

Child soldiers

Role-play cards (page 1 of 2)

www.soschildren.org

Card 1: After hearing rumours of the LRA approaching for several weeks now, they are suddenly in your village. They go through house by house, killing some, and taking others with them. Your father is trying to hide you and your older brother in a wardrobe when they enter your house. It doesn't take them long to find you. They pull you out, and place you on the bed. Your brother is 17, and they ask him if he is ready to sign up to join the army. He says no. They shoot him in the head. Then they ask if you're ready to sign. Your father is weeping quietly and nods at you. **What do you do?**

A: You slowly shake your head and refuse to sign.
Take card 2

B: You sign the document they put in front of you with shaking hands.
Take card 3

Card 3: The soldier in front of you carefully folds the contract, and puts it in his pocket. You haven't read it, but it states that you have just signed up to the army for life, and that if you break the contract, you and your family will be punished with death. Without giving you time to collect your belongings or say goodbye to your parents, the soldier pulls you out the door. The last thing you see is your mother crouching over your dead brother's body. The soldier points his gun at you while making sure you get on a truck, where you see some of your friends already sitting. They all have tears streaming down their faces. The truck starts moving, and takes you out of the village, and away through narrow country roads. The journey takes 12 hours, but you are unable to sleep. Every time you close your eyes you see your dead brother's body in front of you. When you arrive at the army base, you are pulled off the truck, and led into a large building. You are hungry, but nobody is offering you any food. You are told to sleep on the floor. **What do you do?**

A: You wait until all is quiet, and most of the other children are sleeping. The man who is guarding you keeps walking round and round the building. When he is furthest away from you, you take the opportunity to run out one of the back doors. **Take card 4**

B: You try to get some sleep, thinking that it's best to be alert in the morning, and that if you behave well and are rested, you might get the chance to escape. **Take card 5**

Card 2: The soldier walks up to you, puts his gun against your head and fires.

The End

Card 4: The forest is thick and it is very dark. The man who is guarding you heard you running across the floor before you even made it out the door. He is chasing you now, and he knows the forest better than you do. You keep waiting for the bullet, but it doesn't come. Instead, you suddenly feel his hands grabbing hold of your shirt and how it rips when he pulls you to the ground. Without a word he lifts you up and takes you back to the camp. When he gets there, he chains you to a tree in the courtyard and leaves you there, while he goes to speak to another officer. He comes back with the other officer, who tells you that because of what you've just done, your mother will be killed in the morning. **Take card 5**

Child soldiers (cont.)

Role-play cards (page 2 of 2)

www.soschildren.org

Card 5: In the morning, all of you are taken out onto the courtyard. You now recognise several of your friends in the harsh morning light, and by just seeing their faces, you can guess that their families were visited in a similar way to yours. **What do you do?**

A: You need the support of your friends, and walk up to one of them, asking how he is, and if you can think of a way of escaping together. As you are talking, one of your friends makes a joke to make you all smile in the middle of the misery. An officer notices that you're smiling, and lines up your friends in front of you. He hands you a gun, and tells you that you have to shoot one of them, otherwise he will shoot you. **Take card 6**

B: You pretend to not recognize any of your school friends – you are too exhausted and upset to want to hear anything about what they've just been through. You don't speak to anyone as you are sent in to your first fire arms practice session. While you are there, some of the adult soldiers suddenly start using the younger children as targets. You are forced to shoot your father's friend's son. You know your father will never forgive you for this, and abandon all hope of ever returning home. **Take card 7**

Card 7: Over the next months, you think less and less of what used to be your family and home. It is helped by the drugs and alcohol the soldiers hand to you when you've performed well in practice. You find it makes it easier to shoot people if you are intoxicated. Slowly, you get used to life in the army. You never see your family again. **The End**

Card 6: What do you do?

A: You close your eyes and shoot. **Take card 7**

B: You refuse. **Take card 8**

Card 8: The soldier hands his gun over to one of your friends, who is only 10 years old, and tells him to shoot you. He does. **The End**