



ENGAGING YOUR *pastor* IN ORPHAN CARE

Top 10 ways to be successful

1. UNDERSTAND HIS WORLD

Believe it or not, pastors do more than preach on Sundays. They are pulled incessantly in many directions—from hospital visitations to managing community relationships, from discipling congregants to answering emails. When we understand a pastor's world, we gain grace to serve him well in the waiting! Rather than exhaust him with “one more thing,” present orphan care in a way that energizes him!

2. PRESENT THE NEED

Right now, in your backyard, there are children in need of families. Is your pastor aware of this? Contact your local child welfare office to get accurate numbers for your county. Find out how many children are in foster care, how many are waiting for adoption, and what the greatest need in your county is. Then, at an appropriate time, share that information with your pastor.

3. TRUST HIS LEADERSHIP

Once a pastor is made aware of the need, he will respond with a red, yellow, or green light. No matter the response, trust his leadership. A pastor's job is to seek vision from God and then walk it out through the culture of the church. If a red light is given, pray that his eyes would be opened to the need and his heart tugged to respond. If a yellow light is given, be patient yet persistent. If a green light is given, take the lead as permitted, but always submit to his vision.

4. PAINT A PICTURE

Numbers are compelling, but stories can be even more powerful. Paint a picture for your pastor of the realities of children in foster care. An incredible tool to do so is the Removed videos. They are a three-part short film series that tell stories of kids in care. Check them out at removedfilm.com, then send your pastor one to watch.

5. INVITE HIM IN

Invite your pastor into the foster care world through Clergy in Court. When a pastor experiences a court session with biological parents, foster parents, judges, and advocates, he is often motivated to get involved. To get started, contact your local judge to receive permission. Then, invite your pastor to attend court with you.

6. AVOID THE BUSY SEASONS

If you're a parent, have you ever noticed that our kids seem to seek out the busiest moments to ask for something? The baby is crying, your hands are in dishwater, the phone is ringing, the toast is burning, and up walks your 5-year-old asking to go to the park. “Really, son??” you might ask. When it comes to presenting new ministry opportunities to your pastor, avoid the busy seasons such as Easter or Christmas. Strategically look for times to talk to your pastor that aren't already saturated with other events.

7. SCHEDULE AN INFO MEETING

If your pastor is ready for a deeper conversation about church-based orphan care and where to start, introduce him to us! Our staff is trained to walk him through next steps. To book an info meeting, visit nextsteps.backyardorphans.org. We'd love to have you be in that meeting as well!

8. SHARE A RESOURCE

Church leaders want to study the theology behind any ministry, and orphan care is no different. Adopted for Life by Russell Moore dives deep into the theology of adoption. The author writes from a Gospel-centered perspective, reminding the Church of our own adoption into God's family, and encouraging Christians to be a people who care for orphans! It is our most recommended resource for pastors. Consider gifting this book to yours!

9. TELL 'EM WHAT'S HAPPENIN'

There are several opportune times throughout the year for churches to highlight orphan care. If he's open to it, introduce your pastor to some of the following: Abuse Prevention Month (April), Blue Sunday (April), National Foster Care Month (May), Orphan Sunday (November), National Adoption Month (November), and National Adoption Day (November). Ask your pastor how you can help your church honor these special times and bring awareness to orphan care.

10. USE THE DRIP MODEL

“The Rule of 7” says that a person must hear or see a marketing message seven times before they will buy a product. In a way, you are marketing orphan care to your pastor. Don't get discouraged! You are introducing something new and it takes pastors time (years even) to grasp the vastness of orphan care! Rather than overwhelming your pastor with a fire hydrant of information and passion, try the drip model! Start small. Start simple. Start slow. Have patience, and remember, he'll need time to process and pray about how this new opportunity fits into his vision from God for the church.

