



The Gospel and Our Adoption

Text: Galatians 4:4-7

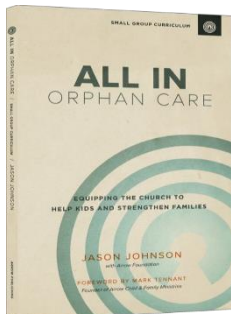
Jason Johnson from Christian Alliance for Orphans

1. As Jason talked about, we were not only saved from death through Jesus but also adopted into God's family. Read the following passages and list the "benefits" or "rights" we have as sons and daughters of God. What does that mean for our relationship with Him?
 - a. Galatians 4:4-7
 - b. Ephesians 2:4-10
 - c. Hebrews 4:16
 - d. Matthew 7:9-11
2. Read Deuteronomy 10:14-20.
 - a. According to the passage, whom does God defend?
 - b. What do these people have in common?
 - c. How can you make your heart more like God's with regard to orphans?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 6:20; Romans 5:8; John 15:13
 - a. How was our adoption costly to God?
 - b. How does the cost God paid to adopt us motivate us to love children who need a family?
4. Consider what your role could be in caring for the fatherless. Who in your community (within Grow Group or elsewhere) can you support and be a part of their foster or adoption story?

Prayer Points:

1. Praise God in advance for all He will do to bring glory to His name through Faithbridge and our community.
2. Ask the Lord to give you a personal sense of responsibility in praying and caring for the fatherless in the community and around the world.
3. Ask God to give guidance and provision to those pursuing foster care or adoption.
4. Pray for the leadership of Faithbridge as they shepherd those who are willing to serve the fatherless in our community and around the world.

Challenge: Set aside time to worship God. Thank Him for your story of adoption and that He is a loving Father. (Let Psalm 103 and Ephesians 2-3 guide and move you to worship God).

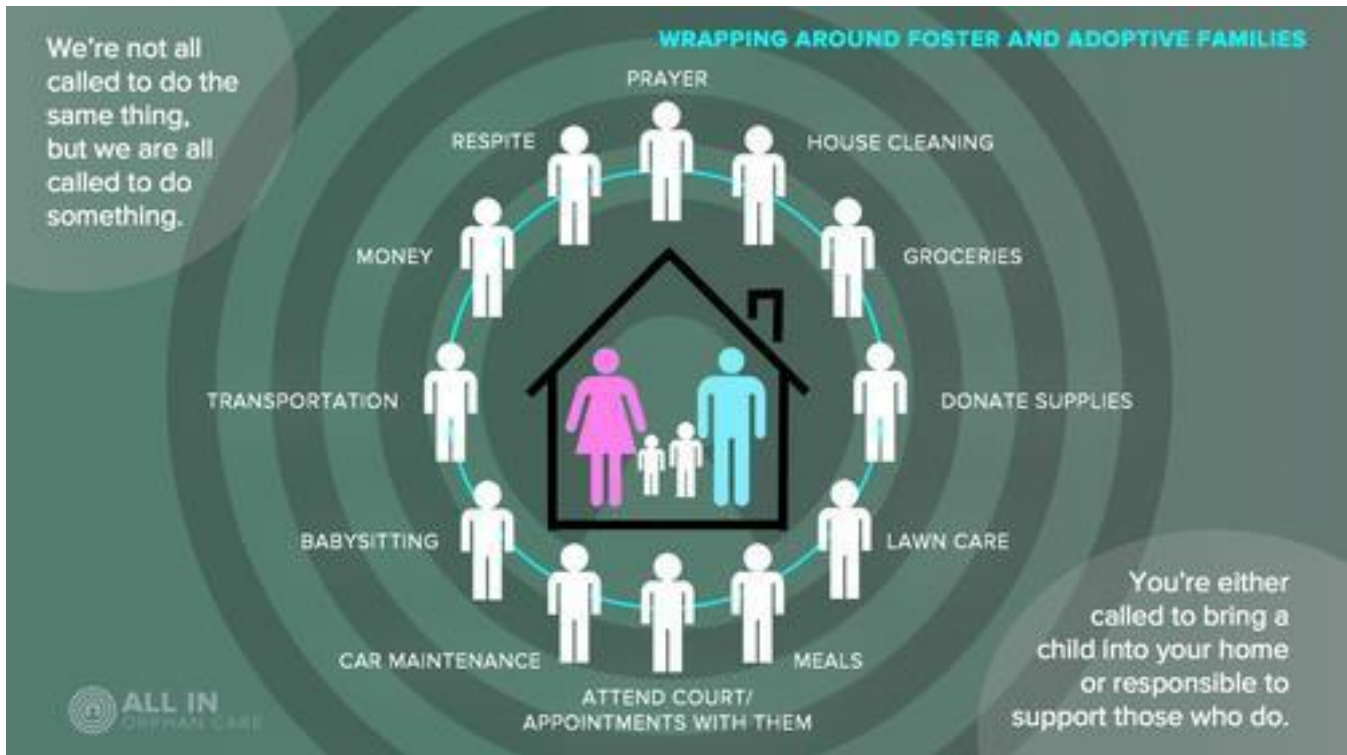


Read Study Deeper and discuss as a group. What might your next steps be? Consider using this resource as a future 6-week study.
<http://www.allinorphancares.com/curriculum/>

STUDY DEEPER

Ten Simple Ways Your Church (or small group) Can Serve Foster Families

by Jason Johnson



Foster care is a Church problem, not a state child welfare problem. It is a Gospel issue first, not a government issue. The Church has both the duty and privilege to speak on behalf of and stand for the sake of those who cannot speak and stand for themselves because that is exactly what God has done for us through Jesus. That's the Gospel.

Kids in foster care are not the government's kids, they are God's kids and therefore the Church's responsibility. In response, many families choose to submit to the laborious and often painstaking process of becoming licensed foster homes so that abused, neglected and marginalized kids can have a safe, nurturing and Jesus-centered place to find refuge and be loved. The work these families do is full of unbelievable difficulties and unspeakable joys. On a daily basis they carry both the weight of brokenness and the hope of redemption on their shoulders and in their hearts. They live, breath, cry and walk out the Gospel in the vulnerable lives of these young kids while exposing their marriages, their children and their community of friends to a warfare unlike any other. It is a calling - a hard, beautiful, worthwhile calling.

But not everyone is called to be a foster parent. As a matter of fact, most people in the Church won't ever bring a child into their home for any extended period of time. But this does not mean they, and the Church as a whole, don't have an essential and necessary role to play in the lives of these foster families and the children they are giving their lives over to.

While we are all not called to do the same thing, we are all certainly called to do something. Perhaps it could be said this way: You're either called to bring children into your home or you're called to serve and support those who do. These kids, after all, are God's kids and therefore all of our responsibilities within the Church. So here's ten simple, unique and diverse ways that a church can practically serve foster families within their body - and in so doing participate in their calling and responsibility to care for God's kids by serving and supporting the families who have brought them into their homes.

1) **Organize a Meal Calendar**

It's fairly standard practice for small groups, support groups, women's ministries, etc. to organize a meal calendar for a family when a new baby is born. Do the same for a foster family when a new child is brought to their home.

2) **Schedule Lawn Care**

Do whatever you can to relieve any amount of burden you can from the family - like organize a team of people in the church who rotate mowing foster families lawns while they have children in their homes.

3) **Certify Babysitters**

It is illegal to leave a foster child with a babysitter that is not (in most cases) CPR certified and background checked. This means most families struggle to find babysitters. Host CPR certification classes at the church. Have sitters ready for families!

4) **Conduct Dedication Ceremonies**

Most churches celebrate Parent/Child Dedication ceremonies during the year. Do the same for foster families. When they bring in a new placement pray for them in front of the church and have the body commit to support them!

5) **Host Date Night Childcare**

Once a quarter or every semester (or even once a month) the church can hire certified babysitters for a Friday or Saturday night and allow foster families from the church and community (hint: outreach!) the chance to go on a date!

6) **Deliver Care Packages**

Most placements occur with little to no notice. Often times within hours. Have things like diapers, gift cards, baby supplies, and other necessities ready to go to be dropped off to a family immediately after receiving a child.

7) **Stock a Supply Pantry**

In conjunction with the care packages develop a supply pantry that stores items like diapers, cribs, strollers, car seats, baby equipment, bikes and other things that families may immediately need upon a child placement.

8) **Build a Respite Care Team**

Certified babysitters can watch a child for a short period of time (generally less than 48 hours). When extended breaks are needed or travel plans require it, respite care providers are needed. These are extremely hard to find. Have a team at your church ready!

9) **Facilitate Support Groups**

Foster parents live in a unique world of state regulations, bio-parent visits and licensing guidelines as well as experience the emotions that come along with loving vulnerable children. Give them a place to connect, share experiences and encourage one another.

10) **Pray**

Pray for them. They are engaged in a spiritual battle over the lives of incredibly vulnerable children. They are standing on the frontlines and in the gaps for these kids while willingly placing themselves in the path of the Enemy's attacks.