

LOVE GOD. LOVE PEOPLE. EVEN NOW. ESPECIALLY NOW.

Setting the lonely
in families

PSALM 68:6

Virginia's Kids
BELONG

AN AFFILIATE OF AMERICAN KIDS BELONG

FOR RICHMOND

Unite the Church. Transform the city.



VIRGINIA HAS TOO MANY LONELY CHILDREN.

MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH.

HERE'S HOW CHURCHES CAN HELP SET THEM IN FAMILIES.



WHEN ASKED ABOUT A PREFERRED
INFORMATION SOURCE ON ADOPTION, SURVEY
TAKERS SAID THEY WOULD RATHER HEAR FROM
THEIR PASTOR THAN ANY OTHER SOURCE.

talk
about it



Children in foster care
and their families are
modern-day "widows and
orphans." (James 1:27)

While the government has legal custody of children in foster care, Christians believe that the **church is the God-ordained institution** charged with caring for vulnerable children.

There are over 800 churches in metro Richmond and 500 kids in care. Over 100 are waiting for adoptive families.

People of faith **want to "show up"** even now. There are dozens of ways to **show up** for children in the foster care system and the families and workers who care for them.

While the virus largely affects adults, the solution to the virus - social distancing - hurts kids.



Incidences of **child abuse and neglect rise** when children are home for long stretches of time with economically-strapped and emotionally-stressed parents.

Virginia is anticipating a **flood of new children** into care once social distancing ends, while simultaneously dealing with overburdened current foster families.

The church can both **serve now** and **prepare now** to be ready.



Your church members want to help vulnerable kids.

Practicing Christians are an astounding **FIVE** times more likely to adopt than the average adult.*

Pastors all over the country are starting to dedicate ONE Sunday for a special service to **connect God's call** to care for "widows and orphans" to children and families in foster care.

There is something for **everyone** in your congregation to do.

Whether you're 17 years old and mow a foster family's lawn or 70 years old and can bake a lasagna for a newly adoptive family, you can do something.

Recent Barna research reveals
a striking 77% of practicing
Christians believe that
Christians have a personal
responsibility to adopt.

Not everyone is called to
foster or adopt, but
everyone is called to care.



Whether you, as pastoral staff, have personally fostered or adopted, you **reinforce** this message.

Whoever isn't fostering or adopting supports those who are with **meals, errands, prayer, and tangible needs.**

Adoption and reconciliation are **core themes** of the Gospel.

It works. Hearing from pastors equals a **direct increase** of action toward vulnerable kids and families.

who
ELSE?

Who else has done a Belong Sunday?

National

Andy Stanley,
Northpoint

Craig Groechel,
Life Church

David Platt,
McLean Bible

RVA Area

Cloverhill Church
Third Church
Area 10

WEAG
Cool Springs Baptist
Redemption Hill
Hill City
Center Church

"The Sunday service we dedicated to talking about foster care and adoption was the most meaningful service we ever had at our church."

- Darren Whitehead, Church of the City, Franklin TN

what

DOES IT
LOOK LIKE?

1

Give a sermon on how God sets the lonely in families.

2

Weave God's heart for vulnerable children into your existing series.

3

Dedicate a special time before the sermon to highlight children who need families.

what

DOES IT
LOOK LIKE?

Once you've decided on the time allotment, the VKB team will do a 45 minute personal call with you or your staff. Email janet@vakidsbelong.org to schedule.

We are prepared to provide the resources and consulting needed to ensure these efforts are **tailored to your church** and that you are confident in the nuanced messaging.

**POTENTIAL
NAMES**

Setting the Lonely in
Families

Brave

Showing Up When You
Can't Show Up

Following God's Heart

Mothers & Mission Fields
(Mother's Day)

**HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
RESOURCES***

Interview a Foster Family in your
Church

Show a video of a child waiting
to be adopted
(vakidsbelong.org)

Interview a child welfare official
who is also a person of faith

Interview your Ministry Lead

Interview an older Biological
Sibling Who Fostered

*These resources can also be used during the
week on social media as follow up.

what

IS THE
ASK?

Set the Lonely in Families.

Sign up to foster or adopt.
Or support someone who does.



Anyone who is interested can attend an
online "Next Steps" Event hosted by VKB
any Monday in May at 7:30 pm.*

*Go to vakidsbelong.org/faith to sign up.

*good to
know*

Addendums



THE FOSTER CARE CRISIS

UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM



OVER 5000 CHILDREN
IN FOSTER CARE



OVER 800 WAITING
FOR ADOPTION



OVER 500 AGE OUT
EVERY YEAR

THE NEED IS REAL. THE SOLUTION IS YOU!

THERE ARE MANY WAYS YOU CAN HELP!

1

INVEST IN BIRTH PARENTS:

Birth moms & dads can sometimes be invisible in the foster care and adoption faith conversations. But the Gospel narratives of redemption and reconciliation are reasons to serve & invite them into relationship.

2

BECOME A LICENSED FOSTER FAMILY:

Virginia has a shortage of foster families, but they are in **desperate** need for foster families who will take older kids, sibling sets or kids with special needs. Some localities will only train and approve families willing to take those populations of kids.

3

PURSUE "FOSTER TO ADOPT":

Over 60% of parents who adopt out of foster care do so because they were the child(ren)'s foster family first. Very few foster to adopt families will tell you the journey was easy or fast. Navigating the system, birth family relationships, and trauma all take commitment.

4

SUPPORT A FOSTER OR FOSTER-TO-ADOPT FAMILY:

See the back of this page for more info on the importance of "wrap-around support" for foster & foster-to-adopt families and their children.

5

EMBRACE SOCIAL WORKERS:

Social workers are the first responders to kids in crisis & see more trauma in a day than most of see in our lifetimes. Social workers are routinely overworked and underpaid but are critical to children's outcomes.

6

INVEST IN AGED OUT YOUTH:

Eighty-nine percent of children who age out of foster care are addicted, incarcerated, homeless or pregnant within 2 years of aging out. Each child who ages out costs taxpayers \$300,000 over their lifetimes in social welfare costs. Virginia is 47th in permanency.

who

CAN FOSTER OR ADOPT?

Virginians need to

Be at least 18 (!) years old
Have room in their hearts, homes
and schedules.
Be willing to learn about trauma

They do NOT

Have to be married
Have a college degree
Own a home
Make a lot of money
Be a Stay at Home Parent
(once social isolation ends)
Have to add their foster child to
their health insurance

YOUR CHURCH BEING THE CHURCH: Wrap Around Support for Foster & Adoptive Families



Meal Train



Babysitting



Age Appropriate
Clothing



Run Errands



Room Prep before
a Placement



Ongoing House &
Yard Work



A Listening Ear &
Support



Attend Court
Hearings



Gift Cards for
Meals & Outings

EACH COUNTY HAS A NETWORK LEADER!



Richmond City

Katie Vance Lucas
kvancelucas@secondbaptistrva.org



Henrico

Autumn Zaborowsky
henricopartners@gmail.com



Hanover

Amanda Bishop
mbeier@vt.edu



Chesterfield

Angie Grant
agrant@cloverhill.church



Metro Coalition

Rush Middleton & David Giles
rvacoalition@gmail.com

Next Steps Meeting

Online
Every Monday in May
@ 7:30 p.m.

Go to Vakidsbelong.org to register

Facebook Groups

Join your local network on
For Richmond's
Facebook page for up to
date information.

www.forrichmond.org

Full Faith Leaders Kit

Access VKB's full faith kit
by registering with
Virginia's Kid Belong.

www.vakidsbelong.org

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ADDITIONAL CONTACTS



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Unite the Church. Transform the city.

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