

INTRODUCTION

Show Hope is a faith-based organization propelled by a mission to care for orphans by engaging the Church and reducing barriers to adoption. In all we say and how we say it—including, but not limited to, our internal communications, organizational decision-making, and outbound marketing—Show Hope embraces the core principle that “words matter in all things.” Every word is an opportunity to tell a story, and if a picture is worth a thousand words, then our pictures tell countless more. That opportunity carries with it a tremendous responsibility, and so we seek to tell every story with intentionality and look expectantly for the way in which the Show Hope story joins the greater narrative of God at work in the world.

Included below are excerpts from Show Hope’s Style Guide, as well as some helpful resources, that frame the way we seek to foster integrity in the stories we tell.

EXCERPTS FROM SHOW HOPE’S STYLE GUIDE

General Rules:

- + Use “family” or “loving family” or “loving family through adoption,” instead of “forever family.”
- + We choose not to say “Gotcha Day.” Instead, we prefer using phrases like “coming home day” or “day [child’s name] was adopted.”

People First Language:

- + We say “a child with special needs,” not “a special needs child.”
- + On first use, distinguish the demographic of children you are referring to as “orphan(s).” Following that, whenever possible, use “waiting child(ren),” “child(ren) who has/have been orphaned,” or best of all, simply “child(ren).”
- + Medical language used in reference to children being cared for in Show Hope’s Care Centers is very sensitive and must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with an editor from Show Hope’s Communications team.
- + Dramatization of a child’s emotions or mental state should be avoided. We may say that a child cried, but not that he/she “wept with despair.” We strive to portray truth in events, while always working diligently to protect the child’s right to their own unique perspective and dignity.
- + Avoid salvific language when telling adoption stories. While it is true that God chooses to bring us into his family through adoption, adoption of children into human families is not a method of salvation or a form of evangelism.
 - + In the same way, we do not use “rescue” language when talking about adoption.
 - + As an example, we would not say “Suzy was four years old when her family came and rescued her.”



THE P.R.A.Y. ACRONYM:

Show Hope is an orphan care nonprofit, not an adoption nonprofit or an adoption agency. While we advocate for adoption, we also understand that adoption may not be the best solution for every child. In order to best protect vulnerable children, Show Hope employs the P.R.A.Y. acronym to remind ourselves that adoption is most appropriately considered within the following spectrum of care: **P**reservation of families, **R**eunification of families, **A**doption, and **Y**outh services such as foster care or residential care.

Preservation means doing everything possible to preserve the integrity and unity of a child's biological family. Part of orphan care is doing what we can to help children remain in the love and protection of a family.

Reunification, following preservation, is the process of placing a child in a temporary home with the goal of the biological family coming back together. It also includes the possibility of a child being placed with extended family members. This is the model used by the foster care system in the U.S. While reunification can be the best option for a child, it is also important to seek timely solutions. It is important for a child to find security and permanency sooner rather than later.

Adoption is the approach to orphan care most people are familiar with. When a child is not able to stay with his or her family of origin, adoption is often the best option available to preserve, protect, and meet the needs of a child. If possible, it is good for a child to be able to come into a family in their country of origin, but we also affirm the value of inter-country adoption when a domestic placement is unlikely. Coming to know the love of a family through adoption is a beautiful thing.

Youth Services means taking action for children who are unable to remain with their family of origin or enter into a family through adoption. It is vitally important to provide access to resources and services that help these children thrive and grow. One example of youth services would be mentorship programs that pair children with a role model, giving them someone to look up to and learn from. Another example of youth services would be residential care that helps meet the needs of children who have been orphaned.

This acronym is a helpful framework to begin building an understanding of orphan care solutions. While Show Hope's scope of work is not able to actively participate in each of these four elements, this approach to orphan care is our philosophical backbone. It influences the way we talk about each aspect of our work, and the way we think about the impact our work has.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Blogs:

Below are a few Show Hope blogs that focus specifically on the importance of sensitivity in the language we use:

<https://showhope.org/2015/09/08/examples-of-adoption-friendly-language/>

<https://showhope.org/2016/01/07/every-parent-is-a-real-parent/>

<https://showhope.org/2016/01/14/are-we-speaking-with-love/>



On Show Hope's Use of Statistics About Children Who Have Been Orphaned:

In the same way that words are important, so too are the numbers we employ to substantiate the great need of children who have been orphaned. In an effort to more clearly convey this global need, Show Hope began using "15 million orphans" as the standard number cited in all our communications as of January 1, 2018. We believe this is an important shift, and would invite you to read our white paper to find out why we also feel it is a necessary shift. You can access On Show Hope's Use of Statistics About Children Who Have Been Orphaned here: <https://showhope.org/statistics-children-who-are-orphaned/>