

Way to Serve- Fostering the Family's Progressive Level of Engagement

1) Organize a Meal Calendar

It's fairly standard practice for small groups, support groups, women's ministries, etc. to organize a meal calendar for a family when a new baby is born. Do the same for a foster family when a new child is brought to their home.

2) Schedule Lawn Care

Do whatever you can to relieve any amount of burden you can from the family - like organize a team of people in the church who rotate mowing foster families lawns while they have children in their homes.

3) Certify Babysitters

It is illegal to leave a foster child with a babysitter that is not (in most cases) CPR certified and background checked. This means most families struggle to find babysitters. Host CPR certification classes at the church. Have sitters ready for families!

4) Conduct Dedication Ceremonies

Most churches celebrate Parent/Child Dedication ceremonies during the year. Do the same for foster families. When they bring in a new placement pray for them in front of the church and have the body commit to support them! (Don't bring the child up, just the parents.)

5) Host Date Night Childcare

Once a quarter or every semester (or even once a month) the church can hire certified babysitters for a Friday or Saturday night and allow foster families from the church and community (hint: outreach!) the chance to go on a date!

6) Deliver Care Packages

Most placements occur with little to no notice. Often times within hours. Have things like diapers, gift cards, baby supplies, and other necessities ready to go to be dropped off to a family immediately after receiving a child.

7) Stock a Supply Pantry

In conjunction with the care packages develop a supply pantry that stores items like diapers, cribs, strollers, car seats, baby equipment, bikes and other things that families may immediately need upon a child placement.

8) Build a Respite Care Team

Certified babysitters can watch a child for a short period of time (generally less than 48 hours). When extended breaks are needed or travel plans require it, respite care providers are needed. These are extremely hard to find. Have a team at your church ready!

9) Facilitate Support Groups

Foster parents live in a unique world of state regulations, bio-parent visits and licensing guidelines as well as experience the emotions that come along with loving vulnerable children. Give them a place to connect, share experiences and encourage one another. Check out Jason Johnson's book, [ReFraming Foster Care: Filtering Your Foster Parenting Journey Through the Lens of the Gospel](#)! It's got group discussion questions attached to each chapter so it can be used in a group setting!

10) Pray

Pray for them. They are engaged in a spiritual battle over the lives of incredibly vulnerable children. They are standing on the frontlines and in the gaps for these kids while willingly placing themselves in the path of the Enemy's attacks.

The Church is uniquely equipped with a variety of giftings, callings and passions to effectively eliminate the foster care crisis in our country. The opportunities to serve these kids and the families who care for them are endless and full of possibilities. Perhaps the script at your church could be this simple:

"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!"

HERE'S A VISUAL TO HELP YOU "SEE" WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE IN YOUR CHURCH

One family bringing a child(ren) into their home while others wrap around them with tangible support.

