



Grassroot Inspired, Formed & Transformed
for Holistic Child Development

Child Protection

Dan Brewster

THE CHILDREN & FAMILIES IN THE BIBLE SERIES
Book 5



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE IDEA FOR these studies came from a reading of the excellent book *Precious in His Sight* by Roy B. Zuck (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Mi., 1996). Much of the material in the early versions then was based on gleanings from *Precious in His Sight*, and I am grateful to Dr. Zuck for permission and encouragement to explore in his book for those insights and principles. The book called *Children and Childhood in the Bible Revised Edition* was a result of that exploration.

This series of booklets uses much of the material in *Children and Childhood in the Bible*, but in this shorter “booklet” format. The material in each one can be covered in a day or so of group or individual study. I am grateful to Dr. Rosalind Tan, the Director of the Holistic Child Development Institute (HCDI) in Penang for the idea and the inspiration to rework the material in this smaller, booklet format. The booklets are in response to her passion to create materials very suitable for “grassroots” pastors, “lay” leaders, children’s workers and care givers. Thanks Rosalind!

Dan Brewster

I am very grateful once again for the expert assistance to my friend Ms. Lim Siew Ling. She contributed substantially to the creation of this Series. Her comprehensive familiarity with Scripture and wealth of pastoral and ministry experience gives her a marvelous ability to both explore and interpret Scripture and also to craft appropriate and provocative reflection questions. Thank you very much, Siew Ling!

And once again, I have been helped by my friend Mr. Kok Chik Bu in the overall design, look and feel of the books in this series. As has been the case with his work on other Holistic Child Development (HCD) resources, his creative touch has fashioned the attractive and readable style and format of the book. Thanks Chik Bu!

Finally, and not least, I am grateful to Compassion International, the organization in which I have served for nearly 30 years now, for the opportunity to spend time exploring the Word of God as part of my work to develop resources like these.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

THE PURPOSE OF this booklet and the others which follow is to help learners dig deep into the Word to see what it says about children and childhood. But more importantly, they are to create understanding of the worth and significance of children, and their role in pointing to and illustrating Christ's "upside down" Kingdom..

Some people have said that the Bible has little to say about children and childhood. But in fact the Scriptures are *full* of references to children. These booklets include hundreds of verses relating to the child. Moreover, these studies show that children play a significant role in the unfolding of the message of the Bible – that God loves and protects them; that they are extremely perceptive in understanding the things of God; and that God often deploys them as His messengers and models – often it seems when adults may have been too corrupt and deaf to His calling.

The Booklets in this Series are:

Book One: The Worth of a Child

Book Two: Family Life in Bible Times

Book Three: Nurture and Training of Children

Book Four: Parental Modeling and Generational Consequences

Book Five: Child Protection

Book Six: Theological Significance of Children

Note: A bibliography for the Series can be found at the end of Book Six.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

EACH OF THESE booklets contains four studies on a specific theme with a variety of Bible verses or reflections about children. The studies are structured as follows:

Topic Overview: A brief introduction to the topic which presents real life case studies or scenarios as a backdrop to the Scriptures and reflections of the study.

What Does the Bible Say? Here you will be asked to go to specific Bible passages to explore what the Bible says about children and understand more of God's heart for them.

Key Insights or Principles: For those Bible passages, you may find new insights or key learning related to the theme. It may be that the number and breadth of Scriptures on a topic surprises or impresses you. Or you may be convicted anew with the biblical perspective on some topics which contrast sharply with the perspectives we see today and hear about in the news. Write down the main biblical principle, as well as your personal observations and gleaned knowledge about the Scriptures on the topic.

Reflection Questions: This section asks you to apply the key biblical principles to your **personal life**, the **culture** in which you live, and the **context** of your society and circumstances in your own country. They may require more inquiry, research and personal reflection. There are no right or wrong answers to the reflection questions, but they will provide the basis for interesting and lively discussions about how children are viewed and treated in your own personal life, context, and culture/country. Ideally these questions should be discussed in groups. The discussions will draw you deeper into the biblical material, and point to the contemporary significance of the topic.

Where I have quoted Scriptures, I have used the New International Version. However, as you are doing your studies, you may profit from using a variety of versions if available. Also, while often single verses are given; good Biblical scholarship requires you to read the Scriptures around the verses, to have a fuller understanding of the historical settings, and contexts of the Scriptures.

Note: There are frequent references especially to Dr. Roy Zuck's outstanding book *Precious in His Sight*,¹ which inspired this Workbook. In some places we have sought to include more of Dr. Zuck's fine analysis and development of the many themes he addresses in his book. However, the references to his book can surely not do it justice. I highly recommend that learners using these booklets get a copy of *Precious in His Sight* which will add immeasurably to the depth and breadth of the topics explored here.

Whether you are a front-line childcare worker, a church or organization leader, I trust that these booklets will encourage, inspire, and provide you broad new insights about children and childhood in the Bible—and about your ministry and mission priorities.

¹ Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight-Children & Childhood in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996).

CHILD PROTECTION

IN THIS LAST section we have to deal with something quite unpleasant – the exploitation and abuse of children.

Children have always been at risk. The book of Job, perhaps the earliest book of the Bible includes heart-breaking passages about the neglect and exploitation of children (see Job 24). But while children have always suffered, there is one thing abundantly clear in Scripture—that God has a special place in His heart for those children—the orphaned, the abused the neglected, the hungry. The Oxford Statement on Children at Risk puts it well:¹

Scripture clearly shows that God is outraged about what is happening to children. Our own anger is but a pale reflection of God's own fury and indignation. Our compassion for hurting children and the righteous anger that arises within us reflects nothing less than the jealous love and righteous anger of our Heavenly Father...Over and over again, God's warning throughout the Bible is "Don't touch my precious children!" (Exodus 22-24; Psalm 68:5; Ezekiel 16:1-14. Deuteronomy 24:17 etc.)

Jesus warned of terrible consequences for anyone harming his children: "...it would be better that a millstone be hung around

his neck and [he] be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

The Oxford Statement continues:

Nowhere do we learn more of the loving and jealous character of God than in His protection and defense of His children (Deuteronomy 24:17, 27:19). Indeed, God entrusting His own son to humankind as a vulnerable child, requiring that Son to be nurtured by a frail but able family and community, symbolically provides a model of trust and responsibility which sets an example for His interaction with all humanity, and which shouts to us about the significance of children.

The justification for special protective guardianship of children at risk is clearly demonstrated and mandated throughout Scripture. Our studies in this section will help us understand that God's heart is broken when children suffer, and that our hearts must similarly be broken. Consider the challenges which are facing children at risk in your own cultures. What can you as leaders and child care workers do to advocate for children? Advocacy is one way EVERYONE can get involved, whether working specifically with children or within the different structures of society, to be a voice for the vulnerable.

¹ The Oxford Statement on *Children at Risk*, drafted in Oxford in January 1997 provides both a practical and biblical rationale for Christian care for children. The entire Statement may be viewed at: www.viva.org.

STUDY 1: CHILD PROTECTION IN THE BIBLE

■ Introduction

WE HAVE SEEN that God is the defender of the poor and needy and children are His primary concern. In these last days, millions of children globally are in trouble. Advocacy for children at risk in this 21st century is no longer confined to the poor refugees in the Sub-Saharan deserts, but also in the concrete jungles of developed nations. "All children are at risk!" is a battle cry from global child advocates. Therefore, all children need protection wherever they are.

What child protection "policies" has God put in place for His precious ones? For

one, He has placed the burden on the adults to "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves." (Proverbs 31:8). With the same intensity, He has warned that His wrath is upon those who are guilty of abusing these little ones. Over and over again, the Bible repeats His warnings: "Don't touch my precious children!"

For Further Exploration:

Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight*, pp. 168-175.

See the Oxford Statement on Children at Risk at www.viva.org.

■ What Does the Bible Say?

1. Discover how **God** care and protect the weak in the following verses. Identify who the **primary recipients** are:

References:	Primary Recipients of God's Care and Concern	How God Protect the Weak & Helpless
Primary Scriptures:		
Psalms 146:9	<i>The alien, fatherless and widow</i>	<i>God watches over the weak and those who need protection e.g. alien, fatherless and widow.</i>
Jeremiah 22:3		
Lamentations 2:11,19		

Matthew 18:10		
Psalms 82:3-4		
Hosea 14:3		

2. Read the following to identify actions we are to take or avoid to protect the interests of children:

Our Task/Responsibilities: References:	Child Protection in the Bible
Isaiah 1: 17, 23	
Zechariah 7:10	
Matthew 19:14	
Luke 17:2	
James 1:27	

3. What kind of child protection is provided for children in the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament? Write your observations in column below:

References:	Child Protection Under the Mosaic Law
Numbers 27: 7-11	
Deuteronomy 14:29	
Deuteronomy 16: 11,14	

Deuteronomy 24:17, 19-21	
Deuteronomy 26:12	

4. Proverbs 17:7b provides advocacy-related contents which states that “A brother is born for adversity.” Identify below the brothers in these passages and briefly comment on the advocacy actions they took in defending their siblings in adversities:

Reference:	Brother	Comments on their Advocacy Actions
Genesis 34:17		
Genesis 43:34		
2 Samuel 13:21		

5. READ and study Isaiah 58. Answer the following questions below from your observations of this remarkable chapter:

- Vs. 6-7: What is the “true fasting” that God requires?

- Vs.8-12: List the blessings that God promises to those who defend and help the “hungry,” the “poor wanderer,” and the “naked” as mentioned in these verses.

- Read Vs. 12 and Psalm 10:14. What did God call those who cared for and protected those in need? How does this apply to you in your context?

■ *Key Insights or Principles:*

■ *Reflection Questions:*

1. Discuss the type of help given or preventative actions taken to protect the children in your culture. (Example: local child protection laws or policies, NGO's etc.)

2. Are any of the preventive child protection actions taken in your culture related to traditional values similar to those provided in the Mosaic Laws of the OT? Discuss.

What are some specific kinds of child protection children in your culture need the most? Discuss.

3. In your opinion, what kinds of risks are **urban children** experiencing in this decade? What kinds of child protection measures need to be implemented in urban environments? How can you, in your context, advocate for these measures?

4. In addition, discuss the risks **rural children** are facing and the measures needed for their protection. If this is your context, how can you advocate for these measures?

5. Based upon the Scriptures in Isaiah 58 and Psalm 10 you have just read, construct a “job description” for a person who would be a “Repairer of Broken Walls”, (Isaiah 58:12). List the job responsibilities and the benefits that will come to those who are so called. (Then see below for version provided by the author, Dr Dan Brewster)

■ *Case Study:*

POSITION DESCRIPTION from Isaiah 58

JOB TITLE:	REPAIRER OF BROKEN WALLS
BASIC FUNCTION:	Not to turn away from your own flesh and blood. (v. 7)
REPORTING RELATIONSHIP:	The Lord will guide you always; The glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. (vv.8,9,11) (Your emails will be answered!)
RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To loose the chains of injustice.• Untie the cords of the yoke.• To set the oppressed free and to break every yoke.• To share your food with the hungry• To provide the poor wanderer with shelter.• When you see the naked, to clothe him.• Spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry.• Satisfy the needs of the oppressed. (vv. 6, 7, 10)
BENEFITS PACKAGE: (Health, pension, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your light will break through like the dawn• Your healing will quickly appear.• Your righteousness will go before you.• The glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.• Your light will rise in the darkness.• Your night will become like the noonday.• He will satisfy your need in a thirsty land.• He will strengthen your frame.• You will be like a well-watered garden,• Like a spring whose waters never fail... (vv. 8, 10, 11, 12)

STUDY 2: CHILDREN AS VICTIMS OF INFANTICIDE AND SACRIFICE

■ Introduction

"THE SO CALLED right to abort an unborn baby has led to the view that parents have a right to terminate a live baby."¹ In some countries, like China, where there is a one-child policy and boys are preferred over girls, many parents and doctors are forced to commit abortions and infanticide. Some may have heard of the case of "Baby Doe" who was born with Down's syndrome in 1982 in Indiana, United States. This innocent one was left to die by the parents because they "were simply exercising their freedom of choice?"²

Unfortunately, even infanticide and child sacrifice are not unknown in the Bible. Roy Zuck points out to us that there are 3 forms of infanticide in Bible times, viz., killings of infants and children in warfare, child sacrifice in pagan worship, and child cannibalism during siege and famine.³

Let's examine the Scriptures closely regarding this most disturbing subject.

For Further Exploration:

Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight*, pp.81-89.

Oxford Statement on Children at Risk at www.viva.org.

¹ Zuck, *Precious in His Sight*, p.81.

² Ibid., p.82.

³ Ibid.

■ What Does the Bible Say?

1. In Scriptures, we learn that there were times in biblical history when children were killed. Identify the contexts and the names of the persons/tribes who committed this act. One is done for you.

References:	Context	Description of Infanticide
2 Kings 8:12	<i>Hazael murdered King Ben-Hadad of Aram and succeeded him as king.</i>	<i>King Hazael dashed the little children to the ground.</i>
Exodus 1:15-22; Acts 7:19		
2 Kings 3:26-27		
Psalms 137: 9		
Isaiah 13:16,18		
Hosea 10:14		
Nahum 3:10		
Matthew 2:16		

2. There are a disturbing number of passages in the OT which indicate that the Israelites committed infanticide. Read the verses in context in order to discover the circumstances, persons/kings/tribes who committed this act:

References:	Context	Description/Motive of Infanticide by the Israelites
2 Kings 16:2-4	<i>King Ahaz "walked in the ways of the kings of Israel 'following' the detestable ways of the nations the Lord had driven out."</i>	<i>He "even sacrificed his son in the fire" as sacrifices to the idolatrous gods.</i>
2 Chronicles 33:6		
2 Kings 25:1-21		

Jeremiah 7:31		
Lamentations 2:20; 4:10		
Ezekiel 16: 20-21		
Ezekiel 20: 26,31		
Micah 6:7		

3. Read Joshua 6:21 and compare with Genesis 15:16 and Deuteronomy 9:4-5. Why do you think God command the slaughtering of children in the following passages? Discuss how these might be interpreted in today's modern contexts/situations.

4. Read the following Prophets to determine the denouncement of infanticide. What were the words used? (Examine the context of the verses to understand thoroughly.)

References:	Prophet	Words Used to Denounce Infanticide
Jeremiah 7:30-34; 32:35	<i>Jeremiah</i>	<i>"done evil", "detestable", "defiled", "beware"</i>
Ezekiel 16: 20-23		
Ezekiel 23:39		
Micah 6:7-8		

5. God's commands to the Israelites regarding infanticide are in the following Scriptures. Determine the commands given about this subject.

- Leviticus 20:1-5

- Deuteronomy 18:10

6. Explore the root causes of infanticide as mentioned in these passages. What are these causes?

- Leviticus 26:27-29

- Deuteronomy 28: 53-57

- Ezekiel 5:8-10

■ *Key Insights or Principles:*

■ *Reflection Questions:*

This study gives us some very unpleasant topics to think/talk about. Let's learn from each other as we discuss the following questions:

1. Do people in your culture still commit infanticide or murder of children today? If so, in what ways are these acts practiced? Explain the contexts and reasons for these acts and relate them to the biblical examples we have studied.

2. In Judges 11:30-31. What is your opinion concerning Jephthah's killing his daughter as a sacrifice? Do you agree that his action constitutes murder of his daughter? Why or why not?

3. Why did God not spare the lives of the “innocent” children when He passed judgment upon the adults? Note these examples: The flood (Genesis 6:5), destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20); and the Canaanites (Exodus 23:33).

4. Have you ever reflected upon Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22? Give your reasons why this is not a pagan act of child sacrifice. Cf. Genesis 17:4-7.

5. Would you say that mothers (especially unwed teenage mothers), who abandon their babies in public places are committing infanticide? How can you or your community help to prevent such forms of infanticide from occurring? What might be your action plan to help combat this practice?

STUDY 3: CHILDREN AS VICTIMS OF ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

■ Introduction

IT IS DIFFICULT to know, much less discuss, the horrific abuses innocent children around the world are facing daily. Many of these are culturally rooted. For example, some children born out of wedlock or from incestuous relationships often feel despised throughout their lives. Others in impoverished nations are blatantly exploited through abusive child labour or sold into prostitution. Unless intentionally addressed, these abuses continue to be passed down from generation to generation.

Dr. Wess Stafford, the president of Compassion International was a victim of abuse as a child during boarding school. He spoke of years of struggle in overcoming his childhood scars right through his adulthood.¹ He determined not to let the resulting anger and bitterness of those experiences define his life. He was able to put it all behind him and move on with a commitment to caring for children in similar circumstances all over the world. Imagine how many more lives are being ruined each day in the hands of wicked perpetrators if child abuse and exploitation are not confronted or prevented.

The voice of the Lord continues to speak on behalf of child victims as in the days of old—“...spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed” (Isaiah 58:10). Stand up and be counted as a “Repairer of Broken Walls” and “Restorer of Streets with Dwellings” (vs. 12).

For Further Exploration:

Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight*, pp23-44, 168-175.

Protecting Children: Prevention and Immediate Response—Compassion International’s Guide to Protecting Children from Abuse (Colorado Springs, USA: Compassion International).

¹ *Protecting Children: Prevention and Immediate Response—Compassion International’s Guide to Protecting Children from Abuse* (Compassion International: Colorado Springs, USA). Most portions of this study are taken from this important Guide.

■ What Does the Bible Say?

1. Read the following Scriptures. What kinds of abuses or oppression were orphans in the bible subjected to? These verses give you some examples.

Reference:	Abuses and Oppressions Faced by Orphans
Job 6:27	
Job 24:3,9	
Psalms 10:18	
Isaiah 10:2	
Joel 3:3	

2. One of the problems faced by children in the Bible was the fact that they were taken away forcibly from their homes. Identify the circumstances in the OT which caused them to be in such circumstances. One is done for you.

References:	Child	Circumstance
Genesis 37: 12-36	Joseph	<i>Sold as a slave by his brothers to Egypt; lived in Egypt for 93 years.</i>
Exodus 2:8-10	Moses	
2 Kings 4:1-7	Widow whose sons were going to be sold into slavery	
2 Kings 5:1-3	Naaman's slave girl	
Daniel 1:3-7	Daniel and his 3 companions	

3. The following Scriptures describe children who were despised in the Bible because they were products of the sinful incestuous or illicit acts of adults. Can you identify them? As always, also examine the verses surrounding these specific verses to understand the context.

References:	Child	Incestuous/Illicit Relationships
Genesis 19:30-38	<i>Moab and Ben-Ammi</i>	Lot and two daughters
Genesis 38: 1-30		Tamar and her father-in-law, Judah
2 Samuel 12:15-23		David and Bathsheba
Hosea 1:2-9		Gomer and Hosea

4. Read all we know about Abishag in 1 Kings 1:2,3, 15; 2:17-22. It is very likely that she was a very young girl when she was brought in to sleep next to David to keep him warm. (!?) Have you ever thought of what young Abishag might have been thinking or how she was mistreated and “passed” around? We never hear a word from her – she was just a piece of property. How might you compare what happened to Abishag in your experiences today?

5. What does the Bible say concerning incestuous or illicit sexual relationships? Read the following additional Scriptures on this subject. Is the Bible silent regarding the offspring of such relationships? Defend your answers from Scripture.

- Leviticus 18:17; 20: 14

- Ezekiel 22:11

6. What are some of the consequences for those who abuse and exploit children or refuse to protect their rights? Read the following passages:

References:	Consequences for Child Abusers
Exodus 22:22-24	<i>God will hear the cry of the orphans and "be angry" and "will kill you with the sword."</i>
Proverbs 23:11	
Zechariah 7:11	
Malachi 3:5	

■ *Key Insights or Principles:*

■ *Reflection Questions:*

1. Discuss the effects of TV, violent movies, internet pornography and other aspects of media on violence, abuse, and exploitation of children and youth in your country. What can the church and families today do to counteract this influence?

2. What are the most common forms of child abuse or exploitation in your community or country? Who are the abusers? Who are the groups who help rescue and restore the children?

3. What are some of the cultural practices of your country that may contribute to child abuse? Who are the perpetrators of this kind of abuse? How can this type of child abuse be prevented?

4. Recall Isaiah 58:7 which mentions “the hungry”, the “poor wanderer” and the “naked”. In what ways might the children who are victims of child abuse and exploitation in the world today similar to those described by Isaiah long ago? Why?

5. Think of how traumatizing it must have been for young Herodias to have to dance before the king, and then be used by her mother to ask for the head of John the Baptist. Further, she was told to carry it on a tray to the king! (Mt. 14:3,6; Mk 6:17,19). What might be the comparable traumatic experiences for young children today?

6. Another very different type of “abuse” and exploitation can be what has been called the instrumentalization of children. You have probably seen children imitating the roles of adult preachers, fiery evangelists, prophets, missionaries and the like. What do you think of this practice? What are the positives and negatives/dangers? Discuss how and why this can be another form of exploitation of children.

■ Case Study:

Consider the story of Dinah in Genesis 34. Note especially verses 1 – 12 and verse 30 and 31. (Background of story is that Dinah was the only daughter of the household of Jacob, the youngest child of Leah. We do know that she went “out” to the city which placed her in a vulnerable position for the events that followed in the passage.) Read the passage to suggest responses to the following questions:

- Based on her birth order and what you know about her father Jacob’s time in Padan Aram with his uncle Laban, how old might Dinah have been when she went to visit “the daughters of the land”? (Use a Hebrew dictionary to discover the meaning of the words that are translated “women,” “girl,” etc.) If you agree that she may have been a girl of only 10-12 years of age (or less), how does that affect your interpretation of and feelings about the story?
- How might the fact that Dinah was a daughter born *to Leah* have affected Jacob’s care and protection of his only daughter?
- Do Dinah’s actions invite the consequences that occurred to her as a result of “going out?”
- Note as many instances as you can of how adults failed to protect this vulnerable girl.
- Note the absence of anything said by or to the girl. (She did not have a voice in her own tragedy. She is basically a piece of property.)
- Based upon Jacob’s response and “silence”, what do you think incensed Jacob the most? His sons’ response? His relationship of trading with the Canaanites? His defiled daughter? His own personal safety?
- What concerns you the most in this terrible story? Is it the rape of Dinah? Jacob’s failure to protect Dinah? The sons’ deceit as described in vs. 13-17? Or, the brothers’ revenge as described in vs. 25-29?
- Discuss how this reminds you of girls who are being trafficked today.

■ *Action Plan:*

Would people in your church recognize the symptoms exhibited by a child who was being abused in the home? What training could/should be provided to equip the Church to recognize and respond when such cases are present? What procedures does your organization or church have in place to help prevent, identify, and report possible child abuse? Make a preliminary plan to strategize and mobilize to prevent child abuse and exploitation in your context.

STUDY 4: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)

■ Introduction

DO CHILDREN HAVE rights? Aren't all human rights God-given? Is it biblical for humankind to create rights for children through the passing of laws and documents?

Amongst all the initiatives and documents promoting the welfare of children by NGO's and governments, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is "the most powerful legal instrument for the recognition and protection of children's human rights."¹ Its origins go back to a visionary Christian named Eglantyne Jebb in the early 1900's. The CRC was developed from the Jebb draft on the "Rights of the Child." It now has 54 articles and is ratified by all nations except two, (which two are they?) It can be categorized into 4 groupings of rights, viz., survival, protection, development, and participation.²

Despite the CRC being widely used today, there were some concerns raised by Christians concerning the "rights" of a child. For example, Article 3 is perceived by some to transfer God-given rights and responsibilities of the child to the State. Another concern is the secular rights' language created by laws which may contradict the biblically based God-given rights. John Collier has a much more pro-

active approach to this child rights' issue. He says: ³

If we have not got anything better, then we can still as Christians affirm much in the CRC. Just because it does not come from a Christian source, does not mean we must despise it. The challenge to the church is to maintain Christian input.

In this study, we shall take a closer look at three representative major provisions from the CRC and view them through the lens of Scripture. Most of the discussions here were taken from pages 193 – 199 of *Child, Church and Mission, Revised Edition*. As you study each of these Articles, you will discover that they merely affirm what God commanded the Church to do as we have already learned throughout this Workbook. But watch closely to see how they might be misinterpreted, or misused.

For Further Exploration:

Dan Brewster, *Child, Church and Mission, Revised Edition*, pp. 193-199.

John Collier and Associates, *Toddling to the Kingdom* (Chapter 10), pp. 57-59.

Douglas McConnell, *Understanding God's Heart for Children*, pp. 23-31.

www.unicef.org/crc--Text of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Accessed April 29, 2008).

¹ Dan Brewster, *Child, Church and Mission*, p.194.

² John Collier, *Toddling to the Kingdom*, p.58.

³ Ibid., pp.77-78.

■ What Does the Bible Say?

- Article 3 of the CRC on Best Interest of the Child says: *“All actions concerning the child shall take full account of his or her best interests. The State shall provide the child with adequate care when parents or others charged with that responsibility, fail to do so.”*

Read the following biblical commands from God. Determine and discuss how Article 3 of the CRC is supportive or contradictory of these commands. Write briefly your observed biblical implications for the Church.

References:	God's Commands	Supportive or Contradictory?	Biblical Implications for Church
Numbers 27:7			
Deuteronomy 10:18			
Deuteronomy 26:12			
Deuteronomy 27:19			

- Article 14 of the CRC on Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion states: *“The State shall respect the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance.”*

Read the following Scriptures. Determine and discuss how Article 14 of the CRC is supportive or contradictory of these Scriptures. Write briefly your observed biblical implications for the Church.

References:	God's Commands	Supportive or Contradictory?	Biblical Implications for the Church
Deuteronomy 6:6-7			
Proverbs 22:6			

- Article 19 of the CRC on Protection from Abuse and Neglect states: *“The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child.”*

Read the following Scriptures. Determine and discuss how Article 19 of the CRC is supportive or contradictory of these Scriptures. Write briefly your observed biblical implications for the Church.

References:	God's Commands	Supportive or Contradictory?	Biblical Implications for the Church
Genesis 21:17 Psalm 82:3,4			
Isaiah 30: 20-21			
Isaiah 58:10			
James 1:27			

4. After having an in-depth look at Articles 3, 14, and 19 of the CRC; discuss in a broader manner how the provisions of the child rights in the CRC are reflective of God's view on Rights and write briefly the biblical implications for the Church based upon these additional verses.

References:	God's View on Rights	Biblical Implications for the Church
Proverbs 31:8-9		
Luke 20: 46-47		

5. Some Christians argue that Rights are God-given and cannot be given or created by people or laws. Others suggest that the emphasis of the CRC should be more about **responsibilities and obligations** because rights are self-centred. Do you agree or disagree with these statements? Why? Discuss.

6. Based upon the above argument, discuss and analyze how the rights in the CRC are supportive or contradictory to God-given rights, which reflect God's purposes, in the following Scriptures. Once again, write briefly the biblical implications for the Church as you reflect upon these passages:

References:	Purpose of God-Given Rights	Supportive or Contradictory?	Biblical Implications for the Church
Psalms 33:5			
Proverbs 29:7			
Isaiah 1:17			
Zechariah 7:9,10			

■ *Key Insights or Principles:*

■ *Reflection Questions:*

1. Does Article 14 of the CRC promote Western values (or tend to destroy traditional values) in your culture?

2. How could this Article be used to challenge parental authority in your culture, if applicable? In what other ways might this Article be abused?

3. Based upon what you learned in studying the biblical teachings about parental discipline/behaviour management of children, compare the provision of Article 19 with the following Scriptures studied previously: How does the Article compare and contrast to these Scriptures and others? Discuss.

- Proverbs 13:24; 29:17

- Hebrews 12:6

Is this Article 19 a benefit or a hindrance, in your opinion, to protecting children in your culture? Why or why not?

4. Some people argue that the whole discussion of “rights of a child” may not be culturally appropriate (especially in Asia). Discuss why this is or is not the case, and give specific illustrations from your context/culture.

5. Look at some of these other provisions of the CRC. Discuss how they might be very helpful in protecting and providing for children, and encouraging their participation:

- Article 2: Every child has the right to a life free from discrimination.
 - In what ways can the Christian community advocate for non-discrimination in your context? Discuss how schools and churches can contradict discrimination in their contexts.

- Article 6: Children have the right to survive and develop to the fullest.
 - How is it that the “right to survive and specifically develop to the fullest” can be so different across cultures and socio-economic borders? Can the CRC provide positive feedback and encouragement and enforcement when the ideas of surviving and developing to the fullest can be so different?

- Article 13: Children have the right to express themselves.
 - What does this article mean to you specifically in your context? In what ways should children express themselves? Is it ever right for a child not to express herself/himself? Discuss.

Discuss some of the CRC Articles as to how they could be misused or misappropriated in your country or culture:

6. Despite the almost global ratification of the CRC, why are so many governments failing so badly in protecting children at risk? Discuss and list your opinions below.

7. What are the factors in your culture that encourage or hinder a child from exercising his or her God-given rights?

8. Have you seen children “flaunting” their rights, or behaving with an attitude of “entitlement” in opposition to parental authority? Discuss. How do you think a child’s rights should be exercised in your culture?

■ *Action Plan:*

Based upon all the Scriptures you have studied in this specific study and others, draft a brief “Christian Rights of the Child” with at least 5 or more provisions. Support with Scripture references.

THE CHILDREN & FAMILIES IN THE BIBLE SERIES

Book 5: Child Protection

This **Study Series** will enable you to explore many aspects of ministry to children, including ways to teach them, parental responsibilities, and theological issues related to children. Each Study introduces you to statements in the Scriptures about children, gives you key insights on the topic of that chapter, and asks you “reflection questions” that encourage you to think of the implications of the issues in that lesson.

May you be blessed as you study about and minister to children, all of whom are “precious in His sight.”

From the Foreword to the Series by Dr Roy B. Zuck

Each of these booklets contains four studies on a specific theme with a variety of Bible verses or reflections about children. The studies are structured as follows:

- **Topic Overview:** A brief introduction to the topic presents real life case studies or scenarios as a backdrop to the Scriptures and reflections of the study.
- **What Does the Bible Say?** Here you will be asked to go to specific Bible passages to explore what the Bible says about children and understand more of God’s heart for them.
- **Key Insights or Principles:** For those Bible passages, you may find new insights or key learning related to the theme.
- **Reflection Questions:** This section asks you to apply the key biblical principles to your **personal life**, the **culture** in which you live, and the **context** of your society and circumstances in your own country.

