

THE FOSTER CARE *Prayer Guide*

A woman with long brown hair is carrying a young child on her back. They are in a grassy field, and the scene is backlit by a bright sun, creating a warm, golden glow and lens flare effects. The woman is wearing a dark blue t-shirt, and the child is wearing a striped long-sleeved shirt.

24 Groups of People to
Pray for in Your Community

a tool created by  members working together

Suggested ways to use the *foster care prayer guide*:

Daily

Pray every weekday for a different group of people. You will be able to pray through this guide approximately once per month.

Weekly

Pray for one group of people per week. You'll get through the guide approximately twice per year.

As a Prayer Vigil

Gather with others in your church and community for an evening to pray for foster care in your community. Each May, Focus on the Family sponsors the National Foster Care Prayer Vigil. For more information about hosting a foster care prayer vigil in your community, visit [**FosterCarePrayerVigil.org**](http://FosterCarePrayerVigil.org)

Also, if you'd like to learn more about joining a group of others by phone for 15 minutes each week to pray for the foster care system in your state, visit [**CAFO.org/NFCII/Foster-Care-15**](http://CAFO.org/NFCII/Foster-Care-15)



Children in Foster Care

Pray that children in your community would know they are loved by God and understand that He desires to be in relationship with them.

Pray that children in foster care would experience a feeling of belonging in a foster family, a church community, or a group of friends within your community.

Pray that God would lead them as they work through hurt they have experienced in their past and in their present.

“As a kid, I mastered the art of getting kicked out of foster homes. I was scared. I was confused. I was hurt by the things happening to me and around me as a kid, so I acted out...For me, it felt I had no one to talk to about the scary, terrifying, heartbreaking things going on in my life, so I acted out.”

- Josh Shipp
Former Foster Youth



2 Biological Families

Pray that biological parents in your state would have the strength they need to face their circumstances and that they always keep the best interests of their children in mind.

Pray for the relationships between biological parents, foster parents, and the foster care system; that biological parents feel heard and that others are able to extend compassion.

Pray that churches in your community learn how to support biological families and how to equip them to prepare for reunification with their children.

“We started hearing their stories and we realized that none of these biological family members, none of these biological relatives set out to abuse their kids, but a lot of times these were people who had very difficult up-bringsings themselves. We discovered that they were broken people made in the image of God and therefore were worthy of love and dignity.”

-Johnston Moore
Foster and Adoptive Parent



3 Churches

Pray that your church will choose a specific way to care for children in foster care based on the strengths of those within your congregation.

Pray that other churches in your community will seek out Biblical wisdom about children who need families and how to best care for them.

Pray that churches in your area will come together to care for children in foster care in order to create movement within your community.

“It is in light of [the] gospel that 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...The Church is uniquely equipped with a variety of giftings, callings and passions to effectively eliminate the foster care crisis in our country.”

- Jason Johnson

Director
CAFO National Church Ministry Initiative



4 Foster Parents

Pray for endurance and strength for foster parents in your community as they invite children into their families.

Pray that your community will rise up and stand by these parents while encouraging and supporting their needs.

Pray for peace and understanding in every relationship -- with the children (biological and foster), the children's biological families, the social workers, and with their community.

“I mean look at us, we are not special. We are sinners, and we yell at the kids, and we fumble and we make mistakes, but you know what, God is a gracious God and forgives us and takes our hand and he says, ‘It’s okay. Tomorrow’s a new day.’”

- Irene Garcia

Foster Parent

5 Adoptive Parents



Pray that potential adoptive parents in your community listen to the Lord's direction as they pursue adoption of a particular child.

Pray that adoptive parents would seek Biblical wisdom and the advice of other adoptive parents as they walk with their children through healing.

Pray that communities and churches in your area would come around adoptive parents in supportive and encouraging ways.

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families...

Psalm 68:5-6a



6 Child Welfare Professionals

Pray that social workers would have the emotional support to care for their own families well in the midst of giving so much of themselves to the families in your community.

Pray that churches in your community would commit to care for and to support child welfare professionals.

Pray that social workers and administrators would fight discouragement and burnout by continuously seeking and finding joy, hope, and peace in Christ.

“Please let my footprint be light in the lives of those who I tread upon.”

- Scott

County Director
Child Welfare Office

7 Organizational and Church Ministry Leaders



Pray that the fruit of their hard work would serve as an inspiration to others in your community.

Pray that they are able to balance ministry life and family life by making the time for their families.

Pray that they would lead groups within your community to care for children in foster care with humility.

“Pray that God would protect me against feeling satisfied with our efforts as long as there are children still without parents and people who don’t know about the hope we have in Jesus.”

- Michele

Ministry Leader



8 Counselors and Therapists

Pray that counselors and therapists in your community would work hard to discover what is best to help children in foster care, foster parents, social workers, birth families, and other individuals involved in foster care.

Pray that counselors and therapists would make time to care for their own physical and emotional well-being.

Pray that therapists would listen to God's Word and His promises as they help others walk through hardship.

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

Galatians 6:2



Pray that teachers in local schools in your community would be aware of the unique needs children in foster care may have and that teachers would have the tools and knowledge required to respond to these needs.

Pray that teachers at your local schools are able to experience rest and renewal outside of the classroom, so they have the capacity to fully engage with students.

Pray that teachers, child welfare staff, and foster, adoptive, or birth parents would all make the effort to work together, so that children can excel in school.

“They need that loving foster mom, that social worker, that counselor, that teacher, that Sunday school leader to be there to nurture and protect. To reassure them that they’re safe.”

-Rod Marshall

Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes



Pray that lawyers and judges would seek justice and would see the case through the eyes of the children being impacted in foster care in their community.

Pray that they would take an active role in initiating repair of what is broken in families and in the foster care system.

Pray that they would seek out Biblical wisdom when defending children.

“Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.”

Psalm 82:3

10 Lawyers and Judges



Law Enforcement Officers

Pray that the law enforcement officers in your community would be well equipped to engage in their roles as protectors of the weak, including children who experience abuse or neglect.

Pray that officers in your community would have wisdom and empathy as they interact with children who come from hard places.

Pray for the safety and emotional well being of law enforcement officers as they come face to face with difficult decisions and experiences on a weekly basis in your community.

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority . . .”

- Timothy 2:1-2a



12 Kinship Caregivers

Pray that your church and your state would support kinship caregivers in your community well, whether they are informal, formal or voluntary caregivers.

Pray that these extended family members would have the emotional, spiritual, financial and other resources to provide a safe home for these children from within their family.

Pray that their relationships with the children they take in will flourish and bring security and hope into the children's lives.

“They don’t get resources, they’re not being vocal, they don’t have a lot of support. They’re just doing it because that’s their family.”

-Kim Phagan-Hansel

Author of The Kinship Parenting Toolbox



13 Researchers and Policy Analysts

Pray for researchers and policy analysts to understand how the data they are finding connects to policies and practices that can lead to transformation.

Pray for accuracy, patience, and pursuit of the truth in their research, writing, publications, presentations and advice.

Pray that their research and their policies would bring positive changes to the foster care system in your community and fulfill God's plans for children and families to flourish.

“Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding”

Proverbs 3:13



Pray that local journalists would report in such a way that those in foster care and their foster parents and biological parents will not feel that their stories have been violated, but that truth and justice have prevailed.

Pray that journalists would uncover lies, secrets and opportunities for change while revealing the truth.

Pray that journalists in your community would use their platform to bring justice within the foster system and help find families for kids.

“I am a journalist by trade, and while I have adoption stories and foster care stories and little connections here and there, nothing personally. It’s become a real personal conviction for me to help these kids and help these families, and provide them the information that helps them on their journey.”

- Kim Phagan-Hansel

Editor of Adoption Today Magazine and Fostering Families Today Magazine

14 Journalists



15 Classmates

Pray for the kids in foster care in your local schools that they would find friends and encounter compassionate teachers who will help them through tough transitions.

Pray that your local teachers would gain the wisdom and knowledge necessary to help students respond well to children in foster care.

Pray that classmates will have the courage to report evidence of suspected abuse or neglect.

“Whether it’s a child that’s going to be in your own child’s classroom or a young person that you stop at a crosswalk for, we are all here to play vital roles in each other’s lives.”

-T. Ortiz Walker Pettigrew

*Former Foster Youth and
Human Trafficking Advocate*



16 Adults Who Have Abused or Neglected Children

Pray that they will confess, repent and seek healing, reconciliation and forgiveness while coming to terms with the consequences of their actions.

Pray that they will be broken-hearted for those they have hurt, and seek reconciliation, in ways that are appropriate.

Pray that cycles of abuse will be broken when abusers reach out for help to the churches in your community to find healing, especially if there has been abuse in their own pasts.

“We understand the concept of redemption, we understand mercy. We’ve received it in so many ways. We should have an abundance to give back.”

-Shelly Radic

Project 1.27



17 Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs)

Pray that God would raise up people within your community to become CASA volunteers so that every child has someone to speak up for them in court.

Pray that CASA volunteers would be well equipped to support children in foster care and have the knowledge needed to speak up for them.

Pray that CASA volunteers would build meaningful and lasting relationships that will communicate love and worth to children in foster care.

“Court appointed special advocates -- they are appointed by the judge. Lay persons [who] don't have to have any particular degrees. They have to have a loving, caring, heart. They are the eyes and ears of the court. They speak for the child.”

-Judge Joyce Warren



18 Elected Officials

Pray that the President, legislators, governors, mayors and other elected officials in your community will use their power and influence to protect the weak and vulnerable.

Pray that elected leaders would be open to partnership with local churches and faith-based organizations to significantly impact kids in foster care.

Pray that local elected leaders would actively fight corruption, human trafficking, abuse, neglect, homelessness, poverty, hunger, oppression and discrimination.

“Having governors involved is huge. They can make sweeping changes very quickly that it would take years for the rest of us to make.”

-Janet Kelly

*Former Secretary
of the Commonwealth of Virginia*



19 Respite Care Providers

Pray that just as they provide rest and relief to foster and adoptive families; that they will also experience rest and relief in their own lives.

Pray that a large number of individuals and churches would actively seek to provide respite care for foster and adoptive families in your community.

Pray that their example of sacrifice and service would serve as an example to others that anyone can be involved in foster care in some capacity.

“They’re the ones who are overseeing the whole care community, and they are watching the foster family and encouraging the foster family to keep having date nights and keep tracking with your own birth children, your biological children, and doing the things that you did before foster care came into your world.”

- Sandra Stanley

North Point Church



Pray that God would raise up a team of advocates in every church in your community who are passionate about speaking up for children in foster care.

Pray that individuals who currently advocate in your community would feel connected to the children for whom they are advocating and encouraged to do all they can to speak up for children.

Pray that advocates would build lasting relationships with churches and groups in your community in order to inspire others to advocate.

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves ...”

Proverbs 31:8a



21 Siblings

Pray that siblings are able to remain together in safe and nurturing environments while in foster care within your community.

Pray that more families in your state will feel lead and prepared to adopt sibling groups.

Pray for the children of foster parents in your community that they would respond to the needs of the kids who come in and out of their home with compassion and understanding.

“My brothers came to us from foster care and then not long after, we also brought their sister, their biological sister into our family... For me as a child, this was very normal. This is just how our family was built. I never thought anything of it and I never thought I would make a profession of it... But then when I moved to Washington, DC and was working at an advocacy organization, God really started to stir my heart for kids in foster care, so I started to volunteer through our church.”

-Chelsea Geyer

DC127



22 Health Care Professionals

Pray that health care professionals at local hospitals would have the time and resources needed to holistically care for children in foster care.

Pray that God will reveal to doctors and nurses the specific needs of children in foster care, and that they will make wise decisions as they plan out care.

Pray that God would raise up more doctors and nurses in your area who are passionate about using their gifts to bring healing and hope to children in foster care.

“As a Mother-Baby nurse, my job is usually full of joy as parents experience new life with their infants. But, sometimes I care for infants who will enter foster care as soon as they leave the hospital. When I see those bundled babies alone in our nursery, my heart breaks because I know that their first few months of life will not be easy. So I hold them a little tighter, rock them to sleep, whisper words of love into their little ears, and then cry out to our God that He might protect them and bless them.”

-Sarah Rooker. RN

23 Mentors and Mentees

Pray that God would provide a mentor for every child in foster care in your county.

Pray that uncertainty, barriers, inexperience, and differences between mentors and mentees will not impede meaningful conversation and fruitful relationships.

Pray that mentors will be confident in their ability to communicate worth and love to their mentees.

“[Mentoring] just gives [children in foster care] a spark. But it’s more than that. It’s more than just an event. It’s being there consistently...it’s a whole other thing to pour into their lives and helping them, equipping them to be what they can be as an adult and a member of society that is all that God’s created them to be.”

-Christie Erwin

Project Zero



24 Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

Pray that every youth who ages out of the foster care system in your community would have the resources necessary to survive and to thrive as an adult living on their own.

Pray that youth would have a support system of adults in your community who will guide them through the process of aging out.

Pray that God would reveal ways for the people and churches in your community to tangibly support children who must age out of the foster care system.

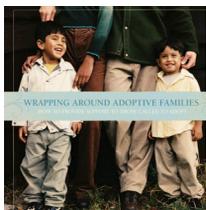
“As children age out of the US Foster System, the statistics are quite alarming ... We serve a God that is bigger than all those statistics. We serve a God that can turn all of those statistics around, but it requires the church to step in the gap on their behalf.”

- Scott Brown

CAFO Aging Out Initiative Coordinator

Additional Tools & Resources

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY RESOURCES:



Wrapping Around Adoptive Families makes it clear that struggling adoptive families need their church families to support them during times of trials. While the suggestions in this booklet may not apply to all situations, they represent a general “cry of the heart” of adoptive families who welcomed home an emotionally wounded or struggling child.



A Servant's Heart helps individuals and churches understand how to rightly care for the adoptive and foster families in their community. With support and care from those around them, adoptive families can truly thrive.



The Focus on the Family Store is committed to serving you and your family by making it easy to connect with valuable resources that relate directly to your own situation and stage of life. By purchasing from this dynamic new storefront, you are helping Focus on the Family's efforts to reach families in need.

store.focusonthefamily.com



Focus on the Family Clubhouse and Clubhouse Jr. magazines are for children from ages 3-12 and help children expand their Christian worldview through inspirational stories, games, crafts, projects and more.

ClubhouseMagazine.com

ClubhouseJr.com

800-A-FAMILY (232-6459)

The Family Help Center, which is made up of Relationship Services and Counseling Services, honors the mission of Focus on the Family by dedicating ourselves to caring for the diverse needs of the many constituents contacting us daily by providing timely, accurate, and personal responses that address each individual need or concern. We approach each call, letter, email, social media post, digital engagement or counseling consultation with the awesome knowledge that we are interacting with an individual crafted in the image of God.

CAFO NATIONAL FOSTER CARE INITIATIVE RESOURCES:



Foster Movement U is an ever-growing online collection of training tools all designed to help you and other key leaders in your community know how to build foster care movement where you live.

CAFO.org/FosterMovementU



Our weekly Foster Roster newsletter

is short and sweet and filled with practical articles, videos, blog posts and other tools for leaders like you. Sign up at CAFO.org/FosterMovement.



We are looking for leaders in every state who will pray together 15 minutes each week by phone for kids and families in foster care. Check our website to see if your state's prayer call has already launched. If not, be one of the leaders who make that happen! CAFO.org/FosterMovement



National H.E.L.P. Week for Child Welfare Professionals

We're asking churches around the country to H.E.L.P. (Honor, Encourage, Love, and Pray for) the child welfare professionals in their community. While National H.E.L.P. Week for Child Welfare Professionals takes place each May, we want to provide tools, ideas and resources you and your church can use year-round. To learn more, visit

CAFO.org/FosterMovement.



Farmer Herman & The Flooding Barn is a children's book about 344 people working together to solve a big, big, big problem. And it's illustrated by 344 kids, adoptive and foster parents, child welfare professionals, pastors, organizational leaders, recording artists, and authors who are all counting on the power of unity to bring hope to over 400,000 kids in foster care. The animals can't wait to meet you! Find out more at movethebarn.org



This CAFO National Foster Care Initiative resource
has been provided for you through a special collaboration with



Helping Families Thrive™

At Focus on the Family, we believe that every child deserves to know the love of a forever family and that every family deserves the chance to thrive. Because of this, we are endeavoring to raise awareness of and recruit adoptive families for waiting children and youth in foster care. To learn more, visit

ICareAboutOrphans.org

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