

IDEAS FOR YOUR CHURCH'S ORPHAN AND ADOPTION MINISTRY

So you've gathered a few individuals/families who are passionate about orphans and adoption and are interested in starting a ministry at your church. What's next?

- **STAFF PRESENTATION:** It is important that you present your vision and mission to your church staff, so they can better understand your God-given passions and join your efforts through prayer and action. Ask a knowledgeable pastor or lay person to present the Biblical foundation for adoption or use the DVD available through Family Life. Present your ideas, and leave staff with a packet of materials, including ministry brochures, statistic sheets, a book like "Fields of the Fatherless" by C. Thomas Davis, etc.
- **SUPPORT TO FAMILIES:** Start an e-mail list or web group, where prayer requests, adoption/foster care information and ministry-related information can be easily passed on. Start a mentor program where you can match experienced adoptive/foster families with those just starting or interested in the process. Provide meals to families who have recently adopted or are experiencing difficult times in their family.
- **SMALL GROUPS/SUPPORT GROUPS:** It is a wonderful idea for adoptive/foster families to come together and support each other. Be cautious not to become exclusive, but to branch out as a group to positively impact your church family and community by showing them the needs of children in your own community and around the world. Pray for these children each time you meet, and for Christian parents to make them part of their families.
- **CHURCH MEDIA:** Utilize already existing church media to get the word out about the need for foster/adoptive families. Articles in the church newsletter, church-wide e-mail announcements, bulletin announcements and inserts (some available for free from agencies and organizations), media presentations (including pictures of adopted/foster children or waiting children set to music like Steven Curtis Chapman's, "When Love Takes You In") can be very effective. Announce upcoming events, encourage people to stop at your informational table when it is available, and promote foster care and adoption (i.e. announcing foster care month and using related statistics to show the need in this area, etc.). Special times for these announcements/inserts may include National Adoption Awareness Month (November), Foster Care Month (May) and Sanctity of Human Life Sunday (third weekend in January).
- **POSTER CAMPAIGN:** Design or make posters with pictures of adoptive families in different situations, waiting foster children, statistics and Bible verses to highlight National Adoption Awareness Month (November) and promote adoption within your church.
- **INFORMATIONAL TABLE:** Occasionally have an informational table available before and after worship services with adoption, foster care and ministry information, and ministry members on hand to answer questions. Make it personal. Create resource sheets with agency references and mentors of experienced families from your ministry. "Affording adoption" information is always popular.

- **BULLETIN BOARD:** Request a permanent bulletin board in a visible area to display statistics, foster care and adoption information, interesting articles, pictures and profiles of waiting children, and adoptive/foster families from your church.
- **SERMON ON ADOPTION:** Ask your pastor or arrange for a guest speaker to speak about adoption and its Biblical foundation in a worship service. This is a great time to have an informational table provided before and after each service, a media presentation and possibly recognition of adoptive and foster families and/or adopted child dedications.
- **LIBRARY:** Donate adoption and foster care-related books to your church library. Set up a display for Adoption Awareness month (November), including books, brochures, etc.
- **SOCIAL EVENTS:** Provide occasional social events to promote community among those involved in your ministry and to give those outside of the ministry the opportunity to come and meet those interested in supporting orphans, foster care, and adoption.
- **PANEL DISCUSSION:** Plan an evening around a panel of varied adoptive/foster families, opening with a talk about the Biblical foundation for adoption. The panel can present their stories and answer questions related to foster care and adoption.
- **ADOPTION AGENCY SEMINARS:** Use your church as a place to provide families with opportunities to learn about reputable adoption agencies that share your vision.
- **ADOPTION WORKSHOP:** Host an adoption workshop through organizations such as Family Life's Hope for Orphans or Kingdom Kids.
- **LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS:** Present and provide opportunities for ministry and church members to care for orphans outside of foster care and adoption. Ideas can include mentor programs for local foster children, "adopting" an orphanage as a church, orphan sponsorship programs, short term mission trips, etc.
- **BRANCH OUT:** Connect with people in other churches that share your vision for orphan and adoption ministry. Form a network that can share resources, plan joint activities that can impact a larger audience, and support one another.
- **COMMUNITY FOCUS:** Set up an informational booth at community events, have a ministry float in your local parade featuring adopted/foster children, or use your own creative ideas!
- **ADOPTION AS A MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH:** Consider what it could mean for adoption to be taken out of the business world and into our churches!

FAMILIES OF PROMISE
 Orphan and Adoption Ministry
 A ministry of Kentwood Community Church
www.familiesofpromise.org

ORPHAN AND ADOPTION MINISTRY LINKS

STARTING A MINISTRY:

Christian Advocates for Adoption (CAFA): Exists to promote adoption within the community through Inspiration and Education.

www.cafadopt.org

Family Life's Hope for Orphans: Exists To effectively resource, encourage and equip the body of Christ to respond to God's instruction to care for the orphan.

www.familylife.com/hopefororphans

Kingdom Kids: Present large Christ-centered adoption conferences and help families raise finances for adoption by developing a support team committed to praying for and contributing to the family's adoption.

www.kingdomkidsadoption.org

ESTABLISHED CHURCH MINISTRIES:

Antioch Adoptions: Read their incredible story at www.antiochadoptions.org

Edgewood Baptist Church: New Beginning's Ministry www.ebcadoption.org

“His Heart for Orphans” Adoption Ministry: E-mail Aimee Poche at:
ephesians1five@cox.net

First Baptist Church in Brenham, Texas: This small-town church has successfully completed a summer hosting program that is resulting in the adoption of 40 kids from Kazakhstan. They also have an ongoing adoption support group. You can contact Jay and Suzanne Faske at faskefamily@stratosurf.net if you have questions.

Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky: This large, suburban church has a multi-faceted orphans ministry. To learn more about their orphan and adoption related programs, contact Kent Hatfield at hatfield@skp.com with questions.

Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota: This church has a heart particularly for domestic adoptions and finding godly homes for minority children. Bethlehem's two established funding programs (the Micah Fund and Lydia Fund) have helped numerous families with financial assistance. To find out more about establishing adoption assistance funds in your own church contact Maridel Sandberg at maridel@charter.net.

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