

# UZIMA

## THE GIFT OF AN HIV TEST



### WHAT IS HIV?

*HIV STANDS FOR HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS. IT'S A VIRUS THAT DESTROYS INFECTION-FIGHTING IMMUNE CELLS AND CAN, IF LEFT UNTREATED, EVENTUALLY LEAD TO A DISEASE CALLED AIDS WHICH CAN KILL YOU.*

### YOU CAN.

**This is the story of something really awful, something hopeful, and something you can do about it.**

In 1981, doctors and scientists gave a name to a virus that was making thousands of people sick: HIV, or *human immunodeficiency virus*. HIV was a terrible virus, destroying a body's infection-fighting immune cells and eventually leading to a disease called AIDS. Since 1981, 35 million people have died of AIDS.

That's right. **35 million.** That's a big number and that probably makes you upset. It makes us upset too. It's something **really awful**. Just so you know, an HIV infection isn't something like a cold or the flu that you get by breathing germs in the air or touching someone else. The virus is only passed through direct contact with another person's bodily fluids. In fact, 90% of the children with HIV worldwide got it from their mother in pregnancy, childbirth, or by breastfeeding.

Ok, now here's the hopeful thing: There isn't a cure for HIV, but since 1981 scientists and doctors have spent a lot of time -- and governments around the world have spent a lot of money -- learning about how HIV is spread and making medicines to treat it. If a mother has HIV, she can now take a medicine that will greatly reduce the chance that she gives it to her child.

Unfortunately, people living in poor countries and remote areas have the least access to these medicines or even HIV tests.

So here's the **thing you can do**: World Renew supports people with HIV in 12 countries and one of the ways we do that is through **HIV testing**. The sooner someone finds out if they have HIV, the sooner they can get medical care and support and avoid contracting AIDS. *And an HIV test only costs \$3.*

**You can help stop the spread of HIV.** In fact, the rate of mother-to-child transmission has been dropping around the world because of the efforts of people like you and organizations like World Renew. **YOU can help.**



**THERE ARE OVER 2 MILLION CHILDREN LIVING WITH HIV AROUND THE WORLD TODAY.**

[worldrenew.net/gifts](http://worldrenew.net/gifts)

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## ONE STAR

**Can I make a difference in the face of overwhelming trouble?**

The numbers related to the HIV/AIDS epidemic can swamp you. 35 million people have died of AIDS since 1981. At the height of the pandemic, 13,000 children a day were infected. *13,000*. Today 37 million people live with HIV -- 84% of them living in Africa and Asia -- and over 2 million of them are children, most infected during their mother's pregnancy, their own birth, or through breastfeeding. **Where to begin? How can helping one person in the face of such numbers even matter?**

First, the Psalms tell us to cast our burdens on the Lord, to wait for Him and let our hearts take courage. The apostle Paul calls God "the source of hope," promising an *overflowing* of



confident hope if we trust in Him. **We should begin there.**

It is *after* we have taken our burdens to the Lord that we can turn our eyes toward suffering. And we can trust that our small attempts to help are worthy and worthwhile because the Psalmists say God not only "determines the number of stars; he gives to all of them their names." **God has named each star.** Will He not be pleased if we help one of His children?

American author Loren Eiseley wrote a short story called ***The Star Thrower*** in which he describes a boy and an old man on a beach covered in starfish after a storm. The boy walks toward the old man, stopping to pick up one starfish after another and toss it back into the waves. The old man points out that there are far more starfish than the boy could ever throw, saying "You can't make a very big difference!" to which the boy replies, picking up another starfish and hurling it into the sea, "I made a difference to *that* one!"

Scientists and doctors and government officials and organizations like World Renew have picked up a lot of starfish in the HIV crisis over the last 37 years. Research and investment have led to treatments that are saving lives, **including ones that can prevent mother-to-child transmission.** The first step in gaining access to that treatment and halting the spread of this tragic epidemic is a \$3 HIV test. It's recipient is like a starfish on the beach, a named and precious star in the heavenly body of Christ's kingdom, worthwhile and worthy, **beloved.**

## MORE...

**Enhance your lesson with a video or book.**

Young children probably aren't ready for information about HIV beyond the fact that it's a bad virus that makes lots of people sick. But their tender hearts can definitely feel empathy for other children around the world. There are TONS of great **books about kids around the world** that can open our North American children's eyes to the lives of children unlike (and just the same) as them. ***Children Around The World*** by Donata Montanari is a fun choice.

## LESS THAN A LATTE...

**An HIV test costs only \$3 -- less than a latte! Fundraising at this price lets kids accomplish a LOT.**

Even small children can understand what \$3 is worth to them (a hot dog at the ballpark, a comic book, a bag of candy). Have your little fundraisers **commit to donating \$3 by giving that thing up one time** (or more). If they write down their pledge on a cut-out heart, you can hang those prominently in school -- a great way for growing the campaign to an entire church or school.

Visual cues (like cut-out hearts on a wall) help build momentum for fundraising. **Collecting money in baby bottles or putting pacifiers in the collection plates** before they're passed will prompt giving hearts.

For high school students or youth groups, **screening a movie** like *The Lazarus Effect* from HBO (available on YouTube) can be educational -- and selling refreshments an added fundraising-bonus.

**For more ideas, visit [www.worldrenew.net/kidsfundraisingideas](http://www.worldrenew.net/kidsfundraisingideas)**



Older children may be ready for something more. With their increased ability to hear complicated stories and their budding hearts for justice, screening a 32-minute movie like ***The Lazarus Effect*** (from HBO available on YouTube -- don't confuse it with the horror film of the same title!) might be just the thing.

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