

## **10 Ways To Start Serving the Orphan Today**

For many - especially young people - caring for orphans seems out of reach. If I can't adopt or foster, then I can't do orphan care...can I? The great news is that there are myriad meaningful ways to reflect God's love for vulnerable children even when opening our home isn't possible.

### **PRAY**

Care for the fatherless is God's idea and heart. Pray for God's people to rise up for children and families in distress.. Pray for foster and adoptive families and children you know. Pray for CAFO member [organizations](#) and churches, and others serving children around the globe.. Pray for specific ways you can be used. Use this [prayer guide](#) for more ideas on how to pray.

### **LEARN**

There is so much to learn when it comes to caring wisely and well for orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC). Passion is a good thing, but doesn't guarantee wise action. Spend time with adoptive and foster families in your community and ask questions, bring dinner and sit around their table, babysit their kids. Read [books and articles](#), listen to [podcasts](#), [webinars](#), and sermons. Join [CAFO's OVC Essentials Course](#). Attend [CAFO's annual Summit](#). Intern at a local agency.

### **ADVOCATE**

Use your voice for the voiceless. On Orphan Sunday each year, churches worldwide celebrate God's love for the fatherless and how ordinary people can make a difference. Show a short video, pray for orphans during a service, arrange a foster care "Heart Gallery," host a communitywide concert. Find event ideas, free resources and more at the [Orphan Sunday website](#). Share your passion on a blog or email with friends. Host a discussion group or book club in your home. Choose an organization and become a representative in your community.

### **BABYSIT**

Parenting children from hard places can be exhausting and challenging. Find a foster/adoptive family in your church or community and offer regular, free babysitting, tutoring, or "mother's helper" services. Ask your local foster agency or church foster ministry about providing childcare at events and trainings. Volunteer in children's ministry and seek to be a loving, consistent presence for children coming from difficult backgrounds.

### **CONNECT**

A consistent, caring adult presence makes a profound difference for any child, but especially those who've experienced parental loss or displacement. Become a [CASA](#) to be an advocate and ally for one child as the courts determine what is best for him or her. Mentor a child a local mentoring ministry. Tutor, coach, or serve in children's/youth ministry where you know there are youth who need support.

### **VISIT**

Mission trips can be life changing. But without [careful attention](#) to the long-term situation we enter, travel can eat lots of money with little impact...and may even do harm. Seek out an organization serving OVC whose missions trips are consistent with [CAFO's guidance](#) on wise short-term missions. Prioritize opportunities to support and uplift those who will be serving children in a place long after you are gone.

### **INTERN**

Put the skills, education, and resources God has given you to good use for an organization or non-profit that is doing work to care for vulnerable children and families. As you serve, you'll also gain valuable experience, sharpen skills, form connections, and learn from others in your prospective career field. Find a trustworthy CAFO member organization [HERE!](#)

### **GIVE**

Our money follows our heart...and our hearts follow our money. Even as young people, getting our pocketbooks involved often draws our hearts in deeper. Give a monthly donation - even a small amount - to an organization or non-profit supporting children and families. You could donate your daily coffee drink or eating out budget for a month. Sponsor a child through a [trusted organization](#). Consider donating your birthday or other holidays, asking others to donate instead of giving gifts.

Put creative fundraising skills to use. Donate Christmas gifts, clothing, backpacks or school supplies to your local foster agency.

### **GATHER**

One of our greatest capacities, especially as young people, is the power to bring people along with us on a shared journey. How much could you get done at a foster family's house if you all went together? How much money could you raise if your family and friends banded together to give to a single organization? How many more people would hear about needs in foster care or orphans if your campus group took up the cause together? How much more fun would it be to cook a meal, babysit, or paint the local child welfare office if done with friends? Harness the strength of numbers and rally your group of friends or ministry, or group of friends to focus your efforts on fundraising, serving tangibly, advocating for the cause of the fatherless, and creating dialogue in your community.

### **CREATE**

God has given us each distinct skills, interests, and hobbies How might you harness your unique gifts to serve children and families? From oil changes to haircuts, cooking a regular meal to designing a room for a newly adopted child, providing one-on-one athletic training to cleaning a homes or car, giving rides to grocery shopping, hosting a bbq or just being a friend, the opportunities are as truly as endless as the gifts, talents, and passions God has given us.

So, where is God inviting you to jump in today?