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HELP US, AS THE BODY OF CHRIST, UNDERSTAND HOW OUR EXPERIENCES, PERSONALITIES, AND GIFTS CAN BE USED TO FILL KEY ROLES IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD. LORD, MAY WE...

- collaborate together with other churches to care for children before, during, and beyond foster care and/or adoption.
- seek Biblical wisdom regarding children who need families and the families who welcome them into their homes.
- choose or maintain our specific focus to care for vulnerable children based on the unique mission and gifting of our congregation.

Romans 12:4–8 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

James 1:27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.
PREVENTION

MAY WE AS BELIEVERS ENTER INTO A STORY OF REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION. WHETHER COMING ALONGSIDE A FAMILY SO THAT A CHILD CAN AVOID ENTERING FOSTER CARE, OR SUPPORTING A FAMILY IN THE MIDST OF RESTORATION. AS CHRISTIANS, WE CAN PLAY A PART IN BREAKING DESTRUCTIVE CYCLES, OFFERING MERCY, AND RESTORING HOPE. WE HAVE CHRIST AS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THIS HAS BEEN DONE IN OUR OWN LIVES. LORD, MAY WE...

- help families to seek repentance, healing, and restoration that brings life-giving change into their homes.
- help families to have the emotional, physical, spiritual, financial, and other resources needed to provide safe and loving homes for their children.
- establish the Church as a means of mercy and grace as we walk alongside families before, during and beyond foster care.

1 Thessalonians 2:17 But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face.

Romans 11:30–31 For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy.

1 Peter 2:10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.
MAY WE CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CARETAKERS SUCH AS FOSTER PARENTS, RESPITE CARE PROVIDERS, TEACHERS, PASTORS, AND EXTENDED (KINSHIP) FAMILIES TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS AMONG EACH OTHER TO BETTER NURTURE AND PROTECT CHILDREN AND ASSURE THEM THAT THEY ARE SAFE. LORD, MAY WE...

provide caretakers with rest and renewal so that they have the capacity to fully engage with children.

be aware of the unique needs of foster and adopted children and help caretakers identify the tools and knowledge needed to respond to those needs.

foster relationships and community to create the best possible outcomes for the children in care.

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
MAY WE AS THE CHURCH RAISE AWARENESS OF THE FACT THAT WE CAN EACH PLAY A PART IN ENHANCING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE. LORD, MAY WE...

help foster children in our community experience a feeling of belonging in foster families, church communities, and through friendships.

help foster parents experience strength and support as they invite children into their families.

answer the call to care for the precious lives that matter most to the One who created them.

Colossians 4:2-3 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison.

Matthew 18:5 And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

Psalm 54:4 Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me.
VULNERABLE TEENS

MAY WE RECOGNIZE THAT TEENS WHO NEED HOMES HAVE UNIQUE NEEDS AND CHALLENGES THAT INCLUDE FEWER HOMES AVAILABLE TO THEM AND COMPLICATIONS OF “AGING” OUT OF THE SYSTEM. WITHOUT INTERVENTION FROM CARING PEOPLE, MANY OF THESE TEENS WILL FACE BLEAK FUTURES. LORD, MAY WE...

pray that vulnerable teens will find friends and encounter compassionate and encouraging teachers in school.

recruit mentors to commit to being a consistent source of positive influence and help teens see what they can become as an adult.

ensure that every youth that ages out of the foster care system has the skills necessary to survive and thrive as an adult.

Isaiah 1:17 Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

Psalm 5:11 But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.
DEFENDERS OF THE FATHERLESS

MAY WE SUPPORT THE LAWYERS, JUDGES, LAW ENFORCEMENT, CASE MANAGERS, AND CASA WORKERS WHO ARE ACTIVELY DEFENDING VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN THEIR ROLES AND ARE REPEATEDLY FACED WITH MANY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES AND DECISIONS THAT DETERMINE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN. LORD, MAY WE...

- ask for a hedge of protection over workers who come face to face with difficult situations. Protect their emotional well-being to avoid burnout.
- support those who encounter children in their work to be well-equipped as they engage in their roles as defenders of the weak.
- encourage workers to seek Biblical wisdom when defending children and interacting with families.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

Psalm 82:3 Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.

Isaiah 1:17 Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.
LET US BE REMINDED THAT WE ARE ALL BROKEN PEOPLE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD WITH INHERENT VALUE AND WORTH. LORD, MAY WE...

help biological families to have the strength they need to face their circumstances and always keep the best interests of their children in mind.

consider the relationships between biological families foster parents, and the foster care system; may the biological families feel heard and may others extend compassion.

as a church, learn how to support biological families. May we equip and support them as they prepare for reunification with their children.

1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is made complete in us.

Psalm 116:5 The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.
MAY WE LIVE AS PEOPLE OF HOPE THAT GOD IS MAKING ALL THINGS NEW AND KNOWING THAT GOD LONGS FOR RESTORATION—BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HUMANKIND, IN OUR COMMUNITIES, AND IN OUR FAMILIES.

LORD, MAY WE...

help families to understand that they are loved by you, God, and that you long to have a relationship with them.

celebrate with those who are moving past their hurts, hang-ups and bad habits. May we see them through your eyes, as your children, holy and dearly loved.

as the Church play an active role in restoring families by providing tangible, emotional, and spiritual support.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Isaiah 55:1 Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.
VULNERABLE CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD

MAY WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ALL CHILDREN NEED AND DESERVE A SAFE AND LOVING HOME AND RECOGNIZE THE REALITY IS THAT THERE ARE MORE CHILDREN WHO NEED FAMILIES THAN PEOPLE OPENING THEIR HOMES. LORD, MAY WE...

advocate for the process of international adoption to be ethical and child-centered.

strive for families to receive help with barriers such as government policies and high financial costs.

make it possible for children and families to receive post-adoption support.

Ephesians 1:5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.

Psalm 68:6a God sets the lonely in families.
LET US PRAY FOR ALL THOSE TOUCHED BY ADOPTION; THIS INCLUDES CHILDREN, BIRTH PARENTS, ADOPTIVE PARENTS, AND ADULT ADOPTEES. MAY WE ALSO REMEMBER OUR ADOPTION INTO GOD’S KINGDOM THROUGH CHRIST. LORD, MAY WE...

as the Church, advocate for children who are adopted to receive the trauma-informed care they need in loving and nurturing homes.

help adoptive families to seek and find community that invites the Lord to speak to the heart of their families.

be people that can walk alongside birth families without judgement.

Matthew 7:7–8 Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Psalm 107:41 But he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families like flocks.

Romans 15:5–7 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.
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Inspiration for this guide came from the Christian Alliance for Orphans Foster Care Prayer Guide