

## Our Story

- Read the passage from Lamentations. Discuss, as a family, as a group what happens to children in war zones, as refugees, as displaced persons. List the steps that might be taken to prevent national and international violence. Choose one or two where you can make a contribution toward peace.
- Discuss the personal stories. What would you have done if the army had taken your school children?
- List the things that can be done to protect children and nurture their growth. Choose one or two ways you can help.
- Invite someone from a child welfare agency to speak to your church.
- Get your family involved in National Hunger Awareness Day (NHAD), June 5. This initiative is led by food banks, food rescue programs and their agencies to inform the general public, food manufacturers and policy makers that hunger is a severe domestic issue, but that it can be ended. The majority of America's Second Harvest partner agencies are faith-based representing every faith tradition and denomination, from large urban multi-service organizations to small rural programs. For information and resource materials, see [www.hungerday.org](http://www.hungerday.org).
- Pray, as a family, as a community, together three times: "O God, give us – all of us – this day our daily bread."



Uniquely cooperative effort by African Methodist Episcopal Women's Missionary Society, American Baptist Churches USA, America's Second Harvest, Bread for the World Institute, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Reformed Church, Church World Service, Community of Christ, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, The Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America World Hunger Program, Franciscan Friars, Good Ground Press/Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Heifer International, Maryland Province of the Jesuits, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., Presbyterian Hunger Program, Reformed Church in America, Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Committee on Relief, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



# The Children Beg for Food

## The Prophet's Story

of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE

*The precious children of Zion,  
worth their weight in fine gold –  
how they are reckoned as earthen pots,  
the work of a potter's hands.  
The tongue of the infant sticks  
to the roof of its mouth for thirst;  
**the children beg for food,**  
but no one gives them anything.  
Those who feasted on delicacies  
perish in the streets;  
those who were brought up in purple  
cling to ash heaps....  
Happier were those pierced by the sword  
than those pierced by hunger,  
whose life drains away,  
deprived of the produce of the field.*

- Lamentations 4:1-2, 4-5, 9 NRSV



## Personal Stories

### Rani's Story from Bangladesh

In part of Battala slum, Dhaka City, Bangladesh, shanties of bamboo have been constructed on raised platforms over a big ditch, which is used for all sorts of waste. Below the shanties is thick and greasy mud or water covered in water hyacinth. Rani worked as a maidservant in two houses. Her husband left her and married again. She lives in a bamboo shanty with her two children, since she earns very little. She has no alternative but to leave her children in that house. One day when she went to work, her two-year-old daughter dropped into the ditch and could not get out.

In the last two years, five children have been lost in Battala this way. If a baby drops in, he or she drops with force and sinks deep into the greasy mud or goes into water under water hyacinths. Any rescue operation under the raised platforms is difficult. So there is no hope of getting back alive the babies that fall in. <[www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices](http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices)>

### A Homeless Mother from New York City Speaks

I'm totally confused. They tell you something different every time. I cry all the time. My seven-year old son cries all the time. He tells me, "Mom, we don't have a home anymore."

<[www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)>



### Bishop Paride Taban tells a Sudan Story

The soldiers came to the school and took away children for the army. The women in the village were angry and discussed what to do. They decided to take their babies to the barracks. "If you want to take our children, take them from the beginning, not after we have already raised them," they said as they put the babies down. The commander of the troops looked at the crying babies and decided to release the school children. - as told to Bread for the World staff

## Children's Stories<sup>1</sup>

each number is a child's story

- One in every five children in the United States is poor during the first three years of life – the time of greatest brain development. Almost 80 percent of poor children in the United States live in working households. <[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)>
- Every dollar invested in the U.S. Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) saves \$3 in future costs. <[www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)>
- In 2000, there were more than 1.2 million volunteers in the Head Start program helping 858,000 children. <[www.census.gov/statab/www](http://www.census.gov/statab/www)>
- Millennium Development Goal (MDG) #2: Achieve universal primary education. As many as 113 million children do not attend school, but the target is within reach. India, for example, is expected to have 95 percent of its children in school by 2005.<sup>2</sup>
- MDG #4: Reduce under-five mortality by two-thirds. Every year nearly 11 million young children die before their fifth birthday, mainly from preventable illnesses. That number is down, however, from 15 million in 1980. Each day in the developing world, 30,100 children die from mostly preventable and treatable causes such as diarrhea, acute respiratory infections or malaria. Malnutrition is associated with more than half of these deaths. <[www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)>
- There are more than 13 million AIDS orphans in sub-Saharan Africa.
- As many as 300,000 children under the age of 18 serve in government forces or armed rebel groups, some as young as eight years old. <[www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)>



<sup>1</sup> Additional facts, updates, Web links, stories and educational materials at [www.hungernomore.org](http://www.hungernomore.org).

<sup>2</sup> Millennium Development Goal targets for 2015, set by the world's leaders in September 2000.