



ANGEL  
STUDIOS

# SOUND OF HOPE

THE STORY OF POSSUM TROT

# OKLAHOMA DISCUSSION GUIDE

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111 project



## Introduction

Hopefully, if you are reading this, you have had an opportunity to watch the Angel Studios' film, *Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot*. The movie centers around the child welfare crisis in Texas in the 1990's and the role a small church in Possum Trot, TX played in helping solve the problem.

Today, in Oklahoma, the crisis still exists. By "crisis," we are referring to the balance of not having enough families to care for the children in the foster care system across our state. This is a problem that can be solved by the local churches in each county, and we invite you to be a part of what is needed to see that change! You can see all the stats related to child welfare in Oklahoma and specific to your county, you can visit our [website](#)<sup>1</sup>. The numbers on this page are updated each month.

## Looking to the Scripture as our Guide

This discussion guide is intended to help increase understanding of the complex issues surrounding child welfare, help create a gospel filter for the issues, and offer some practical steps forward towards action. To begin the journey, let's look at what Scripture says about the matter. Some of these scriptures were referenced in the movie while others are standards for gaining accurate understanding on the matter of "orphans."

It is important to understand that the term "orphan" is not typically used to describe children in the American child welfare system and can even be considered offensive. This is because most foster children have living biological parents, so to honor the story being worked out in their lives, the term is not used. We will see reference to the orphan in the following scriptures and we intend to apply it to the children in the modern-day child welfare system. The sense of the word points to the relationally and economically vulnerable child which can be applied to children in the modern-day child welfare system.

The term orphan, or in Hebrew it was translated "fatherless," is used 42 times in the Old Testament and four times in the New Testament. There is a repeated theme of God's people being called on to care for the orphan, the widow, and the stranger. There is also no indication in scripture that we will eradicate the need for orphan care until Jesus returns and makes all things new. When we speak of ending the crisis, we are referring to ensuring that there are families waiting for children instead of children waiting for families instead of the idea of there being no more children in the child welfare system. As long as sin and brokenness are in the world, there will be a need for followers of Jesus to be active in this space of caring for the vulnerable child.

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<sup>1</sup> [111project.org/oklahoma](http://111project.org/oklahoma)

**Here are some verses to consider:**

**James 1:27**

*27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.*

**Psalm 68:6**

*God sets the lonely in families,  
he leads out the prisoners with singing;  
but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.*

**Proverbs 31:8**

*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,  
for the rights of all who are destitute.*

**Deuteronomy 14:28-29**

*28 At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, 29 so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.*

**Matthew 25:31-46**

*31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

*34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'*

*37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'*

*40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*

*41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'*

*44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'*

*45 "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'*

*46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*

**1) What are things you learn about God in these verses?**

**2) What are things you learn about people in these verses?**

**3) What are actions to obey in these scriptures?**

**4) What are some of the activities that the scripture commands around "orphan care"?**

### **Overview of Coming Weeks**

The next four weeks in this discussion guide will focus on one group of characters per week. Each group dives deeper into a different part of the child welfare system and community.

We will overlay on each week a "Gospel lens." The Gospel Lens involves three parts:

- Brokenness – what are the tensions faced or impact of sin?
- Rescue – what was the resolution offered?
- Redemption – what was the invitation towards action or transformation?

We will be asking questions that help you look at the story told through the film and find these three elements of the Gospel.

Without the Gospel, we have no hope! The beauty of this story is that it is the very "Sound of Hope!" The lives of those told in the story point over and over again to the power of love, the power of the Church, and the power of the call of Jesus for his followers to step into the messy things and offer to others what they have been given through Jesus. We hope you enjoy the journey, grow in your understanding, and gain clarity on the best next steps that you are being invited into by our Savior!



## The Caseworker

In *Sound of Hope*, the caseworker, Susan, was a central figure displaying the work of child welfare. The film opened the window to see the long hours, difficult situations, lack of resources, and challenges Susan faced, which honestly represents all of those serving in that role.

Let's apply our gospel lens and consider the character of Susan.

### **BROKENNESS**

***1) What were some things that stood out to you in terms of the role caseworkers play and the burdens they have?***

***2) What are ways she encountered hurt & sin in her work?***

***3) What were some difficult decisions Susan was faced with?***

There are around 30,000 child welfare workers in the U.S, as reported by [Statista](#).<sup>1</sup>

In Oklahoma, of the 6,000 Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) employees, around 3,000 of them are in the child welfare department.

The job requires caseworkers to step into often unsafe, stressful, and challenging scenarios day after day. A 2010 article published by the [National Association of Social Workers](#)<sup>2</sup> showed that the average turnover for a caseworker is less than 2 years.

There are many studies that show the impact of secondary trauma on caseworkers, as 53% of caseworkers met the threshold for PTSD, according to the [Child Welfare League of America](#).<sup>3</sup> This kind of trauma and stress can negatively impact their personal lives and relationships.

***4) What areas of brokenness were discussed or displayed in her personal life?***

## **RESCUE**

***5) What ways did you see Susan supported by others?***

***6) What were some things that offered hope or help?***

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<sup>1</sup> [statista.com/statistics/417790/child-protective-workforce-in-the-us/](https://www.statista.com/statistics/417790/child-protective-workforce-in-the-us/)

<sup>2</sup> [cdn.ymaws.com/www.naswtx.org/resource/resmgr/imported/Child\\_Welfare\\_and\\_Social\\_Workers\\_White\\_Paper.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.naswtx.org/resource/resmgr/imported/Child_Welfare_and_Social_Workers_White_Paper.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [cwla.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2022HotTopicWorkforce.pdf](https://www.cwla.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2022HotTopicWorkforce.pdf)

**7) What ways do you imagine Susan could have been supported better?**

**REDEMPTION**

Redemption means “the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil.” In this section each week, consider how the resolution of the story displayed the impact of the rescue offered.

**8) How was redemption lived out for Susan?**

***For her personally?***

***For her professionally?***

***What role did the church have in that?***

Between investigations, paperwork, finding placements, finding resources their families need, making removals, and relationally connecting with the children, caseworkers have a tall order! The church has a great opportunity to understand their profession better and offer support and kindness to those who are working in child welfare in their community.



## The Children

As we consider this next group, we have several examples of stories represented in the film. Some we have more details on than others. We are specifically focused on the foster children, but LaDonna, their biological daughter, is also a character to consider.

### **BROKENNESS**

The majority of children removed from their homes in America are removed due to neglect. In Oklahoma, up to 90% of children removed are removed due to neglect. The other removals take place due to abuse. Of those removed due to neglect, most are impacted by material poverty. The movie states that 70% of them were removed due to circumstances caused by material poverty. The example given by Susan on this is the mother who was evicted, lived in a shack, and then bed bugs infested their living quarters leaving the children covered in bites. Other factors at play are mental illness, substance abuse, and relational poverty.

***1) What are some themes of brokenness you see in the narrative of child removal and child placement?***

Trauma plays a large role in the experience of the foster children portrayed in the film. Let's define "trauma" for the purpose of this discussion. The American Psychological Association defines emotional trauma as follows:

Noun - any disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, [dissociation](https://dictionary.apa.org/dissociation)<sup>1</sup>, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative effect on a person's attitudes, behavior, and other aspects of functioning. Traumatic events include those caused by human behavior (e.g., rape, war, industrial accidents) as well as by nature (e.g., earthquakes) and often challenge an individual's view of the world as a just, safe, and predictable place.

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<sup>1</sup> [dictionary.apa.org/dissociation](https://dictionary.apa.org/dissociation)



**2) What are examples of trauma experienced by the children portrayed in the film?**

Understanding trauma and the impacts of trauma are a deep well of information. There is no possible way this discussion guide could provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. In general, trauma impacts the brain which in turn impacts behavior. It is helpful to think of behavior as a form of communication versus thinking of it as a good or bad thing.

**3) What behaviors of the children mentioned or portrayed in the film are due to the trauma they experienced?**

## **RESCUE**

### **Colossians 1:13**

*For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,*

When thinking about rescue, the dichotomy of darkness and light is often used in the Bible as exemplified in the verse above. If the brokenness that the children experienced was put in the DARKNESS category, the actions that led to their rescue could be categorized as LIGHT.

**4) What actions match the following expressions of brokenness (darkness) with rescue (light)?**

<b>DARKNESS</b>	<b>LIGHT</b>
Ex: Neglect	Ex: Care
Abuse	
Poverty	
Trauma	
Isolation	

**5) What are some ways the above listed action happened well in the story and what are some mistakes that were made along the way?**

## **REDEMPTION**

Redemption through the work of Jesus is a promise that we can be sure of. The timeline of redemption through healing is not something we can be sure of. The work of healing from trauma can be a long, messy work. We know from scripture that the Lord is close to the brokenhearted, the hurting, the oppressed. Here are some scriptures that give us a snapshot of that hope.

### **Psalm 34:18**

*The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

### **2 Corinthians 1:3-5**

*God is the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles.*

### **Psalm 56:8**

*God keeps track of all our sorrows and records each one in his book.*

A wise friend once said that the nearness of God is his goodness. We can offer that hope to others and be a conduit of His goodness through our presence in suffering. A young man who aged out of foster care once said that it was people who hurt him, so his healing was going to have to come in part through people helping him. Karen Purvis says it this way: "A relationship trauma can only be healed relationally." Those are statements of redemption!

**6) In the story of Possum Trot, who were key characters who helped redemption play out for the children? What was their role in their lives?**

**7) What things might be hard for you to believe are possible for children who have experienced trauma?**

**8) What are ways this film opened your heart and mind to the potential for redemption for children who have experienced trauma?**

**9) What are ways redemption has played out in your own life?**



## The Foster Parents

### **BROKENNESS**

Foster parents are often elevated to saint level by people who have never fostered or could never imagine doing that. However, any foster/adoptive parent would be quick to tell you that they are very human, limited, and flawed just like every other person.

***1) In the Story of Possum Trot, why do the foster parents step into fostering?***

***2) Were they prepared for what they encountered once the children were in their home? If not, what ways did you see them struggle?***

***3) Fostering/adopting is a beautiful thing, but it is not easy. What parts of the foster parents' lives were impacted by the children they cared for?***

**4) What were ways you saw the foster parents' limits and mistakes?**

**5) What about these stories seemed familiar to your own story (especially if you fostered/adopted)?**

## **RESCUE**

The Martins reached their limit many times throughout the film. We saw rescue come through the things they turned to for help and support. Asking for help is HARD. It takes great humility and belief that you were not meant to handle things yourself. Foster and Adoptive families are notorious for believing that they chose to be in the boat they are in and therefore shouldn't ask for help. They believe it is up to them to fix it or figure it out. A powerful part of the story is that the families in Possum Trot didn't stay there.

Prayer is the first stop on the road of rescue. Scripture instructs us to ask for help!

### **Philippians 4:6**

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

### **Mark 11:24**

*Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*

### **Psalms 46:1**

*God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.*

**6) What role did prayer play in the story?**

**7) What examples of prayer did you see portrayed?**

**Prayer is the first step, but rescue comes in other ways as well.**

**8) What were things that Bishop Martin and First Lady Donna turned to for help?**

**9) How did those things help?**

## **REDEMPTION**

This story is one of tremendous persistence in doing hard things and obedience to Jesus and his Word. The families who fostered/adopted didn't just change the outcome for the children, they themselves went through a great deal of change and growth. Their faith was truly tested and as James 1 promises, they matured through perseverance.

### **James 1:2-4**

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, **3** because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. **4** Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything*

That verse in James continues by showing us the path towards wisdom:

### **James 1:5**

*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. saying if we lack wisdom, we should ask God who gives it generously without finding fault!*

**10) What transformation do you see in the foster/adoptive parents?**

**11) What were some key traits the parents had that allowed for that transformation to take place?**

**12) How did that transformation impact the greater community? Other individuals?**

This section opened with the recognition that foster/adoptive parents are just regular people, not saints. At the same time, the world is changed by regular people walking in obedience to scripture. The same way Jesus called twelve regular men to be his disciples who would then take the good news into the world. It is the way of Jesus, and we are all invited into the work. Another regular person who had a national impact, Mr. Rogers, said it well...

*"We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes." ~ Fred Rogers*



## The Church

### **BROKENNESS**

Before diving in, there is a preface to this section. The intention is to look at the church through the lens of love and truth. **Ephesians 4:15** encourages the church as follows:

*"...speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."*

It is an important practice to look at ourselves as the church and learn ways we can be transformed in our perspective, our efforts, and our message. It is with that heart that this section will lead us through asking critical questions and considering areas of growth displayed through the story of Possum Trot.

The story of the Martins begins where many churches begin with the needs in their local child welfare crisis. None of us know what we don't know! Many churches would not be able to tell you how many kids are in foster care in their city/county and sometimes even which families are actively fostering within their own church community.

A [Lifeway Research](#)<sup>1</sup> study found more than 2 in 5 US Protestant churchgoers (44%) say their congregation and its leaders are proactively involved with adoption and foster care in at least one of seven ways.

**1) What has been your experience with the church's awareness of the need in foster care/adoption/prevention?**

<sup>1</sup> [christianitytoday.com/news/2023/may/adoption-foster-care-church-goers-children-lifeway-study-re.html](https://christianitytoday.com/news/2023/may/adoption-foster-care-church-goers-children-lifeway-study-re.html)



**2) What has been your experience with the church inviting you and others into the work of foster care/adoption/prevention?**

The Character, Renee, in the story represented the voice of the cynic. She had family who had stepped into foster care and in her opinion it had not ended well. She gave First Lady Donna a warning.

**3) What has your experience been with a similar warning (giving or receiving)? Have you experienced the voice of a cynic?**

This is a very important dynamic to wrestle with. One end of the spectrum offers romanticism. Romanticizing foster care/adoption is not helpful and it does not lead to the proper preparation. On the other end of the spectrum is cynicism. Cynicism leaves fear in the driver's seat and doesn't allow room for the hard, slow work of healing.

One thing this tension leads to is isolation. The fear of judgment, or the fear of failure can lead families to a hard place of isolation when what they desperately need is support.

**4) What are ways you see this tension play out in the film and what are examples of isolation and fear with the church community in the film?**

Another aspect the film brings attention to is the church that was much larger and had more resources, but they had different priorities than Bennett Chapel.

**5) What thoughts/feelings did the interaction between pastors provoke in you?**

**6) What has been your experience related to this dynamic?**

## **RESCUE**

One of the gifts we've been given as part of God's plan for his children to grow and be supported is the local church. The way that we are called to live as the church is also meant to be the revelation of the Gospel to others. The church itself is meant to be a tool of rescue!

**Acts 2:42-47** gives us a picture of what the early church looked like, and it paints a powerful model for us today:

**42** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **43** Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. **44** All the believers were together and had everything in common. **45** They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. **46** Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, **47** praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The church in Possum Trot looked a great deal like the **Acts 2** church.

**7) What are some ways you saw the church at Bennett Chapel look like the Acts 2 church?**

**8) What are some ways you saw prayer practiced?**

**9) What are some ways that corporate worship plays a role?**

**10) How did the community come together and have everything in common?**

**John 17:20-23** Jesus is praying for those who will believe in Him and speaks of how their unity with one another, with Jesus and the Father, will send the message to others that Jesus is real, and his love is for them:

**20** "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **21** that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **22** I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— **23** I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

**11) Who was impacted by the unity and belief of the folks at Bennett Chapel?**

**12) What did this require of the church/church members?**

Redemption was offered to us through the ACTION of our Father. **Romans 8:32** says,

*"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"*

As we embrace the redemption offered to us, we become conduits of redemption for the broken world. The church is the chosen mechanism for the administration of that work.

In **Ephesians 3:10-13**, Paul talks of the church being at the CENTER of God's plan for the revelation of the Gospel:

**10** His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, **11** according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. **12** In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. **13** I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

**12) What did this require of the church/church members?**

**13) In this story, what were some outcomes the church impacted?**

**14) What are new perspectives you gained through this story about the church and what role the church has in the child welfare crisis?**

**15) What about your church? What can you imagine for your church?**

In Oklahoma, there are around 6,200 churches. The number of churches surpasses the number of kids in care in recent history. If every church committed to recruit and support just one foster family a year the crisis could be alleviated. We could see a reality where families are waiting for children instead of children waiting for families. According to the scripture, the church would also be making Jesus known to others along the way. The church is God's plan and is a powerful force of change in every area of brokenness the world has to offer.



## Conclusion

### PATHWAYS OF ACTION

So now that you've seen the movie and taken time to reflect over the story and the lesson embedded throughout, what's next?

The first step is **PRAYER**. In James 1, we are told that if we lack wisdom, He is the source through prayer:

#### **James 1:5**

*5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*

I love that this guidance for us is in the same chapter that true religion is defined:

#### **James 1:27**

*27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.*

The best question you can ask the Lord about anything is, "Jesus, how do you see this?" Whatever "this" is for you might be part of your specific next step.

Take some time right now and ask the Lord the following questions in prayer:

- Jesus, how do you see the crisis?
- Jesus, how do you see the children?
- Jesus, how do you see the foster parents?
- Jesus, how do you see the bio parents?
- Jesus, how do you see the caseworkers?
- Jesus, how do you see the church?

Take some notes below of the things that stir in your heart and mind from that time in prayer:

Another important element to consider is your own personal journey towards freedom. This topic can bring to the surface many different emotions, triggers, and areas in need of growth.

Take some time in prayer to consider these questions:

- Is there any area of healing I need to pursue from what I've learned?
- Is there any area of forgiveness I need to pursue in response to these things?
- Is there anything I need to surrender to you in response to these things?

Write some notes below on the things that stirred in your heart and mind during this prayer.

After asking the Lord how he sees things, and what personal steps he might have for you, the next best question is "How do you want me to respond?"

Take a moment and ask in prayer the following questions:

- How do you want me to respond to the crisis?
- How do you want me to respond to the people?
- How do you want me to respond to the church? Or as the church?

Write some notes on the things that stirred in your heart and mind during this prayer.

As you continue to pray through and ponder these questions, it is helpful to have some context of what is known in the child welfare industry as the continuum of care. The continuum of care includes three stages: prevention, intervention, transition. Within those three stages there are different pathways for action. Refer to chart below.

<b>PREVENTION</b>	<b>INTERVENTION</b>	<b>TRANSITION</b>
Supporting bio families	Traditional foster care	Reunification
Schools	Kinship foster care	Adoption
Crisis Pregnancy Centers	Respite care	Guardianship
Rehab Programs	Emergency foster care	Aging out
	Foster family support	

We believe everyone can do something! Within this continuum are action steps and opportunities galore to help be part of the solution. Each group of people represented in the continuum needs support, mentorship, friendship, and connection. The opportunities are truly endless.

The story of Possum Trot focuses on foster care and adoption. However, the hope of foster care in most cases is actually reunification. Around 50% of children are reunified with their parents. For those families working to reunify, it is an uphill battle against the odds, and they need support and encouragement. Relational poverty often plays into those scenarios as they are trying to overcome whatever has led them to the crisis they are in at the moment of removal.

All kids have a drive and curiosity to be connected to their roots. In the film, you hear this reflected in Terri as she questions whether her biological mother loved her. It is a complicated puzzle for kids, and they need the support and guidance of healthy adults to sort through all the pieces.

If reunification had been possible for the children in the story of Possum Trot, the practices and language of the church and the families would have needed to change to be sensitive to that pathway.

***1) How could a foster family honor/respect the birth family of a child while still providing the love and care that a child deserves?***

***2) How could the church help foster families overcome some of the most difficult obstacles seen in the pathway of reunification? (ex: fear of their personal attachment and loss, fear of the financial commitment, fear of their lack of ability to address the child's needs, fear of safety, lack of capacity to serve the child and their family well)***



Some of the most powerful and beautiful stories are when the church supports the foster family and the biological family, children are reunified, and the children, biological family, and foster family continue in community together long term. Talk about redemption!

For Oklahoma, we have created an action page to help guide you in response to these things. You can visit our [website](#)<sup>1</sup> to see three pathways available in Oklahoma: foster care recruitment, foster care support, and meeting needs thorough CarePortal. There are resources in each of those buckets on that website.

A good place to start is at your own church. What is your church already doing? Who are the foster/adoptive parents who are at your church right now? What organizations does your church support right now? Asking those questions might be a great next step.

Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO) has created a fantastic guide that is helpful in finding what role you might be able to play in Foster Care. You can access that resource in [CAFO's Resource Library](#).<sup>2</sup>

Beyond that, we would love to connect you to organizations who might already be doing the thing you feel most drawn to who can offer even more opportunities and support for you in your next steps.

Some organizations in Oklahoma who we regularly partner with, and their contact information are included in the appendix.

We have also included some further resources if you want to continue to learn more on your own or dive in deeper as a church to continue down this path of making a difference so that every child in Oklahoma has family.

Our hope is that throughout this guide, you have learned some helpful information and insight into the world of needs within child welfare. Additionally, we hope that you can see the needs through the lens of the Gospel and be driven to action by the hope of rescue and redemption offered through Jesus and his Church.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.111project.org/action](http://www.111project.org/action)

<sup>2</sup> [cafo.org/resources/find-your-fit-in-foster-care/](http://cafo.org/resources/find-your-fit-in-foster-care/)



# APPENDIX

## **Oklahoma Opportunities**

**111Project Pledge:** [111project.org/pledgemychurch](https://111project.org/pledgemychurch) & [111project.org/pledgemyfamily](https://111project.org/pledgemyfamily)

**111Project Prayer Experience:** [111project.org/pray](https://111project.org/pray)

**111Project Resource Library Page:** [111project.org/resourcelibrary/](https://111project.org/resourcelibrary/)

### **Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO):**

Find your fit in foster care at [cafo.org/resources/find-your-fit-in-foster-care/](https://cafo.org/resources/find-your-fit-in-foster-care/)

### **Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA):**

CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to advocate for children's best interests. They stay with each case until it is closed and the child is in a safe, permanent home. Learn how you can volunteer to serve as a CASA at [oklahomacasa.org/](https://oklahomacasa.org/)

### **Foster Care Agencies:**

To explore foster care agencies serving in your area, visit [okfosters.org/agencies/](https://okfosters.org/agencies/)

**Meet a CarePortal Request in Oklahoma:** [system.careportal.org/requests?q\[state\]=38](https://system.careportal.org/requests?q[state]=38)

### **Oklahoma Adoption Agencies:**

To explore Oklahoma adoption agencies serving in your area, visit [oklahomaadoptioncoalition.org/agencies.html](https://oklahomaadoptioncoalition.org/agencies.html)

### **Oklahoma Association of Youth Services, Inc (OAYS):**

Explore youth-serving agencies across the state of Oklahoma at [oays.org/membership](https://oays.org/membership)

### **Post Adjudication Review Board (PARB):**

The Post Adjudication Review Board program involves community volunteers in the review of confidential court cases of children and youth in the deprived and delinquent court systems. The review boards provide an unbiased oversight of each case and serve in an advisory capacity to the judges handling each case. Learn more about how you can volunteer to serve with PARB at [oklahoma.gov/occy/departments/post-adjudication-review-board.html](https://oklahoma.gov/occy/departments/post-adjudication-review-board.html)

**Pregnancy Centers:**

To explore pregnancy centers in Oklahoma, visit [golife.org/oklahoma-pregnancy-clinics](http://golife.org/oklahoma-pregnancy-clinics)

**Safe Families:**

Safe Families offers a voluntary hosting program for children whose parents are experiencing a short-term emergency or crisis. Hosting families, supported by local churches, allow parents relief from some of their parenting responsibilities while they work through some problems or achieve short-term goals. Learn more at [safefamiliesok.org/](http://safefamiliesok.org/)

**Stand in the Gap: Life Launch Program:**

Life Launch offers a trauma-informed mentorship opportunity serving youth 16-22 years old who are aging out of foster care or are functionally orphaned. Learn more how you can volunteer to mentor at [standinthegap.org/lifelaunch/](http://standinthegap.org/lifelaunch/)

**Book Recommendations**

*Everyone Can Do Something* by Jason Johnson

*Foster the Family* by Jamie C. Finn

*More Than Enough* by Jason Weber

*Reframing Foster Care* by Jason Johnson

**Trauma Informed Resources**

Hope for the Journey Conference - [Oklahoma Opportunities](#)

“The Connected Child” by [Karyn B. Purvis, David R. Cross, et al.](#)

“The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Trauma and Adversity” by [Nadine Burke Harris](#)

“Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers” by [Robert M. Sapolsky](#)