

Gladys Aylward

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Part 5



Do you remember how many children Gladys had taken in as part of her family? (*Allow response.*) She had 40. Then, in 1938, World War II came to the village of Yangcheng. Have you ever heard of World War II? (*Allow response.*) During this war, Japan fought against China and sent airplanes to drop bombs on Chinese villages. Gladys was at the inn with her family when bombs began to fall on her village. When the bombing was over, the town was in ruins. Even the inn was hit. And Gladys was knocked unconscious.

When she awoke, she slowly pulled herself up. As soon as she could think clearly, Gladys ran everywhere with her little first aid bag—mostly bandages and a bottle of medicine that helps cuts and bruises. Hundreds of people were hurt or dead. It made her sad and it made her think about all the children she had with her. She thought, *The children are living in a war zone. Dear God, what do I do?!*

Because of the war, and the many adults who had died in the villages near Gladys, more and more orphan children came to live with her in the damaged inn. Soon Gladys had 100 children!

The Mandarin was a good leader of the villages and wanted to help his people. He had grown to respect Gladys and helped her plan an escape with all the children. They decided Gladys and the children would walk across the mountains to a faraway city.

Before they left, the Mandarin told Gladys that he had chosen to believe in Jesus and follow Him. What great news! She and the Mandarin prayed together, praising God for what He had done and asking for Him to be with Gladys and the children on the long journey.

They packed all the food they could carry and hurried off into the wild country of the mountains. They didn't have any cars or horses—they had to walk the whole way! And many of the children were still very little. Each child had a piece of blanket, a scrap of towel, a bowl, and chopsticks. The teenage boys carried food supplies. At first, the children laughed, skipped, sang songs, and talked about what their new home might be like.

But by the third day, the children were tired and hungry. They began to cry and complain. Some of their feet were cut and bleeding, and they were short of food and water. They even licked dew from rocks for a drink.

They came to a big river, but there was no bridge to cross. Gladys was discouraged and didn't know what to do. As they sat by the river's edge, one of the girls said, "It's like Moses crossing the Red Sea!"

Gladys said, "I'm not Moses and this isn't the Red Sea." But the girl responded, "But it's the same God." Gladys needed to be reminded that God was with them.

Would Gladys and the children find a way across the river? Would they ever make it to safety? Come back next time to find out how God continued to work in the life of Gladys Aylward.

