



your youth CAN DO ORPHAN CARE

Top 10 ways to show them how

1. WE ARE FAMILY

According to Psalms 68:6, “God places the lonely in families.” So let’s train our students to notice the lonely and welcome them into our church family. But don’t just preach family culture, let the students practice it. Raise them up to be warm and friendly greeters, inclusive leaders, culture carriers, and prayer warriors. Create moments for them to show love and acceptance to the hurting at your church, despite background, appearance, or behavior.

2. BACK TO BASICS

When youth are removed from their home, they often leave with only the clothes on their back and a trash bag full of possessions. Explain this reality to your students and rally them to collect items for youth entering foster care. This experience will instill empathy and generosity into a generation fighting entitlement. Talk to your child welfare office about providing basic needs such as clothes, shoes, school supplies, toiletries, etc.

3. BACKYARD MISSIONS

Need a missions trip experience this summer in your own backyard? Grab some mowers, trash bags, rakes, and a slew of students! There are many single moms and foster families in your community who could use help with simple projects around the lawn. Picking up trash, trimming the hedges, pulling weeds, and raking leaves are extremely tangible ways for youth to care for “orphans and widows in their distress” (James 1:27).

4. CULTURE SHOCK

The sights, sounds, and smells of a missions trip are not easily forgotten. Traveling to another country, leaving familiarity, experiencing new cultures, and grasping the depth of need in the world is impactful for anyone, especially students. There are 140 million orphans worldwide. The numbers are overwhelming, but when we take a week to put faces to a few of those, our perspective quickly changes.

5. HURT PEOPLE HURT PEOPLE

Grace and acceptance come easier when we understand that hurt people hurt people. There is always more to the story than what we see in others’ behavior. We can teach our students this concept through the story of Moses. Because of the trauma early in Moses’ life, he grew up with a lot of hurt. The stress of that hurt became so strong, in fact, that he murdered someone! But his story didn’t stop there. God set Moses’ heart free, and he was then used to set others free! Let’s raise up students full of grace for the hurting.

6. MENTOR MOMENTS

A basketball game, an art session, or just a little hang time can be a simple way for our students to pour into their younger peers. As youth pastors, we are called to make disciples, but we are also called to teach our students to disciple others! Consider implementing a mentor program in your youth ministry for student leaders to reach younger, hurting kiddos.

7. HERE TO SERVE

Child welfare workers often get a bad rap. But the truth is, they’re not the enemy. They are unsung heroes who work tirelessly to help hurting children in our own backyard. Find ways for your students to serve your local office. You could write the workers notes of encouragement, deliver sweet treats, or help them with physical projects such as painting, organizing, or property clean up.

8. ORPHAN SUNDAY

Does your church participate in Orphan Sunday? Make sure the youth are a part of the day! Perhaps they could be a part of the service through drama, spoken word, music, or other arts. Find volunteer opportunities for them such as ushering, greeting, serving food, or helping set up for the day’s activities.

9. WHAT’S MINE IS YOURS

In the parable of the good Samaritan, there are three philosophies presented. The robber says what’s yours is mine and I’m going to take it. The priest and the Levite say what’s mine is mine and I’m going to keep it. But the good Samaritan says what’s mine is yours and I’m going to give it. Let’s teach our students to stop long enough to notice the broken and meet the needs of the hurting. God is a Father to the fatherless, a friend to the outcast, and he welcomes the “least of these.”

10. PRAYER WARRIORS

Like baseball cards with a twist, create prayer cards for youth in your community who are ready and waiting for adoption. You will need to work with your child welfare office to gain the permission and information needed for this project. With a green light from child welfare, place a picture on the front and a few safe details on the back (i.e. age, hobbies, favorites). Encourage your students to pray for their peers daily! This will help to instill in them compassion and a heart of prayer!

