

Everyone Can Do Something!

BUILDING A FOUNDATIONAL CULTURE OF ORPHAN CARE IN YOUR CHURCH



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A FEW THINGS TO KNOW

Who is this resource for?

This resource is specifically written for pastors, staff and lay leaders that are actively starting and leading orphan care ministries in their churches.

Disclaimer:

There is no prescription for orphan care ministry that fits every church the same. The goal of this resource is to promote ideas, share principles and encourages leaders and teams to determine how some of what is shared best fits the context in which they are doing ministry.

Purpose:

The purpose of this resource is to help ministry leaders ask and answer questions like:

- *How do we move orphan care from the peripherals of our church to the foundational culture of who we are?*
- *How do we engage the broad demographic of people in our church?*
- *How do we best communicate and promote the ministry so that everyone in the church knows they can participate?*

Supplemental Resource:

This guide was developed as a supplemental resource to the “Everyone Can Do Something: Building a Foundational Culture of Orphan Care in Your Church” webinar facilitated in the fall of 2016. The full recording and presentation of the webinar can be found online at www.cafo.org/webinars.

A photograph of a small, white, wooden chapel with a steeple, surrounded by bare trees. The chapel has a sign above the entrance that reads "PALMER CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH". The image is in black and white with a dark, moody atmosphere.

Introduction:

BUILDING A CULTURE OF DISCIPLESHIP

At the core of our motivation to care for the orphaned and vulnerable is the heart of God demonstrated through the gospel on our behalf. It's the gospel - the story of Christ interjecting Himself into our brokenness and redeeming us out of it by bringing us into His forever family (Galatians 4:5-7) – which acts as the grid and guide to not only *why* we must care for the orphaned and vulnerable, but also *how* we must care.

THREE THINGS THE GOSPEL DOES IN ORPHAN CARE:

It compels us into it:

- 1 The work of Jesus on our behalf becomes the primary motivation as to why we would work on theirs – He interjected Himself into our story, so we too interject ourselves into theirs.

It sustains us in the midst of it:

- 2 When the work of orphan care gets especially difficult, and we're left asking "why are we doing this?," the gospel reminds us that the work is worth it - it gives meaning to the struggle and context to the difficulty.

It is put on display through it:

- 3 Scripture is clear that caring for the orphaned and vulnerable is one of the purest and most undefiled demonstrations of the gospel the world will ever see (James 1:27). The echoes of the gospel in orphan care are beautiful and vivid.

We cannot neglect the gospel as the source and the sustenance of our orphan care ministry. ***We're not simply asking people to meet a need; we're discipling people to obey a command.*** It's not that we don't see how overwhelming the need is and want people to do something about it, it's just that we must believe in how compelling the gospel is to raise up those who will. Our goal is not recruitment first; our goal is discipleship first – to get the gospel down deeper and deeper into people so it can more effectively get out wider and wider through them.

An Identity Issue

At the end of the day we want to compel the people in our churches to look at the need around them and ask a few questions: "Who am I?", "What kind of need is there?", and "Would someone like me step out to meet a need like that?"

These are identity based questions - now no longer driven by fear of what it will require of them or potential difficult consequences that might bring their way, we want the decisions our people making about foster care, adoption and orphan care to be driven by their identity in Christ and what He has done for them through the gospel.

This is discipleship.

WE'RE NOT
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SECTION ONE

Everyone can do something



The Body of Christ

The imagery of a human body is consistently used throughout Scripture to illustrate the identity and activity of the Church – how the people of God relate to one another and function together. Some are hands and some are feet. Some are fingers and some are toes. Some eyes and some ears. *We're a collective diversity of unique individuals coming together – all with different gifts, passions, resources, experiences and capacities – not in uniformity, as if we're all the same, but in unity, recognizing our differences and bringing them together for the common good.* Scripture likens it to a physical body, where some are ears, some eyes, some hands, some feet, etc:

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. | 1 Corinthians 12:14-20

In the Body of Christ, ***no one is called to do everything, but everyone is created to do something.*** That's how our physical bodies work and that's how our churches work as well. Unique gifts are given to unique individuals, not for their own good but for the common good of the whole body. (1 Corinthians 12:7)

Specifically, as we look at how the cooperative efforts of the Body of Christ work themselves out through the care of the orphaned and vulnerable, we find the same premise to hold true – *we're not all called to do the same thing, but we're all certainly capable of doing something.* We all have a role to play - some more visible, some more subtle - all of significant importance in serving vulnerable children and families well.



**WE'RE NOT ALL
CALLED TO DO THE
SAME THING,
BUT WE'RE ALL
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OF DOING SOMETHING.**



STORY

I recently met an older gentleman in Oklahoma. I had just finished speaking at an event for a church and he was catering the food for the night. Part of my message included an appeal to the church to empower every individual member to “find their something” – to understand that we’re not all called to do the same things, but that we’re all capable of doing something. Afterwards, he wanted to tell me what his “something” was.

He told me he makes the best BBQ in the state (a bold claim!) and LOVES to cater any orphan care ministry related event at their church including respite nights for couples, info meetings for those considering getting involved and even taking meals over to families homes who have had a new child placed with them. He said that while he may not be in a position to bring a child into his home he can certainly do his best to serve those who are. For him, it meant making sure these families in his church had the best BBQ in Oklahoma. What a gift!

I loved his enthusiasm, his commitment and his absolute clarity about two things: 1) He knew what he couldn't do and, 2) He knew what he could do – and he was resolved to do what he could do with excellence and passion for the sake of these families.

This is what it means to “find your something”!

Find Your Something

The proper functioning of the people of God to fulfill the purposes of God are most often portrayed in communal terms, not individualistic ones. While one role may be more visible and another more subtle, both operate on a cooperative level of equal codependence, to the extent that if even one seemingly "small" part suffers, like stubbing a toe, it effects the larger whole, like bringing a grown man to his knees in pain.

Likewise, when one part fulfills its role, like a hand holding a fork, the larger whole benefits, like a mouth chewing and a stomach being satisfied. This is what it means for the different parts of the body to be “members of one another”. We are far more intricately linked than we realize.

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. | Romans 12:4-5

This becomes our “resounding gong”, the beat of our drum, the message we are consistently and confidently declaring over our people: **Everyone can do something... so FIND YOUR SOMETHING!**

Making Orphan Care “Normal”

In a counterintuitive way, the goal of your church is not to make your orphan care ministry special; it's to make it normal. It's relatively easy to make caring for orphans or kids in foster care a “special” thing because in many ways it is special. It's a uniquely difficult yet rewarding place to engage a broken world with the heart of God.

Yet for as special as it is, we don't want it to be a peripheral part of our church that only “special” people do – we want it to be a normal, regular, consistent thing about our church – any time and all the time, that everyone in our church can do!

“At _____

*Church, some of us are
going to bring children into
our homes; the rest of us are
going to find ways to serve
and support them.”*

Everyone can do something:

WRAPPING AROUND FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES



This is just one example of what “everyone can do something” could look like. It can be one family bringing children into their homes while a whole team, in unique yet equally important ways, gathers around to serve and support them.

What would happen if everyone felt like they had to do the same thing? Or if no one ever told them of the different opportunities there were to get involved? This picture would look very different - incomplete and lacking all the necessary parts.

What could “everyone can do something” look like in your church?

SECTION TWO

From the Peripherals to the Core



The goal is not simply to build a peripheral ministry for a few, but rather establish a foundational culture for the whole.

Here's two primary principles to consider in your efforts to move orphan care, foster care and adoption out of the peripheral spaces of what your church does and into the normal rhythms of who your church is:

1] Use the Familiar

Use ministry mechanisms in your church people are already familiar with. For example, if your church is a small groups based church, then it wouldn't be too strange for a new small group to start for those who are interested in foster care or adoption. Small groups are normal at your church, and it's normal for people to hear of new ones starting. Why? Because, *small groups – that's what our church does*. That makes sense. It's not a peripheral thing from the norm. It's central to who the church is.

Other “normal” things at churches that can be utilized in an orphan care ministry include parent/child dedications, classes, meal teams, counseling services, benevolence ministries, etc. The list could go on. The point is this: **You likely already have many of the components in your church you need to start, sustain and scale a healthy, effective orphan care ministry.** Sometimes it's just a matter of identifying them and utilizing them in this new way.

What ministry structures are “normal” and “familiar” at your church? How can they be used to bring awareness to this ministry, disciple people in it and support them through it?

2] Develop a “Drip Strategy”

Develop a strategy for how you are going to consistently communicate God's heart for the orphaned and vulnerable and opportunities for your people to get involved throughout the year.

The background image shows a street scene. In the upper part, there is a brick building with a sign that reads "ZAHNARZT IN ALTONA". To the right of the sign is a large window. In the lower part, there is an outdoor cafe with several people sitting at wooden tables. A large white speech bubble icon is in the upper right corner.

ZAHNARZT IN ALTONA



**THE GOAL IS NOT TO
BUILD A PERIPHERAL
MINISTRY FOR THE FEW,
BUT TO ESTABLISH A
FOUNDATIONAL CULTURE
FOR THE WHOLE.**

Big events like Orphan Sunday or a sermon are like fire hydrants – a lot of information and emotion all at once for our people to swallow. These “fire hydrant” events are powerful, acting as significant catalyzers to movement by sharing a strong vision with a wide audience.

However, it would be counterproductive to host one or two special “fire hydrant” events during the year with little to no mention of adoption, foster care and orphan care in between. That rhythm does not provide opportunities for people to process what they’ve heard, what they’re feeling and what perhaps their next steps are. It leaves them overwhelmed with a lot of information and nowhere to take it.

It also subtly communicates a message we don’t intend to communicate - that is, that our church cares about this ministry...a couple of times per year. Of course we know that is not the case - we care about this all the time - but to our people, if we’re only addressing it once or twice a year, we could perhaps unintentionally communicate something contrary.

In between the periodic floods, we also want to consistently “drip” the care of the orphaned and vulnerable on our people throughout the year in smaller, easier to absorb ways. This gives them the opportunity to process through what they are hearing and feeling and discern how God may perhaps be calling them to respond. It also keeps the message in front of our church on a more consistent basis.

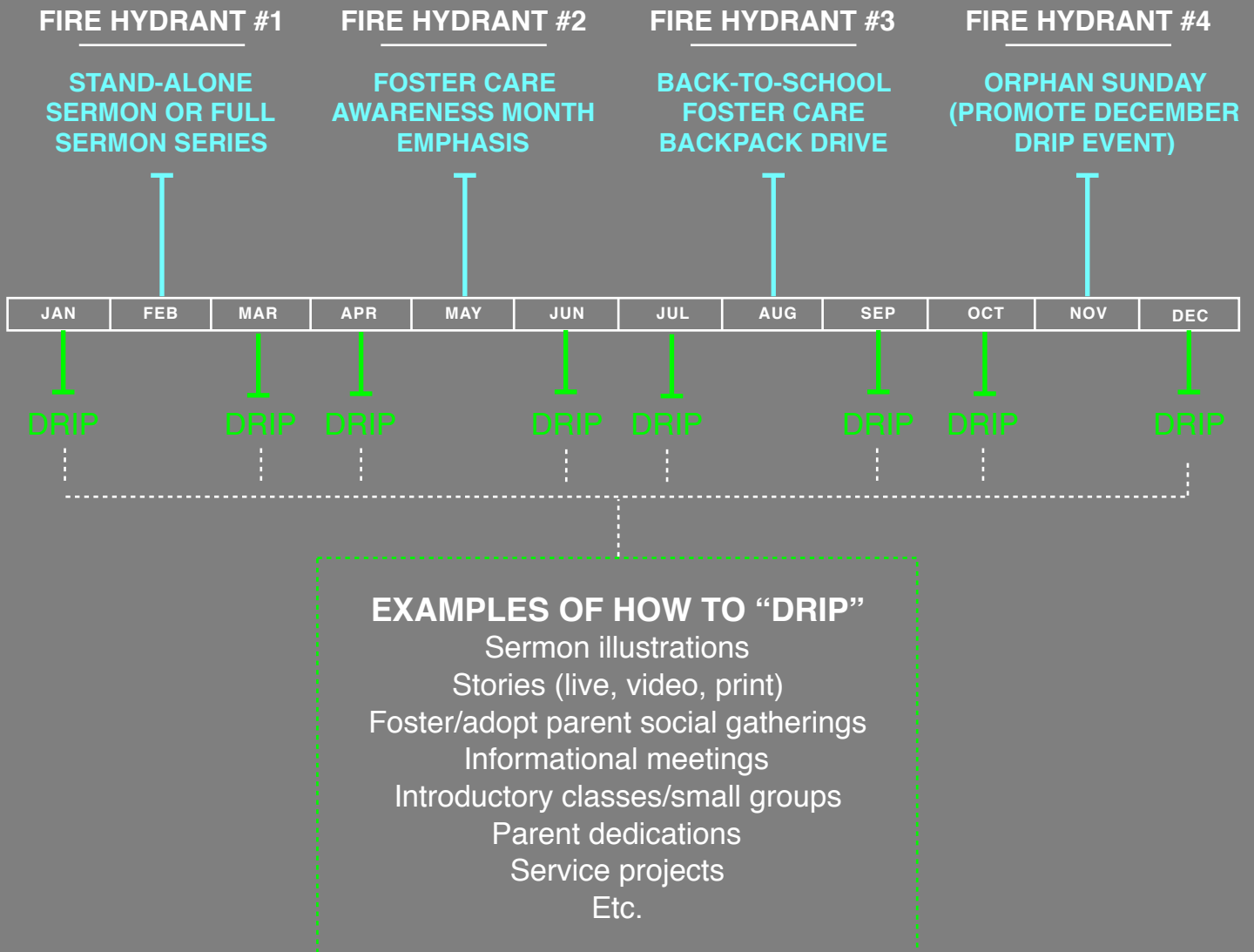
To accomplish this, consider outlining a “drip strategy” for the year that helps keep the issue in front of your people in a strategic, balanced way - with both large “fire hydrant” events and more subtle “drip” opportunities. Maybe your ministry is just getting started, so working with your leadership to plot two or three things on the calendar would be a significant step forward in your ministry. That would be fantastic!

Or perhaps your ministry is at a place where mapping out a comprehensive annual plan is your next steps. Either way, the ultimate goal is for the care of the orphaned and vulnerable to be consistently incorporated into the overall messaging of the church to the extent that your people come to understand it not just as a “special” thing the church does sometimes but as “just what our church does” any time and all the time.

See an example “One Year Drip Strategy” on the following page...

From the Peripherals to the Core

SAMPLE ONE YEAR “DRIP STRATEGY”



These are simply example “fire hydrant” and “drip” opportunities your church could take part in. Be creative, use the familiar and identify things in your church that are “normal” that could be utilized in an annual communications, event and programming plan like this.

Find things that fit the culture and rhythm of your church. It's likely that your church is already doing some things that could be included, so beware of “reinventing the wheel” or duplicating efforts.

When the Stage is Not an Option

It's important to note that "Fire Hydrant" events and "Drip" opportunities can be utilized in a variety of different ways at your church – not just from stage. If you find yourself in a place where you're thinking "Wow, we'd love to be able to do that, but there's no way we'll get that kind of support from the stage" know that you are not without options and you are not without hope. You might just have to be a little more patient or a little more creative in how you implement your strategy.

Right now, it may just need to be exclusive to a specific ministry in the church and over time, through much prayer and hard work, could begin to bear fruit in a larger church-wide context.

For example, perhaps you can utilize the children's ministry as the primary pipeline through which ministry to orphans and kids in foster care is brought to bear church-wide. Everything that happens in a children's ministry is eventually funneled back to the parents. You could go so far as to say that while children's ministries obviously have children, the real ministry is to the parents and for the parents. It's a perfect place that many churches around the country utilize to provide opportunities for families to sponsor kids internationally through child sponsorship programs, collect backpacks for local foster kids and participate in other activities and lessons built around God's heart for the vulnerable and orphaned.

Think creatively and strategically. You may not be in a position right now in your church to "fire hydrant" and "drip" from the top-down, but perhaps you are in a position to impact a large percentage of the people in your church through a different pipeline that is already in place. Be patient, get creative and start looking around at where that might be and having the conversations you need to have with the people who serve and lead in those areas.

What kinds of things would your and/or your leadership team want to include an annual "drip strategy" calendar?

SECTION THREE

Developing a Holistic Culture



If you are in a culture setting role at your church – perhaps on staff or serving in a significant lay leadership capacity – your goal is not simply to start an orphan care ministry; it's to establish an orphan care culture. It's to make the care of the orphaned and vulnerable so deeply ingrained in the culture of who you are as a people that ministry to that end naturally and inevitably flows as a result.

In a sense, orphan care in your church must not be simply be what you do (ministry); it must more foundationally be who you are – together, as a whole (culture). When we aim to start a ministry in our church we may never impact the culture of our people. When we seek to influence the culture of who we are as a church, ministry naturally and inevitably happens as a result. **Transform culture, don't just start a ministry.**

Breaking the “Silo” Mold

It's often the case that church ministries operate in silos – “That’s the missions ministry over there.”; “That’s the homeless ministry over there.”; “That’s the orphan care ministry over there.”; etc. In reality, however, many of these justice, mercy and hospitality-oriented ministries are not mutually exclusive. They are all on some level interconnected. They are part of the same child and family welfare continuum intersecting at different points along the way.

For example, a church could be deeply involved in rescuing and bringing restoration to victims of the growing human trafficking industry. This is a critical place for the Church to engage, however many do so without the knowledge that a significant percentage of those trafficked are actually alumni of the United States foster care system. With that added piece of knowledge, now, a church could more holistically engage the fullness of the problem - to not only bring restoration to those victimized through various programs, but also to prevent more from becoming victims by providing loving homes for children in the foster care system in their city.



**TRANSFORM
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MINISTRY WILL
NATURALLY AND
INEVITABLY HAPPEN.**

Now, it's no longer the foster care ministry "over here" and the human trafficking ministry "over there". The silos begin to break down and a more holistic approach begins to emerge - one which addresses the problem in a fuller way by both restoring those victimized by it *and* preventing others from becoming a part of it.

Similarly, a church could be deeply involved in issues of homelessness, racial reconciliation, mentorship, prison ministry, global child sponsorship programs, and so on - all of which, and others, fall along the same continuum of caring for vulnerable and orphaned children.

As well, some internal ministries within the church - things like children's ministry, singles ministry, youth ministry, young adult ministry, benevolence ministries, counseling ministries, etc. - can all be storehouses for a foster care, adoption and orphan care ministry. It no longer has to be the student ministry "over here" and the foster care ministry "over there", but instead can be more a more intertwined network of ministry that is less siloed off from one another.

Expanding Space for the Whole

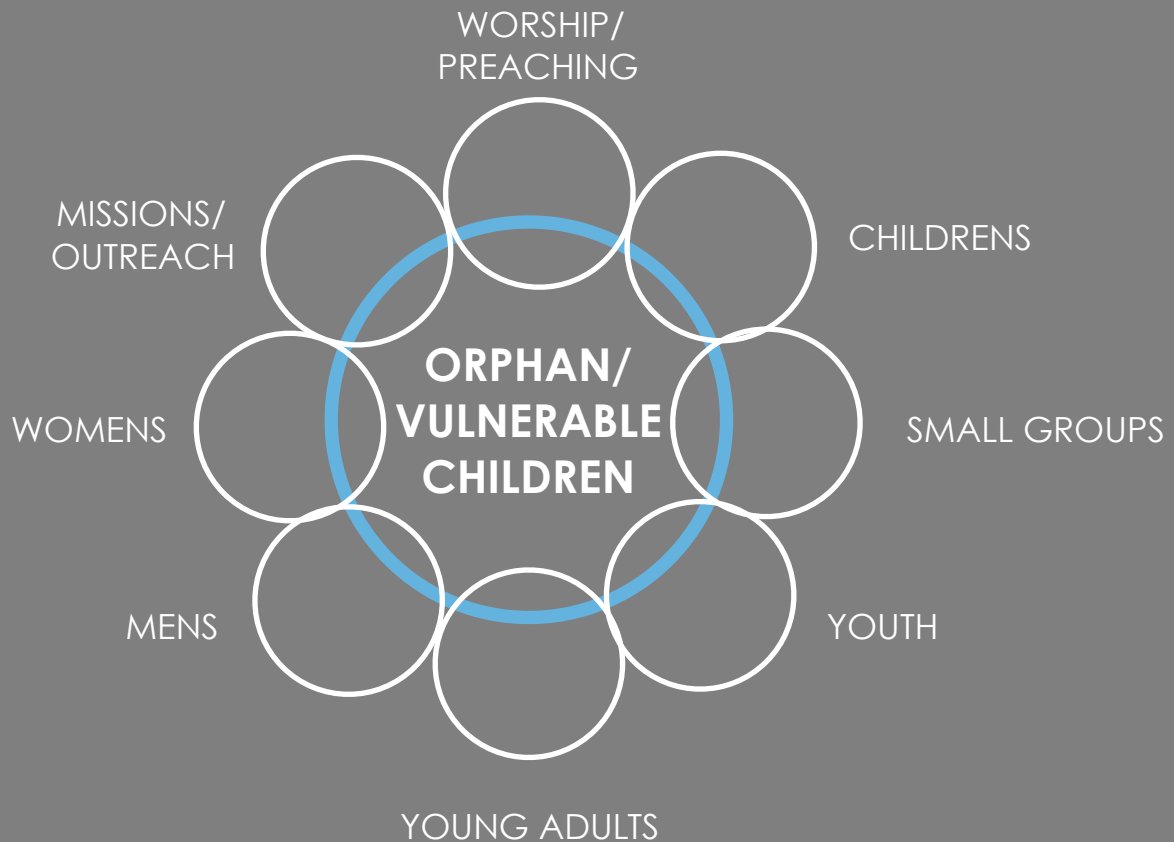
This holistic, strategic approach also expands the space people have to get involved. Some people may say they don't have the margin to do foster care or adoption – but now a church can engage them in a different space that's on the same continuum, perhaps through an international child sponsorship program, mentoring, volunteering at the local crisis pregnancy center, or any other ministry that more naturally fits their gifting and passions.

This model helps people embrace the opportunity they have to engage in an area of ministry they are passionate about and provides the context to help them see how what they are doing in one place is actually intricately intertwined with other places along the same ministry continuum.

If our message is too narrow - foster care or adoption - we effectively cut off the possibility for others in our church to engage at different yet equally important, interconnected places along the spectrum. This holistic, less-siloed, more broad-scaled message approach helps everyone see the role they can potentially play in this.

Developing a Holistic Culture

BREAKING DOWN SILOS INSIDE YOUR CHURCH

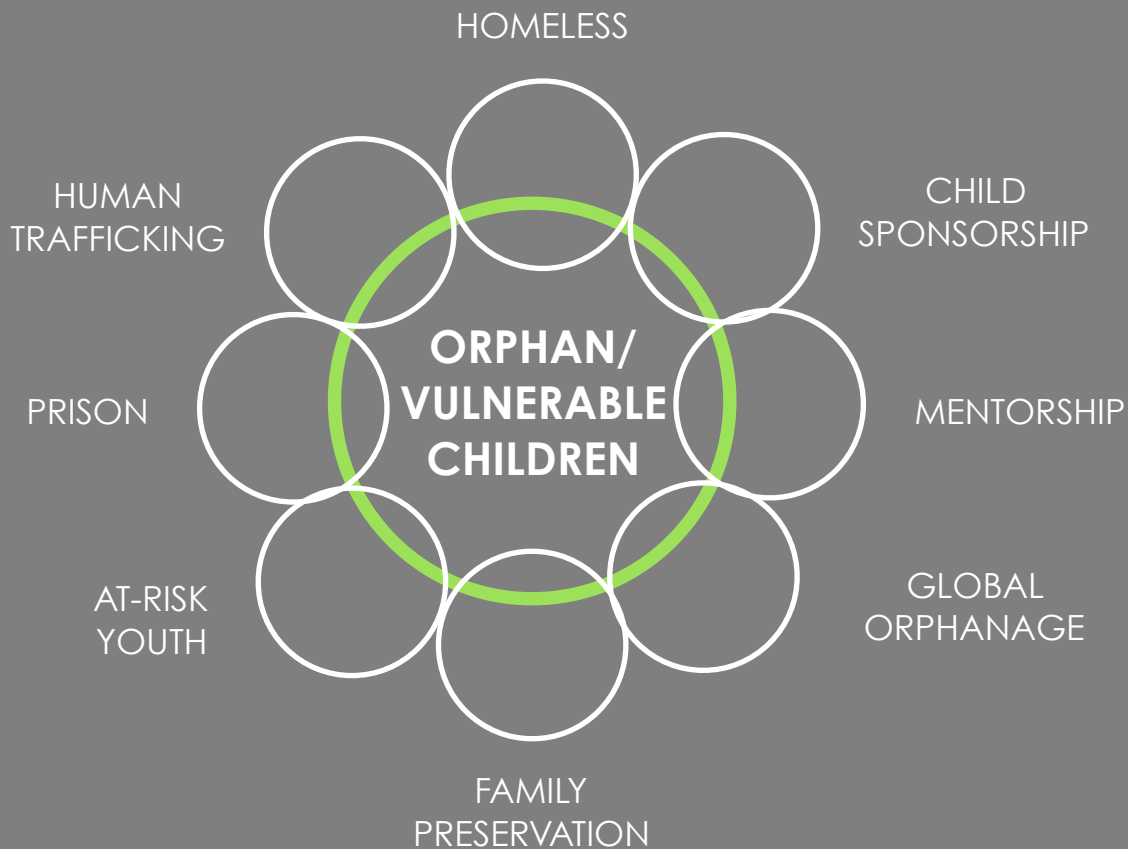


The diagram above suggests some examples of ministry activity **INSIDE** your church that can occur in partnership with your orphaned and vulnerable children ministry. By no means are these examples exhaustive, however, they are a snapshot of the types of opportunities your church has to more strategically and intentionally establish a holistic approach to child and family welfare using other existing ministry programs and resources within your church.

In what ways can you actively work against the “silo” tendency by utilizing other existing ministry programs in your church to more effectively build a culture for the whole, not just a ministry for a few?

Developing a Holistic Culture

BREAKING DOWN SILOS OUTSIDE YOUR CHURCH



The diagram above suggests some examples of ministry activity OUTSIDE your church that can occur in partnership with your orphaned and vulnerable children ministry. By no means are these examples exhaustive, however, they are a snapshot of the types of outreach and mission ministries your church is likely already involved with that have a direct correlation back to the issues of foster care, adoption and orphan care in general.

In what ways can you actively work against the “silo” tendency by utilizing other existing ministry programs outside your church to more effectively build a culture for the whole, not just a ministry for a few?

SECTION FOUR

Charting a Clear

Where is your ministry going? How are you getting there? What are the next steps for people? Who should they talk if they have any questions? Where should they go if they want to get more information?

These questions, and many others just like them, are “path” related questions. They’re directional and tangible - they tell people where to go and give them the resources they need to get there.

As we continue to work towards building foundational cultures of orphan care in your church, a clearly defined “path” will become essential in helping your people know where the ministry is heading and how to get involved.

Top-Down & Bottom-Up

Some churches are already positioned to focus on the care of the orphaned and vulnerable from a top-down position. Whether it’s vision being casted by the pastor from stage or the full support of the staff and leadership, in a top-down approach, vision and strategy are being communicated from the highest levels of church leadership to the lowest levels of ground-level ministry implementation.

However, many ministries are being formed in churches that are not quite ready to implement from a top-down position...and that’s okay. The legitimacy of your ministry is not compromised by the fact that it’s not yet driven from the stage; it simply means the trajectory of your ministry will look different. Rather than a “top-down” approach yours will take on more of a ‘bottom-up’, grassroots identity. Starting smaller and growing from there.

The following diagrams outline examples of what a “top-down” path and a “bottom-up” path could look like in your church...

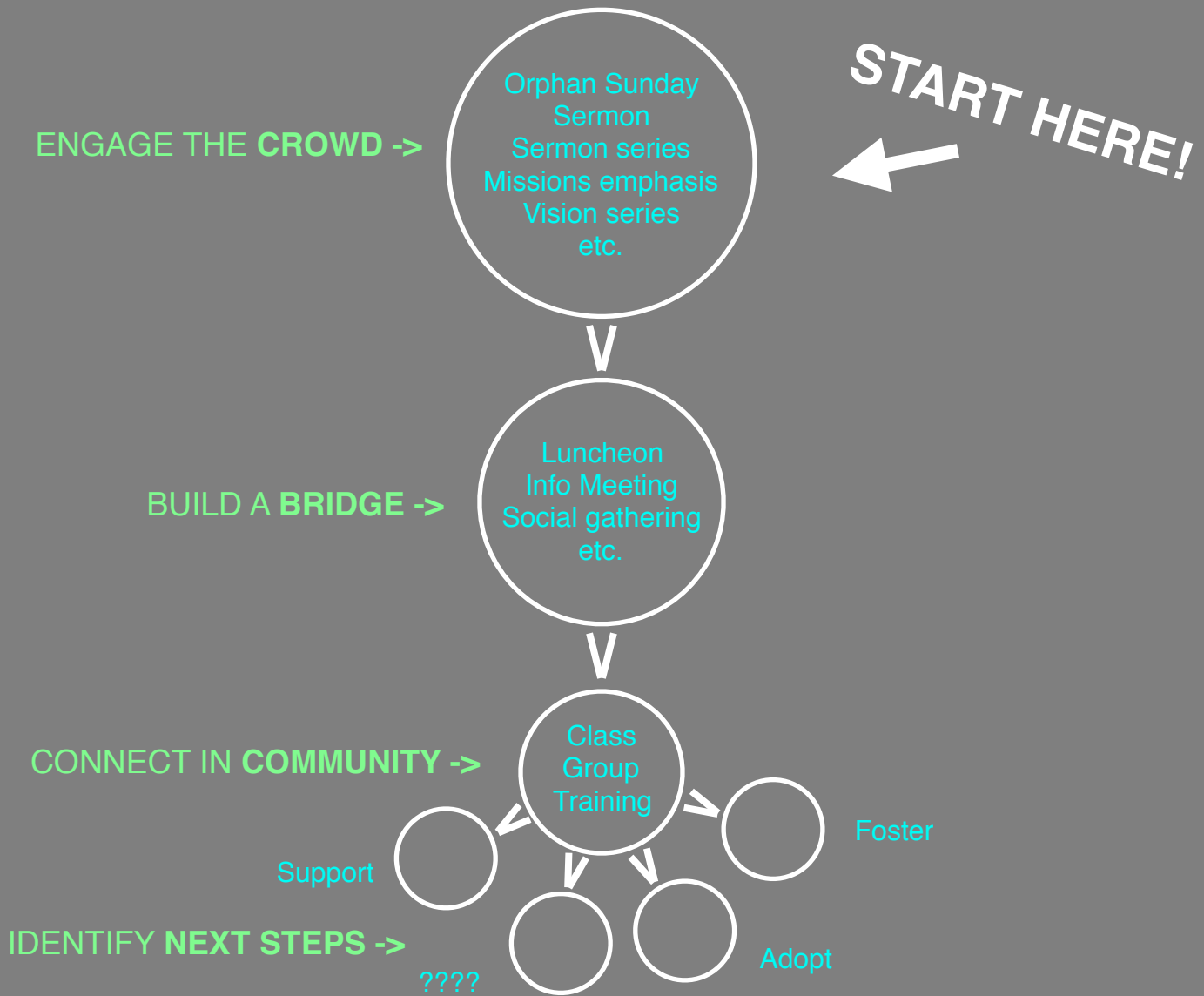


**LEADERSHIP ISN'T
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Charting a Clear Path

EXAMPLE “TOP-DOWN” STRATEGY



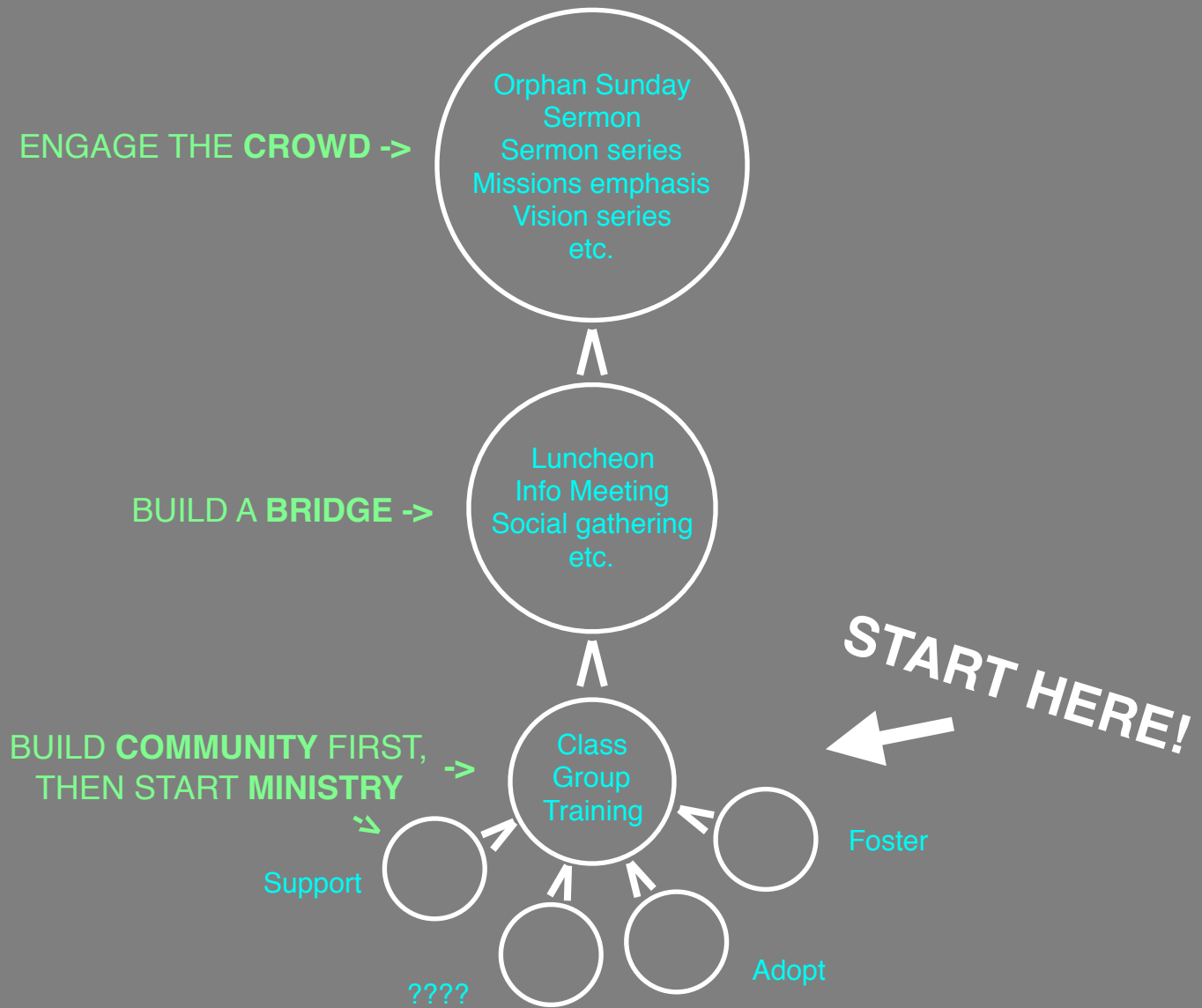
A clear “top-down” path starts big and moves people into smaller levels of community and discipleship where they can find connection, clarity and support.

It is essential in a “top-down” approach to never implement one stage without having the next step planned (example: Engage the Crowd on Orphan Sunday AND be ready to announce the “Bridge” event - perhaps an informational luncheon - immediately).

What can a “top-down” path look like at your church?

Charting a Clear Path

EXAMPLE “BOTTOM-UP” STRATEGY



A clear “bottom-up” path starts with the foundation of community. It works to build community among those already involved first before starting a ministry to engage more. The goal is to identify what culture already exists in your church, who is already involved and how can the ministry be built to best serve and support them. Then it expands from there.

What “next steps” can you take in your “bottom-up” approach to building community and launching a ministry?

ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE FOR ORPHANS

The Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO) unites 180+ respected organizations and a national network of 600+ churches. Our joint initiatives inspire and equip Christians to live out effectively the Bible's call to care for orphans and vulnerable children.

CAFO Membership is an opportunity to join in a vision for God's glory and the care of orphans that is larger than any one organization or project. Together, we seek to inspire, interlink and equip God's people to reflect His heart for the orphan. To a watching world, the Alliance is an all-too-rare picture of the church unified, serving the fatherless in both word and deed, bearing poignant testimony to the character of our God.



THE NATIONAL CHURCH MINISTRY INITIATIVE

Through the National Church Ministry Initiative, CAFO helps churches build effective, sustainable ministries across the country – serving local leaders with essential knowledge, best-practice models, practical resources, strategic coaching and networking opportunities.

Visit www.cafo.org/ncmi to learn how your church can be a part of this national movement.



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In his role at CAFO, Jason works to equip and mobilize churches nation wide through the coaching, resourcing and networking of church leaders within the National Church Alliance Network of over 600 churches.

www.cafo.org

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