

News Story Summary

Twenty nine abandoned special needs children have been rescued from uncertain fates thanks to Paul and Jeane Briggs. The Briggs were recently highlighted in a news article because of their devotion to children whom they adopted from as far away as Russia. Their story began in 1985 when they adopted a two-year-old boy named Abraham. During a mission trip, the Briggs discovered Abraham in a Mexican orphanage. The two-year-old was blind and suffering from brain damage because of abuse. Through the years other children have been adopted by the Briggs, including 24-year-old Joseph who was abandoned by his biological parents because he was born with a cleft lip and palate and 22-year-old Catelyn Joy who was adopted when she was 13 years old. Many of the children had been abused or were suffering from medical conditions such as cancer, polio, and autism. Today the children range in age from 35 to 4 years old, and the Briggs keep open options to adopt other children if the need arises. The couple said they adopt these special children because it's their calling, but they also admit that they just love children.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the sentence “West Virginia couple adopts 29.”)

Focus Attention

As group members arrive, ask: *What circumstances can cause us to cry out to God for deliverance? How has God used you to deliver others?*

Share the story about Paul and Jeane Briggs. Emphasize the conditions and experiences of the children prior to being adopted. Challenge the group to consider the potential futures of the adopted children had the Briggs not intervened. Ask: *What one word would you use to describe the difference between what could have been and what is for these children?*

Say: *The Book of Esther reveals the certainty that Mordecai and the Jewish people would be annihilated at the hands of Haman. However, Esther was encouraged by Mordecai to use her power as queen to rescue the Jews. Esther was in the right place at the right time.*

Encourage the group to consider during the study how the Briggs and Esther compare. Ask rhetorically: *How was God's work to deliver the children and the Jewish people the same? How was it different?*

Challenge

Say: *Unfortunately, many children will never receive the type of care that Paul and Jeane Briggs provides. There are other children around the world who are subjected not only to abuse and abandonment but who live in impoverished conditions or must work long hours to support their families.*

Challenge members to investigate various organizations such as FeedTheChildren.org, SamaritansPurse.org, and WorldVision.org for ways they can impact the lives of children. Direct them to be involved with a view toward sharing the gospel. Ask: *How can we make a difference as a group for the cause of Christ? How can we point others to Jesus, the Deliverer?*

Lead in prayer and ask God to protect children who are suffering from hunger, abuse, sickness, or other atrocities. Ask God to help the group find ways of making a difference in the lives of others.