

How to Build an Orphan Care Community

Below we have listed some practical steps to consider as you start an orphan/foster care community in your church. Each group will be different as the needs and participants fluctuate leaving this list far from exhaustive. We hope it is a helpful starting place!

Steps to Consider

1. Initiate Conversations

Begin conversations with individuals in your church who are already involved with foster care or adoption and those who are interested. Pray together. Pray for unity and for God to start a community.

2. Identify leadership

Appoint people to lead this group. Leadership might include many roles. Consider the gifting of the people involved. Someone might be equipped to teach, another for communication, and another for planning.

3. Begin Gathering

Start to meet regularly with the group you have formed. Consider what will make the space comfortable and hospitable. Bring snacks! Be sure to set the tone that the group is a safe and confidential space for people to be known and supported without judgement.

4. Define Vision & Purpose

Is this group here to provide fellowship? Resources? Trainings needed for foster parents? Teaching? It could be a combination of some of these. However, it is helpful to continually come back to your established purpose when making decisions and growing.

5. Identify Resources

Where are you going to meet? If it is at your church a resource might include someone on staff who can help reserve rooms and advertise to the church that your group is happening. When it comes to teaching material, the leaders of our groups have used the Empowered to Connect study guide, the Rooted curriculum, and Jason Johnson's resources. It has also been helpful to reach out to "experts" in the community i.e. lawyers, nutritionists, therapists, seasoned foster parents to teach to the group and answer questions.

6. Assess & Reassess

On a regular basis consider what is working well and what is not. The needs of your group will change as kids grow, new people join, and families bring new kids into their homes. As these transitions happen make sure to recognize what God has done in and through your group. As you plan ahead or make changes, continually go back to your vision and purpose.

7. Celebrate & Pray

Make time and space to celebrate small victories like a child feeling safe in a home to big events such as adoptions and reunifications. Continue to pray together, interceding on behalf of one another.

8. Grow & Multiply

Continually seek areas of growth, encouraging multiplication of your established group to other campuses or churches.