



Foster Care

Family Guide

Older Elementary



CFK

Adapted from:



THE CALL

For parents ...

We know you care about raising compassionate, empathetic, Christ-like children who see and care about the needs of our world. But talking about heavy topics like abuse, neglect, addiction, and foster care can seem overwhelming.

There are over 12,000 children and youth in foster care in North Carolina. Your family likely interacts with these children in your neighborhood, at your church, and in your schools.

CFK believes that everyone can do something to engage in foster care in our community, and it starts with learning about foster care and what the Bible says about caring for our neighbors.

This 5-day family devotional guides you through teaching your children about foster care and how to pray for children and families impacted by foster care in our community.

We encourage you to use this study as a starting point to open this discussion in your home. We pray that God uses this study to open your hearts to how he may be asking your family to step in to foster care right where you are.

1

God wants children to be safe.



Read

God wants children to be in a family. And God wants children to be safe. Sometimes, a child is born into a family that cannot keep them safe. This can happen for many reasons:

1. The child's parents don't know how or are unable to care for the child (**neglect**).
2. The child's parents hurt the child (**abuse**).
3. The child's parents are in jail (**incarceration**).

When this happens, the child will be placed in a home with a family that can care for them temporarily. This is called a **foster family**.



The Bible Says

Mark 10:13-16 - Jesus welcomes the little children. God loves children and wants them to be safe.



Reflect

- What does it mean to be safe?
- When do you feel safe?
- Who is someone you can talk to if you or a friend doesn't feel safe?



Pray

Dear God, we pray for children in foster care. We pray that you would help their parents get healthy enough to keep them safe. Thank you for being our Safe Place. We love you. Amen.

2 Foster care is not forever.



Read

There are many things that can make it difficult for some parents to take care of their children.

Some caregivers do not have safe parents who can show them how to take care of children, so they need extra help learning how to be good parents.

Some caregivers have had really hard lives and are so sad that they are looking for anything to make them feel better. Sometimes, they turn to drugs or alcohol to make themselves feel better for a little while, but it actually makes everything else confusing. These parents need help getting healthy and away from drugs and alcohol so they can take care of their children.

Some caregivers' brains have a hard time controlling their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, and it makes it hard to do normal things like eat, sleep, and take care of their children. These caregivers need help getting their brains healthy.

Not everyone has all of the resources that we have. But they can still be good caregivers to their children. Some people just need help getting a job and a safe place to live so they can take care of their children.

A **foster family** is a family that can love and take care of a child while their caregivers learn how to be healthy and how to keep them safe. The foster family takes care of the child and does all the things your family does for you.

When the child's caregivers are healthy and can keep the child safe, the child gets to go back home to live with them again. Sometimes, it's not safe for the child to go back home. If this happens, the child will need a new forever family. This is called **adoption**.



The Bible Says

John 13:34 - Love one another. God wants us to love others. Foster families show love by caring for children who need a safe family.



Reflect

Give the child a balloon or ball and ask them to keep it up in the air without letting it touch the ground. Ask them to imagine that they are a caregiver who has to take care of their children by themselves. Slowly add more balloons, one at a time, while reading the following scenarios: This balloon means you just lost your job and you don't have money to buy food today.

This balloon means you can't afford your house anymore, so you have to move around all the time.

This balloon means you are very sad and alone, and you don't have any parents or friends to help you.

This balloon means you don't have a car, so you have to walk everywhere you go.

How does it feel to try to keep all your balloons in the air? How do you think it might feel to try to take care of a child while keeping all of your balloons in the air?



Pray

Dear God, we pray for the caregivers who need help taking care of their children. We pray that you would surround them with people who love them and who can help them. We pray that foster families would be able to provide a safe, healing home for children who need it most.

3 God is close.



Read

Think about your favorite thing in your room. What is it? What if you had to leave this thing behind and move somewhere far away? How would that make you feel? Children who are in foster care can feel lonely and scared. They might have to leave their favorite toys behind, and they have to move to a new place and live with new people. This can feel very sad, but we know that God is close to us when we are sad. He comforts us and stays near to us.



The Bible Says

Psalms 34:18 - God is close to those who are sad. Children who are in foster care might feel very lonely and sad. But God loves them and is close to them.



Reflect

I want you to imagine that you are moving very far away, and you don't know when you will be home. There is a moving truck here to take you, and it can fit 10 things inside. Write down what **10 things** you would pack with you.

Now imagine that the truck is actually a very small car, and it can only fit **5 things**. Cross 5 things off your list.

Now imagine that you can only bring one backpack with you. Cross 3 more things off your list. What is left?

How does it feel to leave all of those things behind?



Pray

Dear God, we pray that children who are in foster care will know that you are close to them. We pray that you will give them comfort and peace. Amen.



We can help children who are in foster care.



Read

Remember when you had to make a list of your things and cross them off? How did that feel? Children in foster care probably feel a lot like this. They have had to leave everything behind and move to a new home with people they don't know. We can show God's love by being generous and kind to children who are in foster care. We can be good friends to them and help them feel safe and loved.



The Bible Says

2 Corinthians 9:7 - God loves when we give to others. Our family has everything we need. We can help children in foster care by giving them things they need.



Reflect

If you had to move to a new home without your family and your favorite things, what would help you feel better? How could someone be a good friend to you?



Pray

Dear God, we pray that you will show us how we can help children who are in foster care. Teach us what to say and do to help them feel safe and loved. Amen.

5 We can help foster families.



Read

Do you remember what a foster family is? Look back to day two for a hint. Being a foster family is a really hard job. Foster families can feel really happy and really sad when it's time for a child to go back to their caregiver. Foster families need extra help sometimes because the children they are caring for have experienced some really hard things that make them sad, lonely, and angry. It can be challenging to take care of children who are experiencing these big emotions.

Kindness is important to our family. One way we can show kindness is by helping foster families in our community.



The Bible Says

Romans 12:13 - Share with those who are in need. We can help foster families by sharing with them and giving to them.



Reflect

What is something that you think would help a foster family? Do you know any foster families?



Pray

Dear God, we pray that you will show us how we can help foster families in need. Teach us to be generous and cheerful givers. Amen.

Now what?

Thank you for engaging with our Foster Care Family Guide. We pray that your conversations were fruitful and that your family feels better equipped to care for children and families impacted by foster care in our community.

We have a variety of ways your family can engage deeper in this mission:

- Donate new toys books and games
- Check out our volunteer opportunities (CFK hosts family-friendly serve events throughout the year)
- Attend a foster parent info session
- Encourage other families you know to walk through this guide
- Babysit for a foster family
- Bring a meal, plan a playdate for a foster family

Interested in learning more about the needs of children and youth in foster care in your community?

*Visit **cfknc.org/next steps**
or scan the code to learn
how you and your church
can get involved.*

