All content in the *WWO Roadmap* is also available online
with added resources and media at wworoadmap.org

INTERVENING

to Strengthen Family-Based Care

The Overview, the Vision, the Collaboration

PREVENTION · BROADSCALE COLLABORATION · INTERVENTION · LIVING REFRESHED

THE OVERVIEW

The focus of this section is on promoting family-based care for those children who have been separated from or are at risk of being separated from their families. The three sections include:

- A description of the continuum of care, ranging from being at risk for separation to kinship care, foster care, and adoption

- Two essential core trainings for national leaders to use to equip the local church to care for children who are at risk of or have been separated from their families

- Resources for church-based "Without Orphans" initiatives to reach children, families, and congregations

THE VISION

Our vision is that these resources will build the capacity of national leaders to equip the local church to shine a light in their communities. Local churches can shine their lights by doing what Jesus speaks of in Matthew 18:5, *"And if you tenderly care for this little one on my behalf, you are tenderly caring for me."* And we see that from the Father's heavenly view, *"God is a Father to the fatherless; He places the lonely in families."* (Psalm 68:6)

THE COLLABORATION

WWO's strength is catalyzing broadscale collaboration across sectors, stakeholders, and platforms to mobilize commitment to support of safe, stable, and nurturing family-based care for ALL children. This includes the 2 to 8 million children living in orphanages and extends up to the hundreds of millions that are sexually, physically, and emotionally abused every year. These broadscale collaborations are leveraged with key faith, academic, governmental, and private partners at the global, regional, and national levels. Achieving global goals that transform systems requires partnerships across the seven key spheres of influence, including education, governments, business, religion, family, entertainment, and media. Such broadscale collaborations extend between countries, alliances, donors, and organizations. Key to progress in the WWO Vision and Mission will be collaborations with organizations that can provide spiritual, emotional, and practical encouragement and support, as well as technical assistance for implementation of country-led "Without Orphans" national plans.

Anja from Paraguay

"I have a picture in my mind of a boy who is 13 years old and he's saying goodbye from a car. He is surrounded by a mother, father, and another child…It seems like a very ordinary picture.

But this is a child who is saying goodbye to a life of growing up in a residential care home. And he is saying goodbye because he is going home to be with his sister and her husband and his niece and nephew that he never knew he had.

This boy grew up in a children's home, not even knowing the name of his mother or father, nor the day of his birth. His heart's prayer was to know his family. Through family reunification efforts started in his children's home, family was located, and we found out his sister and her family had been looking for him for years and didn't know where he was. This was an amazing moment in time — for this boy and for the whole children's home.

Suddenly every child's heart was awakened with a desire to be in family — their own, or a new family. So his leaving and his farewell had a huge impact on that children's home and on those coming alongside him."
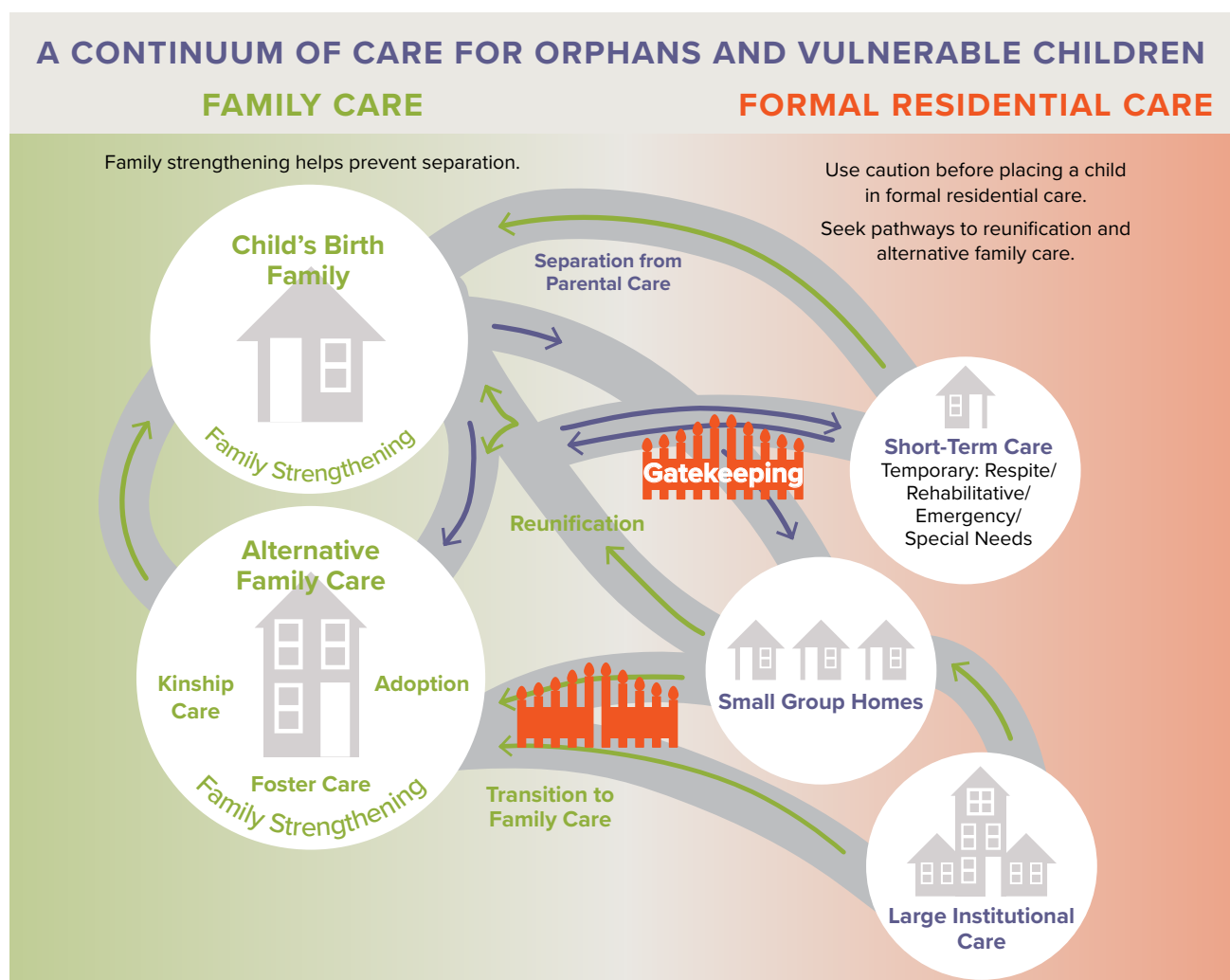
— Anja, Paraguay

1 CONTINUUM OF CARE FOR CHILDREN

Adapted from *Faith to Action Initiative*

One of the greatest causes to vulnerability of children around the world is separation from the love and care of family. Loss of parental care has many causes. For the millions of children globally who have been or are at risk of being separated from their families due to poverty, disease, disability, abuse, trafficking, exploitation, armed conflict, or any other cause, there are no simple or "one-size-fits-all" solutions. There is, however, a growing body of research and evidence-based guidance to inform the ministries and practice of those seeking to address the needs of orphans and vulnerable children.

Strengthening families and protecting children from abuse and neglect while reducing out-of-home placements, such as in orphanages, requires use of a "continuum" of approaches and support services. Family-based alternatives range from reunification with the child's birth family, to kinship care by a relative or adults with whom they have a close family-like relationship, to foster care and adoption. The continuum of care can also include short-term transitional residential care, small group homes, and — for older youth — supervised interdependent living arrangements. Large-scale institutions caring for large numbers of children are not recognized as a positive option in the continuum because they do not provide a safe environment that promotes the healthy development of children.

A CONTINUUM OF CARE FOR ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

FAMILY CARE — FORMAL RESIDENTIAL CARE

Family strengthening helps prevent separation.

Use caution before placing a child in formal residential care.

Seek pathways to reunification and alternative family care.

Child's Birth Family — Family Strengthening

Separation from Parental Care

Reunification

Gatekeeping

Short-Term Care — Temporary: Respite/ Rehabilitative/ Emergency/ Special Needs

Alternative Family Care — Kinship Care — Adoption — Foster Care — Family Strengthening

Transition to Family Care

Small Group Homes

Large Institutional Care

The continuum of care graphic shows a range of care options, while emphasizing the importance of family-based care. The graphic begins in the upper left-hand corner with the child's birth family (parental care). "Family Strengthening" encircles the family to show that supporting the family's capacity to care and provide for children helps prevent unnecessary separation. Family Strengthening is also important to reunification efforts, as well as alternative family placements (kinship care, foster care, adoption), should the child need to be removed to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.

Gatekeeping is another essential component in a continuum of care. There are many reasons why children are separated from parental care, and many factors determine where children go once separated, and whether separation is temporary or permanent. Gatekeeping recognizes that no single form of care is right for every child. Gatekeeping is the process of assessing, if placement out-of-home is necessary, if separation from family has already taken place, and whether reunification is possible and appropriate. If it is not possible to ensure the safety and well-being of the child in their family, the question becomes what form of alternative care is best, given an individual child's particular situation. Both formal and informal arrangements become options. Sometimes informal alternative family care arrangements are best, such as when children are received by extended family members at the request of a parent. In these cases, a formal assessment process is typically not undertaken. As shown here, gatekeeping is especially critical to preventing unnecessary or inappropriate placement in formal foster or residential care. Gatekeeping is also used to assess the best family options once a child has entered into formal care. Gatekeeping can be provided by the community, by local social workers, and/or through government and judicial processes. Whenever possible, children should be active participants in decisions that affect them, and siblings should be placed together so these important family ties are not broken. Ideally, gatekeeping results in placement with safe, stable, and loving family care. In cases where a child is legally available for adoption, several additional layers of gatekeeping are needed given the permanency of the placement.

Once a child has been separated from parental care, priority should be given to family care whenever possible, and to formal residential care or small group care only as a needed alternative. Caution should always be used before placing a child outside family care, and selection of the alternative should be based on the best interest of the child. Large-scale institutional care is not regarded as a positive option for supporting healthy development. For children residing in this type of care, every effort should be made to transition them to family care or, if this is not possible, high-quality "family-like" small group homes.

Reunification

If a child is separated from parental care, reunification is considered the best option if it is deemed safe and appropriate for the child. Reunification is the process of transitioning a child back to his or her family of origin. Reunification may be with birth parents, relatives, or even kinship care. While each reunification looks different, practitioners agree that several key elements are important to best practice for a good transition. These steps are strategic though not necessarily in the order that follows, as they are often interrelated and may occur at the same point in time.

The key steps or elements include:

- Assessing children's families to determine if reintegration into biological families is possible

- Assessing the root causes for the separation and determining how best to address them

- Identifying and facilitating access to appropriate services and support

- Raising awareness about family care with key stakeholders to reduce stigma

- Developing individualized care plans for each child

- Preparing the child and the family

- Monitoring children and families to ensure their needs are being met

Reunification is not always possible or appropriate. When reuniting a child with his or her birth family is determined to be unsafe or not in the best interest of the child, alternative forms of care, preferably family care, should be considered. Alternative care can serve as a short-term function while issues with the child's birth family are being addressed.

If reunification is determined to be unsafe for a child, best practice dictates that, whenever possible, children should be provided with alternative permanent family care such as kinship care, foster care, and adoption.

Kinship Care

The vast majority of children currently living outside parental care live with their relatives and extended family members. Population-based surveys in highly affected countries suggest that up to 90% of orphans live within extended families, whereas 10% live with unrelated caregivers. In most countries, relative care or "kinship" care is the most long-standing and culturally acceptable form of alternative family care. Kinship care includes care by aunts, uncles, grandparents, older siblings, extended family members, and adults with whom they have a close family-like relationship, and can be temporary or permanent. Although it can be formally arranged through judicial authority or social services, it is more commonly informal — often a matter of parents reaching out to relatives and relatives stepping up to care for their loved ones. Kinship care offers the benefits of a family environment and prevents a child from losing his or her culture and, most importantly, a sense of belonging and family ties. For these reasons, kinship care is often preferred by children over other types of alternative care.

As widespread as kinship care is, it is also one of the least adequately supported forms of alternative care. Historically, children have been placed in orphanages for long periods of time without any effort to determine if they have parents or relatives who might be willing and able to care for them.

For families at risk of separation, efforts to identify kinship care options ahead of time can help ensure family ties and care are sustained and protected. For example, social workers in a church-related program working in Nairobi's slums with HIV-positive single mothers routinely asked who could care for their children if they became too ill to do so. Of 200 mothers, half denied having any extended family members who could possibly provide care. However, after developing a relationship with these women, in almost every case, the social worker was able to identify an extended family member willing to provide care when needed. This type of outreach, relationship building, and preparation for kinship care can help prevent children's unnecessary placement in orphanages. Presently, in the United States, there is a movement called 30 Days to Family, which is helping workers focus intensely on who is potentially a kinship provider for a child when an alternative placement is needed. This is an intense short-term intervention developed by the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition to increase the number of children placed with relatives. It seeks to ensure that community supports are in place to promote stability for the child.

Caring for a child can put additional strain on relatives and aging grandparents already impacted by poverty or other issues. Family members and caregivers benefit from support. Grandparents, for example, may need cash stipends or material assistance to adequately feed and clothe a grandchild. Where kinship care is

formalized, usually by local court order or judicial authority, monitoring and ongoing follow-up support help to prevent family breakdown and more instability for the child. Strengthening and family preservation in kinship care looks much the same as it does in the family of origin and is just as important.

In some countries a different approach for kinship care exists, where kinship care is considered within the context of a youth-headed household. This form of family care generally forms when siblings are under the care of an older brother or sister, preferably with additional support from the local community, church, or nearby relatives. While not ideal, this arrangement often enables the retaining of family assets such as the family home and land, as well as keeping siblings together who might otherwise be split up among relatives or foster families or placed in residential care. Youth-headed households can be particularly vulnerable to exploitation and often need support in areas such as education, food, healthcare, and child protection. World Vision, a child-focused faith-based organization, reports that one supportive arrangement is to have a separate structure built next to a relative's home. While not living directly in the home of relatives, the youth-headed household receives a high level of care and supervision by the extended family, oftentimes on the same property.

Foster Care

In situations where family members cannot be identified or are not able to care for children, full-time foster care with a nonrelative is another form of alternative family care. Foster care varies widely throughout the world. In some places it is a growing, positive alternative to placement in an orphanage. In other places, foster care is unknown, rare, or a concept that has not yet been nationally introduced.

Formal foster care is typically authorized and arranged by an administrative or judicial office, which also provides oversight of the family on a regular basis to make sure that the child's needs are being met. Caregivers often receive pre-placement basic training designed to raise awareness of the process and experience of parenting a child who needs out-of-home care. In many foster care programs, a variety of services are offered after placement. For example, additional ongoing training in specific topic areas, access to support groups, the assignment of a social worker for support, or a small stipend or assistance for meeting the ongoing needs of the child, such as food, clothing, or education.

Proper screening of foster parents is essential in order to provide a safe, stable, and nurturing environment for a child. Once the screening process and the preparatory training have been completed, foster parents can benefit from additional topic-specific training that is more in-depth. Topics may include understanding and responding to children's developmental needs; working with children who have been abused or neglected; building attachment and understanding the challenges, separation, and placement issues; working with a child who has been sexually abused; or understanding the impact of psychological trauma.

After a child is placed with a foster family, ongoing monitoring by a social worker or staffperson trained in child protection can ensure a child is adjusting, the foster family is supported, and a child is well cared for, prepared for reunification, and not maltreated. The local church can also play a role in helping raise up foster families, even partnering with judicial officials in screening and assisting in proper monitoring.

Informal fostering is common in many regions of the world. This often occurs when a child is placed in the care of a trusted neighbor or community member. Informal foster care arrangements hold many of same benefits and risks of informal kinship care, and can similarly benefit from family-strengthening services and support.

Both informal and formal foster care can be short-term, long-term, or, in some cases, permanent. Foster care may be used temporarily for a child who has been removed from a dangerous situation while alternative family care or reunification efforts are made. In some cases, it may serve as a pre-adoption placement, often called foster-to-adopt. In some cultures and countries, especially where adoption is not currently legally recognized, foster care can serve as a permanent family placement.

Adoption

For children who have no possibility of remaining with or returning to their parents or relatives, this opens the pathway to a permanent family through adoption. Adoption placements may even become an option at the request of a child's birth family or when a foster family wishes for legal permanency after caring for the child. For some children, adoption can be considered after a child spends time in an orphanage and the rights of the parents have been terminated.

For a child who is without family care and is legally available for adoption, adoption is a path to a permanent family. Research has demonstrated that an adoptive family environment can support improved developmental outcomes for children, especially for young children transitioning from care within orphanages.

Given its permanency, every adoption requires transparency and must be conducted ethically. It is essential that there be more than one level of gatekeeping involved before it is determined that a child is available for adoption. For example, this determination should not be made at the sole discretion of orphanage staff, but should also include the active engagement of justice officials and of social workers external to the orphanage. This type of oversight helps ensure that children and their families are not being coerced and that the possibility of reunification or placement within reliable kinship care has not been overlooked.

Domestic adoption enables children to remain connected to their cultural ties. However, domestic adoption has not yet been legally recognized or made available as an option in certain parts of the world. Some countries are seeing a surge in domestic adoption through local collaborations between government leaders and church leaders, and financial legal costs are being removed. An example from Uganda provides an excellent illustration of grassroots and government collaboration to promote domestic adoption and offer low-cost legal services. When domestic adoption is not possible, intercountry (foreign) adoption may provide children with the opportunity to have a permanent family.

Pursuing Permanency

For all children, permanency planning is an important part of assessing family care options. UNICEF defines permanency planning as a process to ensure stability, continuity, and a sense of belonging to a family. Permanency planning is critical to prevent the separation of children from their families, to reconnect children in care with their original family, or to place children within a permanent family through a relative who obtains custody or guardianship, or through adoption. Short-term alternative care options are used only as a step in the process toward permanency.

Resources

Materials that can be used to educate regional, national, and local WWO teams and leaders on the Continuum of Care include slides, posters, and handouts, found here:

Faith To Action — Transitioning to Care for Children
wworoadmap.org/resource/transitioning-to-family-care-for-children-online-training

Continuum of Care — PDF
wworoadmap.org/resource/exploring-the-continuum-of-care

Pre-Service Critical Competencies for Preparing Families in International Settings, Overview Chart — PDF
wworoadmap.org/resource/pre-service-competency-chart-pdf

Critical Competencies in Preparing Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Families In International Settings
wworoadmap.org/resource/critical-competencies-in-foster-adoptive-and-kinship-families

2 CORE TRAINING FOR PASTORS AND FAITH LEADERS

The two core trainings in this section address: 1) Trauma-Competent Care and 2) Risk to Resiliency: Working with Families in Crisis. Materials include PowerPoints, accompanying PDF text, and small group exercises and are provided courtesy of LAMb International/Global Capacity Building Network. LAMb International (GCBN) has delivered these and other training programs in more than 30 countries.

These materials are included here as links, are in the flash drives from the 2019 Global Forum for a World Without Orphans, held October 24–27, 2019, and are available for free on the WWO Roadmap website. The trainings can be used for collaboration meetings, small groups, and individuals. They are helpful for national leaders, local leaders, caretakers, and parents.

Trauma-Competent Care Training

There are two resources provided to address trauma-competent care: 1) the awareness-building workshop that includes a full slide set and training guide and 2) an introduction to the topic that uses a video resource. The awareness-building workshop takes a total of three hours, and it introduces participants to the topic of psychological trauma for children and how to build trauma-competent caregivers and service providers. The workshop will define psychological trauma and examine its impact on child development. By introducing practical strategies and tools within the context of the seven essential skills of trauma-informed care, this awareness training will help participants understand the importance of building skills to work with traumatized youth who have both emotional and behavioral needs. The major learning point is to understand that trauma has the potential to impact every area of child development. "Behavior is often the language" of the adverse experiences the youth has encountered.

The awareness-building workshop materials are provided to you by GCBN/LAMb International through the World Without Orphans website to use free of charge. As GCBN has a "no-competition" clause related to all training materials, we ask that you do not receive remuneration for providing this training. Finally, the developers encourage you to present this module in the format presented here. It has been designed using evidence-based adult-learning methodology and levels of learning (levels of cognition) to specifically support the transfer of learning from the training session to real life. As such, there is a combination of lecture, large group, and small group activities to keep the learner engaged throughout the training process.

WWO is pleased to help your network build a trauma-informed system of care for children and youth who "come from hard places." Together we CAN achieve our vision that every child will grow up in a safe, stable, and nurturing permanent family and know their Heavenly Father.

Becoming Trauma Informed: Two-Hour Awareness Module and Guide for Trainers
wworoadmap.org/resource/becoming-trauma-informed

Introduction to Trauma Competent Caregiving (4 Hours) — Back2Back Ministries' Introduction to Trauma Competent Caregiving allows caring adults to gain a foundational understanding of why kids from "hard places" experience the behavioral and emotional challenges they do. This comprehensive overview is great for anyone who wants to become a safe person in the life of a child — including foster and adoptive parents, pastors, teachers, and other helping professionals. Research-based and focused on the practical application of trusted skills, learners will grow in their empathy for children, discover what trauma does to developing brains and bodies, and find tools to make an immediate difference in their lives.
wworoadmap.org/resource/introduction-to-trauma-competent-caregiving

Risk to Resiliency: Working with Families in Crisis

The primary purpose of this 10-module training (each module is a three-hour session) is to help build the capacity of pastors and faith leaders to develop skills in understanding their role as part of the larger system that identifies families with children who are at risk of harm or injury due to acts of commission or omission by their parents or caregivers and, when necessary, to initiate action to protect the children and stabilize the family. By understanding the individual and interrelating dynamics, a valid assessment of potential risk of abuse or neglect can be made, and appropriate steps taken to promote safety.

Ideally, there is a checks-and-balances system within child welfare of the country where child protective services workers (social workers) operate within national laws and guidelines. The work is then governed by federal requirements. Typically, the social worker reviews all cases involving the removal of children from their homes and approves the decision and when and if a child returns to the birth parents. Further, the federal child welfare system ideally has rules to ensure that laws protecting children and families are applied appropriately by all who are working with abused and/or abandoned youth. In addition, there would be guidelines identified on monitoring to determine rules are followed. The checks-and-balances system is set to protect the rights of the child, the family, and the community.

A system of last resort, removal of the child by the child protective system, is initiated only when other child welfare interventions are unable to reduce immediate risk to the child. Removal and placement of a child in substitute care, even if intended for only short periods of time, is only considered when the child cannot be protected from maltreatment while in his own home. Often the Church and other non-governmental services are sought by the family for help when crisis emerges in the family, thus giving the Church an opportunity to strengthen the family and potentially eliminate risks.

To be effective, the Church must be seen as one component of the system, a system where the safety of the child is ensured, and the Church can act as an immediate and intensive support to the family. The intervention of the church is to help address known and unknown risk factors and set the stage for children to live safely in their own homes. The sessions that follow build the capacity of pastors and faith leaders to understand their roles in helping strengthen families and ensure safety for vulnerable children.

Access the full Risk to Resiliency PDF as well as the set of all 10 sessions, with text and PowerPoints included, at wworoadmap.org/resource/risk-to-resiliency.

3 RESOURCES FOR THE CHURCH

Resources in this section are available and/or adapted from Home for Good (United Kingdom), Alongsiders International (Cambodia), Hope at Home (Northlands Church/US), and VIVA (Global) for churches, families, and children.

Resources that Reach Children:

Sample resources for reaching children will vary by age. We include as example here:

1. Discipleship materials for ages 10–17
2. A six-session set of Sunday school lessons that can be adapted for children ages 5–17 that address "Why Families Matter" to God and incorporate the WWO cornerstones of the child, the family, the Church
3. One sample Sunday school lesson on God's heart for adoption

1. Discipleship Materials App to Use for Ages 10–17 years
Developed and provided by Alongsiders International

Alongsiders International mobilizes and equips young Christians in the developing world to walk alongside those who walk alone: orphans and vulnerable children in their own communities. The app includes 27 discipleship comic books that have been adapted and translated into 23 languages, along with video testimonies, and is being used in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

Download the app here:
wworoadmap.org/resource/alongsider-app

2. Why Families Matter Resources for Children
Both English and Spanish (*Porque Las Familias Importan para niños y niñas*) versions are available at:
wworoadmap.org/resource/why-families-matter

3. Sample Sunday School Lesson
Sunday school lessons about fostering and adoption help build into children the heart of God for orphans and vulnerable children. Here is one that a church could start with:
Children's lesson: Moses was adopted
wworoadmap.org/resource/sample-sunday-school-lesson

Resources that Reach Families:

Sermons and small group Bible studies about fostering and adoption are a powerful way to raise awareness among families in congregations about the great potential to love and care for orphans and vulnerable children in our communities. It is often the recognition by believers of the vast love of our Heavenly Father in adopting us into His own family that inspires us to be instruments of His love in the lives of orphans and vulnerable children and their families. We include here links to a Bible study discussion guide developed by VIVA and a sample sermon outline from Home for Good.

Why Families Matter Study Guide, developed by VIVA, includes six lessons to help guide small group discussions on how the Bible shows that families are God's ideal place for children.
Spanish: *Guía de Estudio Porque Las Familias Son Importantes*
wworoadmap.org/resource/why-families-matter

Sermon Outline: Adopted — Romans 8, by Krish Kandiah
wworoadmap.org/resource/sermon-outline-adopted

Resources for Churches — adapted from Home for Good, UK

We believe the Church is ideally placed to help support families and children when reunification is an option, to find families to foster or adopt, and to provide an excellent community of support to wrap around those who do. We aim to make family reunification, fostering, and adoption a significant part of the life and ministry of our church by raising awareness and equipping the Church to become a welcoming community for all.
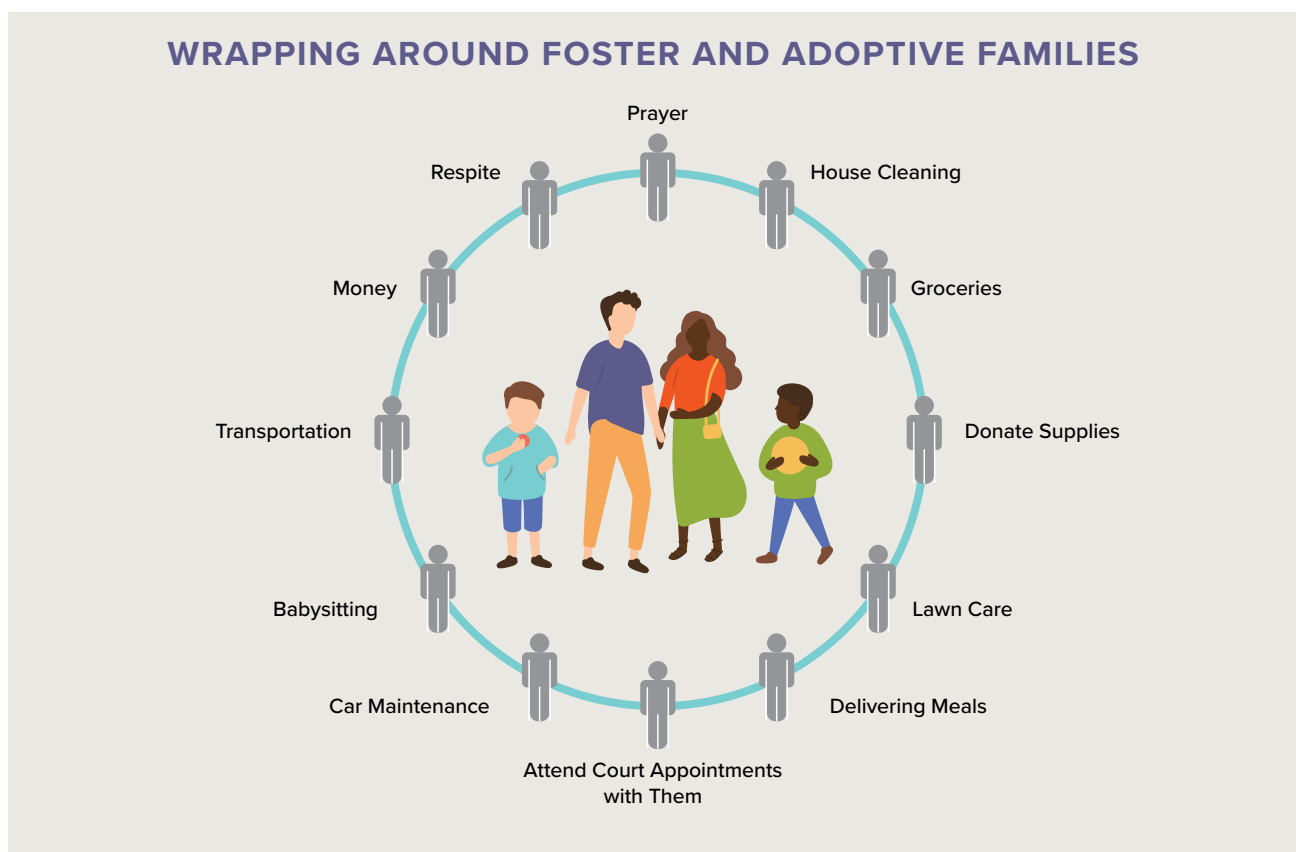
Opportunities for Service for the Local Church

Engaging the local church typically starts with *discussion*, *prayer*, and *learning* about the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children and their families. Several guides for discussion, prayer, and learning follow and then connect to options for action.

wworoadmap.org/resource/opportunities-for-service-for-the-local-church

How Churches Can Provide Wraparound Support to Serve Foster and Adoptive Families

The church community can wrap arms of love, support, and service around families providing kinship care and for foster and adoptive families, as shown in the figure below. These types of support help keep families strong as they are caring for children in need. Often hurt children hurt others, and families who are caring for wounded children benefit from the love and support of others — spiritually, relationally, and practically. This circle shows small acts of service that make a big difference for families who are loving and welcoming children into their homes and lives. (Figure adapted from *Jason Johnson*)

WRAPPING AROUND FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Prayer · House Cleaning · Groceries · Donate Supplies · Lawn Care · Delivering Meals · Attend Court Appointments with Them · Car Maintenance · Babysitting · Transportation · Money · Respite

How Churches Can Provide Spiritual Encouragement for Foster and Adoptive Families

Often the voice that is most encouraging in times of challenge is that of another foster or adoptive parent who has walked through stormy days of parenting and has seen the Lord arise to bring peace and hope. Here are seven short stories from adoptive and foster parents, for adoptive and foster parents — to breathe in life and hope. Additionally, an adoptive mother who authored a 30-day devotional that has encouraged families all over the world, shares it with WWO below.

Resources from Adoptive and Foster Parents, for Adoptive and Foster Parents

"From Adoptive Parents for Adoptive Parents," by Beth and Stephen Templeton and Susan and Brian Hillis, Hope at Home Ministry, Northlands Church, and Ukrainian Adoption Ministry (topics include recognizing and helping our child develop confidence in his/her identity, parenting with grace, seeing orphans become sons and daughters, when God's resources are always enough, when the worst that can happen does, and who is building your house)

Download "From Adoptive Parents for Adoptive Parents"
wworoadmap.org/resource/from-adoptive-parents-for-adoptive-parents

Ready or Not: 30-Day Discovery For Families Growing Through Foster Care & Adoption by Pam Parish
wworoadmap.org/resource/ready-or-not-30-day-discovery