Welcome to Spotlight. I'm Joshua Leo. And I'm Liz Waid. Spotlight uses a special English method of broadcasting. It is easier for people to understand, no matter where in the world they live. What things should parents consider when starting a family? Many people immediately think about the money they need to start a family. Having a baby means getting more food and buying supplies the baby might need. It can also mean losing money if a parent cannot work for a short time after the baby is born. Other people might think about the work required to have a baby. Babies require feeding often. They often wake up in the middle of the night. This can limit a person's sleep. Many people think about these kinds of things when starting a family. But, would you consider the result or influence of a baby on the environment? Would you choose not to have a child if you knew it would negatively affect the environment? Some people are making exactly that choice. They are choosing to stop having children to protect the environment. Today on Spotlight we look at a group that encourages people to "Stop at Two." That is, the group encourages people to have no more than two children. They say this is the best chance for keeping our environment healthy for future generations. The Optimum Population Trust, or OPT, is a group concerned with how population growth affects the environment. The OPT believes the human population is growing too fast for the Earth to support it. If the population gets too big the Earth will run out of resources for people to live on. The OPT works mainly in the United Kingdom. But they believe their ideas are important for people everywhere. Currently, the world's population is over 6.8 billion. But by the year 2050, that number may be closer to 9.1 billion! Many experts are concerned that the earth's resources will not be able to serve so many people. A growing population affects the environment in many ways. For example, every person around the world creates waste. But more people create more waste. They use more natural resources. They expel more carbon dioxide and other harmful gases into the environment. Jonathon Porritt supports the OPT. He explains that each extra person in the United Kingdom alone produces an extra eleven tons of carbon dioxide every year. Add this to an increasing fertility rate. The OPT expects the population of the UK to increase by 16 million in about 50 years. However, if UK women would stop after having two children, that number could change. The population could grow by only 9 million instead. Many people around the world are already concerned with their influence on the environment. People reuse things. They try to reduce the waste they produce. Or they work to save resources in other ways. But are they willing to change their plans for a family because of their concerns? Mr. Porritt says: "People should connect their concerns about the natural environment with their decisions as possible parents. Every new human being is increasing the load on this planet." People cannot completely stop having children. This would cause the human population to decrease and finally die out. Also, people want to have children. But people can limit the size of their family. So, the OPT encourages people to stop after having two children. This way, people can still have children and do a good thing for the environment. The OPT has come up with a plan to encourage people to stop after having two children. They call it the "Stop at Two Pledge." The Pledge is a promise to try not to have more than two children. People can visit the OPT's website to sign the pledge. They then depend on that person to have two or less children. The Pledge says "Having a smaller family - just one or two children instead of three or more - helps to reverse, or slow down, population growth. And by reversing population growth, we would be taking another green step towards environmental survival for all." But there are people who disagree with the OPT. They say that having more children does not always mean much more waste. In fact, having more children can mean that a family produces less waste, when it is divided by each person. Rosie Whitehouse lives in the UK. She has five children. She says: "Just because you have five children it does not mean you have five times the amount of plastic play toys. You just have to say ‘no more'." Other people say having a large family means having a large support group. More children can take care of older or sick parents. Or they can support each other if something bad happens. The BBC news group wrote a story about the OPT's Stop at Two Pledge. They invited readers to share their opinions. One person wrote: "Is having more than two children selfish? No. Environmental extremists are selfish for telling the rest of the world what it may or may not do!" Another commenter wrote: "The environment is one of the reasons we have decided not to have any children. We would not want any child of ours to live in the sad future that is coming. The world cannot support the people it has already got. Having lots of children shows a lack of thought and care, in my opinion." And a third commenter, named Linden suggested another answer to the problem. "I would agree it is selfish and not responsible to have more than two children. It is sad that the environment does not impact more of our decisions. It makes me very sad that these people who decide they need a large family do not seem to consider adoption. There are many children already in this world who would gain a lot from a loving home. Surely this is a far better way to have a large family?" Having children is a personal decision. People must decide for themselves how many children they want to have. The OPT is very clear that they do not want to tell anyone what they must do - only what they can do. What do you think about this issue? Should people have only one or two children? Or do you think there are good reasons for having more children? Should the effect on the environment influence a person's family planning decisions? Will it, or has it, influenced your decisions? Add your opinion about the Stop at Two Pledge. Share your opinions on the script page for this program on our website. The writer and producer of this program was Liz Waid. All quotes were adapted for this program and voiced by Spotlight. Computer users can hear more Spotlight programs on our website at www.radioenglish.net. This program is called "The Promise to Stop at Two." We hope you can join us again for the next Spotlight program. Goodbye!