

STUDY OBJECTIVES

1. Help students understand what it's like to be an orphaned or vulnerable child.
2. Help students understand the difficulties of poverty and how that relates to orphans in Third World countries
3. Help students recognize their need to think about the needs of others and how to meet those needs/minister to those around them.
4. Help them Feel, Understand, and Do Something about the plight of orphaned and vulnerable children.

BIBLE STUDY SESSION 1 (50 min.)

Scripture: James 1:26-27

Prepare: 2 sheets of butcher paper and marker or dry-erase board.

GET TO KNOW YOU GAME

If students do not know each other, take some time to play some get-to-know-you games.

Example: Form a circle. Have 1 student share their name and an adjective that describes them that starts with the first letter of their name. i.e. joyous josie. The next person in the circle must say Josie's adjective and name and then share his with the group, and so on – until everyone know each other's names.

DISCUSS ORPHANS

Once everyone has had a chance to meet, ask: Who can tell me what it means to be an orphan or vulnerable child? (The concept of "orphan" should be fairly simple for students. – a person who has lost one or more of their parents. What it means to be a "vulnerable child" is more complex. A simple definition is that a vulnerable child is one whose family situation is unstable, possibly resulting from the loss of one or more parents, but may also involve abandonment by their parents. Vulnerable children are at great risk of being abandoned by their care givers and ending up in an orphanage or on the streets.) Ask students what they know about orphaned and vulnerable children in Third World countries.

Show Sweet Sleep's "Programs Promo" video and have kids share about what they think it might be like to be abandoned, or to grow up in an orphanage or on the streets. Then ask what did they see in the video that made them sad? What made them want to do something to help? What made them hopeful for the children?

Say: "Orphans and vulnerable children often have no love, no encouragement, no one to call when they need someone and many don't have a healthy, comfortable place to sleep. Sweet Sleep is helping literally change the lives of these orphans and vulnerable children by providing them with a new bed, by finding them adoptive or foster parents, or by helping their family start a business that will provide for the family and keep the children in the home. They also bring teams of volunteers to build beds alongside the orphans and do a variety of activities to share God's love with the children – like VBS, crafts, Bible studies, worship experiences, anti-trafficking discussions – whatever is needed and culturally relevant in their country.

Ask: "If you slept on dirty scraps of foam on a concrete floor, or on a straw mat on the ground, or on a sidewalk – what kind of problems do you think you would have?"

Say: "Orphans and vulnerable children that Sweet Sleep works with share about their backs hurting and aching, their tossing and turning each and every night, trying to find 3 or 4 mattresses if they can to make one comfortable mattress – or scraping together scraps of old foam packaging to sleep on."

Read this letter to the students from a child who received a new bed from Sweet Sleep.

“My name is Mariana and I want to tell you that this bed means a lot for me. It means love because I feel love when I sleep in it. It means comfort, because it is soft and it is sweet to sleep on it. It means a whole world because it is my only personal place in all this world where I can dream, where I can cry, where I can write you letters. May God do the same to you what you have done for us.”

Say: “Tonight, we’re going to experience, in just a small way, what its like to not have a healthy, comfortable place to sleep by staying up all night. We won’t have to experience the pain and discomfort, the filth of curling up and snuggling into dirty scraps of foam, or sleeping on the street, or the effects on your brain development that over time would cause you to be 15 IQ points behind where you could be because of your lack of sufficient sleep. But even one night of no sleep is enough to remind us of the millions of children out there tonight with no place to rest, to dream, or to sleep sweetly.

WHAT THE WORD HAS TO SAY

Have everyone open their Bibles and have a volunteer read James 1:26-27.

Say: "We are called by God to look after orphans and widows in their distress. It doesn't say – if you have time, do this. Or if it is convenient... As God has called us to meet the needs of orphans and widows, we must constantly look for ways to do this. How many of you have ever ministered to orphans and widows? (Get some responses – hopefully!) Many of us get so busy with the details of doing church, or Sunday School, or life in general that we don't make time to even think about, not to mention meet the needs of, orphans and widows around us or around the world. Tonight we're focusing on meeting the needs of orphans, but we also can't forget widows. One thing Sweet Sleep does to minister to widows is to encourage widows in the communities they serve to invite orphans to their homes – to learn life skills, how to manage a home, how to manage their farming – any wisdom that widow has to share is something an orphan could benefit from."

Invite students to turn to Deuteronomy 24:17-22. Read it aloud while students read along.

LIST WAYS WE CAN HELP

Say: “These examples in scripture may not apply to how we can look after orphans in our daily lives. I don’t own a vineyard, do you? Insomnia is a great way to start looking after orphans. We’re helping Sweet Sleep provide beds and families for orphans and vulnerable children by sacrificing our sleep tonight! What else can each of us do to raise awareness about the needs of these orphaned and vulnerable children?” (We’ve had boy scouts make this a project for a badge, kids sell jewelry they made at fairs and neighborhood garage sales, students share about Sweet Sleep at their school and do fundraisers, etc. Students come up with better ideas than we could ever come up with for them!) Create a list with your students and remind them of these ideas after Insomnia.

BEAN GAME ACTIVITY (50 min.)

5. Pray. Pray that God would help us find ways to help these children not be forgotten.

This game will help students realize the difficulties of poverty. They'll then apply this to the situation of Third World orphans and vulnerable children and discuss how they can continue to raise awareness of the plight of orphans and vulnerable children after Insomnia is over. The core message of this activity is that some people in our world struggle to have their basic needs met. It's our role as Christians to take God's love around the world and meet the needs of people in poverty, especially orphans.

GATHER

- White unlined index cards – one for every student. 80 percent of the cards should have a 3 in the top right hand corner 15 percent should have a 2 in the top right and 5 percent should have a 1.
- Dry Beans. Enough for each student with a 3 on their card to have 5 beans and kids with a 2 on their card get 10 beans and kids with the 1 on their card get 20 beans.
- Supplies for stores, disasters, missionaries. You'll need to make posterboard signs for Water, Food, Shelter (2 of each) and then either Tshirts with iron on letters or card stock signs to duck tape to volunteers who will be disasters. Missionaries can be marked by a small sign or just holding a Bible – students will have to seek them out for assistance. The goal for each student is to get 2 water, 3 food and 1 shelter. Shelter costs 5 beans, water is 1 bean and food is 3 beans. Spread the stations out so they have to travel to the stores.

- Permanent markers for each volunteer being a disaster, missionary, store worker, and one for each Bible Study. You can color code them if you like – water gets blue sharpies, shelter gets brown, food gets green, disasters are red, missionaries are purple, etc.
- Bull Horn/sound system to communicate with the students before the game, while the game is going on, and at the end before they break into Bible Study groups.

PREPARE

- Write the numbers on cards. Shuffle then before distributing.
- Have volunteers ready to give out cards and number of beans for their card to each student.
- Set up stores either outside on a recreation field or inside a gym, etc. You just need a large place to play the “game” and a place to gather at the beginning and end. Students will debrief in Bible Study groups either in the same room huddled up at the end – or they can go to their Bible Study rooms if that works better for your location.
- Make sure volunteers have their permanent markers and signs, etc.
- Print out debriefing questions for group leaders and give each leader permanent marker.

RULES

Here's how the game will work. Students gather for instructions for the game. As they enter the gym or auditorium, give them one of the cards and their beans. Tell them not to eat them (some might want to!). They won't know what the cards or beans are for and that's okay. You can also distribute the cards as they enter and give them their beans as they head out for the stores, etc. – Whatever works best for your facility. When the students are settled, explain the rules for the bean game to the students:

1. Each student needs to get shelter, food and water at "stores" set up around the field.
(2 of each store on the field)
2. They can give beans away but they can't steal beans from someone else.
3. No running.
4. Missionaries will be around and can help by giving beans if they can.
5. When the whistle blows, return to the auditorium or Gym.

After getting instructions, tell students the game begins now. Students will start milling around to purchase their items. When they take their card to the water station, the volunteer at that station will ask for one bean then write a W on their card. Throughout the game, “Disasters” will come through and wipe out things by marking out the letters on their card. For example, you can have people being Tornadoes, Hurricanes, Drought. These people will do whatever it is these things do. For example – a favorite is to be the Hurricane – you carry a small water gun and spray the student and yell “Hurricane!” and wipe out their shelter – maybe food and water depending on if you want to be nice to someone that doesn’t have many beans. If you have a kid starting with 20 beans – you may want to wipe out shelter, water and food. Tornadoes can spin around and then mark out shelter, droughts can take water and/or food, etc. Missionaries are there to give a few beans here and there or help guide students to the services they need.

“Rich” folks can give beans but as stated in the rules, you can never steal beans from someone.

You can tell when students are “done” with the activity – they’ll get tired of walking, start to get frustrated by their lack of beans, etc... Try to keep the game going for 20-30 minutes. Then you’ll have time to debrief, and take a quick break before launching into Bible Study #2.

After the whistle is blown and the kids come back to large group, explain: “You probably realized that if you were in group 3, this represented people living in Third World countries. Group 2 was developing countries, and Group 1 represented developed nations – like the U.S. The majority of people in our world do not have the resources needed to fill their “cards” and get the shelter, food, and water needed to survive. To discuss more about this, let’s get in our Bible Study groups and discuss what it was like for people in each group.”

BIBLE STUDY GROUP DEBRIEF

1. How did you feel about the way the beans were distributed? Did you feel like it was fair?
2. Did those with more beans share with those of you who had less?
3. How did it feel when disaster hit?

Fact: Over the last decade, disasters around the world have caused an average 90,000 deaths a year.

4. When your food was wiped out, you, personally, were probably not hungry. Hunger is a huge problem for people in poverty. How big is the problem of hunger?

Fact: The UN estimates that 34,000 children and 16,000 adults die each day from hunger or preventable diseases with poverty-related causes. That amounts to 18 million a year.

Say: "It's hard for us to imagine, but people die from being hungry! How many times have you said – I'm so hungry I'm going to die? It's a reality for millions every day – so hungry, that thousands die every day..."

5. How did it feel when you were helped by a missionary? Do you think missionaries and the people they serve have similar problems?
6. If all you have is a roof over your head, a little food and water, what might be missing? (You'll get some material answers of course – Xbox, PlayStation, etc.) Lead them into a discussion about a safe, healthy comfortable place to sleep – referencing your discussion in Bible Study session 1.



BIBLE STUDY & BEAN GAME

Have a volunteer come by and draw a B on each student's card.

Say: "One thing you didn't have to fight to get out there tonight is a bed. That's because what you are doing by coming to Insomnia tonight – through the funds you raised to come and what you'll do after this event to tell your friends about the need of orphans is helping to provide beds for children who not only are growing up in those Third World countries, but they've lost their parents – or they've been abandoned – discarded – forgotten. Many children around the world, because of you and other students like, will not have to worry about where they'll sleep tonight. They won't have to worry about mosquitoes biting them and passing deadly Malaria to them. They will finally have a place to rest, to pray and to sleep sweetly. But there are millions more who need us to not forget about them – who need us to tell our friends, to talk about them on facebook, to sacrifice our hard-earned money so orphans can sleep and even to go on mission trips to minister to orphans and vulnerable children."

Ask a student to pray for the world's orphans and vulnerable children. Then you close by praying for our response to the needs you've learned about tonight.

After students have debriefed the activity, allow them to go grab some water and use the restroom before either heading to their Bible Study room or returning to the room for Session #2 depending on where you debriefed.

Scripture: James 2:1-9

Prepare: Equal number of 3 different colored index cards – one card per student. 3 sheets of butcher paper and markers



STEPPING INTO THEIR SHOES

As students enter, give them one of 3 colored index cards – like yellow, green or blue.

Ask: “How did you like the Bean Game? Say: We talked in our first Bible study session about the difficulties facing orphans and vulnerable children in Third World countries. Now, let’s take a look at what its like for orphans and vulnerable children you interact with every day.”

Explain: “When you came in the room you received an index card. For this activity, you need to think like a student in this situation. Green card holders – you have both parents living. Yellow card holders – you’ve lost one parent. Blue card holders – you’ve lost both your parents and have no adult family members living (aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.)”

(Be sensitive to those who may have recently lost family members in this activity. If you know someone is in this situation, talk to them about the activity before Bible study and make sure they are comfortable with the activity. If they aren’t, ask them to help you hand things out, etc.)

Lead the students to gather around the 3 butcher paper sheets with others with the same colored card. Each student should have one marker. Say: You are in a group right now of other students who are in the same family situation you are.

If you are in the green group -- brainstorm things that are easier because you have family. If you are in the yellow group -- list things that might be difficult for you because you've lost a parent. If you are in the blue group -- list things that might be difficult because you've lost both parents.

Allow groups to share their lists, starting with the group that had both parents, then the 1 parent group, then the no parents/family group.

Ask: "What can you do to minister to, or meet the needs of students in another group?" (allow students to answer – coming up with things like... We could give a student a ride to dance that we know only has one parent or has recently suffered a loss, etc.)

HOW TO MINISTER

Say: “The term minister simply means to meet needs. To do this, first we have to recognize needs. We have to be sensitive to what others are going through or have gone through.

Consider that each of your friends is like an iceberg. What you see may only be 10 percent of what is really going on in their lives – the rest of what they are going through is underneath the surface. It is always best to think about that 90 percent when thinking of people at school, at church – even at home.”

Explain: “When you came in the room you received an index card. For this activity, you need to think like a student in this situation. Green card holders – you have both parents living. Yellow card holders – you’ve lost one parent. Blue card holders – you’ve lost both your parents and have no adult family members living (aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.)”

(Give an example of this from your life first. Example: My mom died when I was 12 but my friends were constantly making “your mom” jokes all the time. They might not have done that if they had thought – I wonder if this will hurt his feelings – or maybe they didn’t even know she died but were inconsiderate either way...)

Then ask: “What are some examples in your lives of time it would have been helpful if someone knew what was going on in your family or personal life?”

OPTIONAL STUDENT/ORPHAN TESTIMONY

If you have someone in your group that is an older student that has lost a parent or been orphaned, talk to them about sharing about the situation – what they wish other students or friends would do or have done to help, or maybe examples of what people do/did that was helpful. You may have an adult volunteer in your youth group that has lost parents – this is another option if you don't have students in this situation or students are unwilling to share – which is perfectly fine.

CALL TO ACTION

Say: “Tonight we’re looking at how to meet the needs of orphans and vulnerable children here and overseas, but more than that, I want us to begin to think about what others may be going through and how you can show Jesus to them through your response. As you walk around tonight, or at school on Monday – look at your fellow students around you. Think... I wonder what they’re going through? Have they lost a parent? Are they thinking about committing suicide? What is making them look so sad? And what can I do to help. You can even pray for them with your eyes open as you walk through the halls! It’s true!”

WHAT THE WORD HAS TO SAY

Say: "Let's look at James 2:1-9." Ask a volunteer to read as everyone reads along.

Read the first line about favoritism.

Ask: "Is favoritism really a sin? And how does this apply to the way we respond to the needs of those around us or the needs of orphans?" (shoot for – we look down on people, we make fun of people, we think of ourselves as better than others, etc.)

Read verse 5 to the students.

Say: "This is pretty general -- we all know people that have money that are strong Christians and do good things. And we know poor people who don't act like they are "heirs of the kingdom." But we need to remember that God does say: Blessed are the meek, or the poor – for they will inherit the kingdom of Heaven. To help remember that we are not better than others depending on their money or their situations, we should have a "Me3" attitude. God should be first in our lives, then others – and me-3. It helps to remember to consider others better than ourselves – then its hard to look down on someone or treat them wrongly."

Read Philippians 2:3.

Say: This is a verse we should all memorize."

Say: “In verse 8 it says ‘love your neighbor as yourself and if you do this, you are doing well.’ Are you doing well? Do you love everyone in your school as if they are just as important as you? Do you treat them as a special and unique creation of God? God has called us to look after those outcasts, those who have been rejected – those who are struggling. When we are sensitive to what those around us are going through and sensitive to how God would have us meet those needs, great things can happen! Burdens can be lifted, joy can be restored – students who don’t smile, may smile for the first time. And it can all happen by God working through you to meet needs.”

PRAY

Pray for the needs of students in your room that you don’t even know about. Pray that we would all be sensitive to what others are going through and strive to meet those needs. Pray specifically for orphans in your community and orphans around the world. Pray that God would help each of us know how to meet their needs.

QUIET TIME FOR SATURDAY MORNING (20–30 min.)

(Your speaker and worship leader might like to make up the quiet time to relate to what they are talking about in worship but if not, use this Quiet Time Guide)

INSOMNIA QUIET TIME GUIDE

Read through these verses and journal your thoughts about God's heart for the orphaned.

GOD ADOPTS

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba, Father!' (Romans 8:15) NIV

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. (Galatians 4:4-7) NIV

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. (Ephesians 1:4-6) NIV



BIBLE STUDY & BEAN GAME

GOD COMMANDS

Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. (Deuteronomy 24:17)

Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. (Isaiah 1:17)

GOD PROMISES HE KNOWS THEM

For you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, 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)

HE SEES THEM

But you see the trouble and grief they cause. You take note of it and punish them. The helpless put their trust in you. You defend the orphans. (Psalm 10:14) NLT

The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. (Psalm 10:14)

HE HAS COMPASSION ON THEM

God sets the lonely in families. (Psalm 68:6a) NIV



HE DEFENDS THEM

Do justice for the fatherless and the oppressed, so that men of the earth may terrify [them] no more. (Psalm 10:18) Holman CSB

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. (Psalm 68:5) NIV

HE WILL COME TO THEM

I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. (John 14:18) NIV

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU THROUGH THESE VERSES?

Once we give our hearts to Christ, believing and trusting in Him alone for salvation, God says we become part of His family through adoption. "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship [adoption]. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15) Do you believe and trust in Jesus for your salvation? Do you need him to "adopt" you into His family today?



BIBLE STUDY & BEAN GAME

HERE'S HOW TO BECOME PART OF GOD'S FAMILY

F IS FOR FORGIVENESS

Everyone has sinned and needs God's forgiveness.

Romans 3:23: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

God's forgiveness is in Jesus only.

Ephesians 1:7: "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

A IS FOR AVAILABLE

God's forgiveness is available for all.

John 3:16: "God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."

God's forgiveness is available but not automatic. Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven."





BIBLE STUDY & BEAN GAME

I IS FOR IMPOSSIBLE

According to the Bible, it is impossible to get to heaven on our own.

Ephesians 2:8-9: "By grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift - not from works, so that no one can boast."

So how can a sinful person have eternal life and enter heaven?

T IS FOR TURN

If you were going down the road and someone asked you to turn, what would he or she be asking you to do? (Change direction) Turn means repent. Turn away from sin and self. Luke 13:3: "Unless you repent, you will all perish as well!"

Turn to Jesus alone as your Savior and Lord.

John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Here is the greatest news of all.

Romans 10:9-10: "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. With the heart one believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses, resulting in salvation."

What happens if a person is willing to repent of their sins and confess Christ?



H IS FOR HEAVEN

Heaven is a place where we will live with God forever.

John 14:3: "If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also."

Eternal life begins now with Jesus.

John 10:10: "I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance."

H CAN ALSO STAND FOR HOW

How can a person have God's forgiveness, eternal life, and heaven? By trusting Jesus as your Savior and Lord. You can do this right now by praying and asking Jesus to forgive you of your sins and inviting Jesus into your heart.

Accepting Christ is just the beginning of a wonderful adventure with God! Get to know Him better in a number of ways:

- Tell your student minister or your Bible Study Leader tonight.
- Follow Christ's example in baptism.
- Join a church where you can worship God and grow in your faith.
- In your church, get involved in Sunday School and Bible study.
- Begin a daily personal worship experience with God where you study the Bible and pray.

*Spend some time praising God for his salvation and for the way he cares for the orphaned. Ask Him to give you His heart for the orphaned and the fatherless.