearing, learning or physical incapability, which impacts adversely on social, economic or environmental participation...

Kenya Persons with Disabilities Act 2003

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- **Who are the Disabled?**

The United Nations estimates almost 15% of the world's population—approximately 1 billion people, of which over 350 million are children—experience some form of disability. The disabled make up the highest proportion of the world's disadvantaged population...

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Who are the Disabled?

- ❖ They make up 15–20% of the poorest communities.
- ❖ They live marginalized, in isolation, and often have to beg as their sole means of survival.
- ❖ Disabled adults and children are three times more likely to be victims of sexual violence and rape.
- ❖ Other factors, such as physical dependence, life in institutions, and lack of access to legal rights, also make them particularly vulnerable to disease and abuse.

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- How does the world view people with disabilities?

*Two of the greatest influences that affect how we view people with disabilities are our **background** and **knowledge**.*

Background and Knowledge

1. Our **family** and **community**: The way family members and people in our communities perceive people with disabilities may strongly influence our own perceptions.

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- **How does the world view people with disabilities?**

Background and Knowledge

2. Our **education**: The things we have learned tend to have a powerful impact on the way we think and feel.

3. Our **religious and cultural upbringing** influences our attitudes.

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- **Religions of the World and Social Systems**

Tragically, throughout the ages and in many parts of the world today people with disabilities are looked upon as mistakes or those who have been cursed as the result of personal sin or the sins of their parents or ancestors. As a result, they are rejected, isolated, and live as outcasts of society.

→ *Do you see this reality in your local community?*

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Here is how some religious and social systems view people with disabilities:

- ❖ Hinduism – A disabled person is “bad karma”. Such a person is of the lowest caste.
- ❖ Islam – A disabled person is an object of charity or disgrace in a “shame and honor” culture. A disability is that person’s fate (*ghadar*).
- ❖ Communism – A disabled person cannot contribute to society; he or she has no use.
- ❖ Buddhism – A disabled person should deny and ignore his or her plight.

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Here is how some religious and social systems view people with disabilities:

- ❖ Spiritism – A disabled person has been cursed.
 - ❖ Secular Humanism – A disabled person is a victim and to integrate them into society is considered a significant expense.
 - ❖ Religious Legalism – A disabled person is an object of charity. He or she is the focus of ministry projects which highlight results rather than relationships.
- However, the real needs of disabled people are seen as the responsibility of the government, not the religious community.

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How does God view people with disabilities?

→ Created in the image of God for Him

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb...Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

Psalm 139:13,16

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How does God view people with disabilities?

Jesus went out of His way to encounter and include people with disabilities, because He knew how much they may contribute to any family and how vital every individual is to their community. Breaking down barriers and seeing the value of each person helps us to become the true family that God intends us to be. (Mark 2:3-5 and 1 Cor. 12:22-23).

This helps us understand:

- God desires His church to reach disabled people
- God desires disabled people to serve His kingdom

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How does God view people with disabilities?

1 Cor. 12:18: *But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be.*

This helps us understand:

- God not only desires to *reach* disabled people, but that "*He places*" those who make up the Body of Christ so as to show His gracious intention towards "the weaker" and "less honorable" (1 Cor. 12:22,23)

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Successful Models of Disability Ministry

Personal Models

→ see p. 16 *BASICS: Fundamentals of Disability Ministry Training* (Joni and Friends International Disability Center U.S.A.)

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Successful Models of Disability Ministry

Modeling God's Love through the Church

- When it comes to evangelism among disabled people and their families, the gospel cannot be given in word only; it must be accompanied by action.
- Disabled people who experience God's love through the alleviating or sharing of their burden usually remain true to the faith. Evangelism among the disabled that lacks the "relief of a burden" rarely lasts.
- When designing a program for disabled people your church should start small...

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Successful models of Disability Ministry

Church Outreach Ideas*

- Disability Awareness Sunday
- Build a Ramp Day
- Community Outreach
- Luke 14 Banquet
- Sports and Recreation Day
- Foot Washing Service
- Love Gift Distribution Day
- Marketplace Outreach

* from *BASICS: Fundamentals of Disability Ministry Training* (Joni and Friends International Disability Center U.S.A.)

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- Who are the Disabled?

Think of one person you know with a disability. *We invite you to share their name and the kind of disability they have with someone sitting nearby...*

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Dig in...



Discuss as a team how you might address the needs of the disabled, both children and adults, in your church planting strategy...