

PAUSE CAMPAIGN LEADER GUIDE:
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT GROUP



**MOBILIZING STUDENTS.
CARING FOR ORPHANS.**

CONTENTS

+ PREPARING YOUR HEART

- The Global Need
- Using Positive Language

+ GETTING STARTED

- Recruiting Students
- Launch Party Tips

+ PAUSE CAMPAIGN: DAY BY DAY

- Introduction to Pause Campaign
- Introduce Students to Show Hope
- Launch Pause Campaign
- Devotional Content

+ NEXT STEPS

+ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- About Show Hope
- Further Resources
- Parent Email Template
- Church Announcement Template
- Why Social Media?
- Participant Sign-Up Form
- Feedback Form

PREPARING YOUR HEART

Welcome to Pause Campaign, a seven-day social media fast where you and your group will study devotional content that is designed to educate students on the needs of orphans, equipping them to impact the lives of waiting children today.

We appreciate your commitment to serve as a leader. By guiding students through Pause Campaign, you are helping equip them to become change-makers. Before jumping in, we encourage you to take time to read through this guide as you prepare your heart to teach students about God's calling to care for orphans.

Spend time reflecting on what the Bible says about children who have been orphaned:

- + Psalm 68:5 says, **"Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation."** God is the great protector and loving Father of every child. He who numbers the hairs on our head will not turn away from children who have been orphaned, and this should inspire us to act.
- + James 1:27 states, **"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."** This verse is what leads us to believe that while not everyone is called to adopt, we are all called to do something to care for the needs of orphans.
- + Isaiah 1:17 says, **"Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause."** Love and kindness are fundamental to God's character as we are shown in the Bible. That even one child does not know the love and permanency of a family is a great injustice, and there are millions of children living with this reality.

- ✦ In his farewell to the Israelites, Moses leaves instructions from God. Deuteronomy 14:29 says, **“And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.”**
- ✦ In John 14:18, Jesus says, **“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”** This scripture brings great hope in the midst of confusion. Jesus assures his disciples that they will not be alone. Even when he is no longer physically present with them, they will receive the Holy Spirit. In the same way, God will not abandon his children.

Spend time in prayer, and ask the Lord to equip you to lead your group through Pause Campaign. Ask him to reveal his heart for orphans to you and your group members as you break from social media and work through the seven-day devotional. Pray that Pause Campaign will create a lasting impact on your group and for clarity on how God has uniquely gifted each of your participants to become actively involved in caring for children who have been orphaned.

Please let us know how the staff at Show Hope can be praying for you and your group. We consider it an honor to journey alongside you and are here to support you however we can. You can email prayer requests, questions, and additional needs to pause@showhope.org. We're here to help!

To help maximize the success and impact of Pause Campaign on your group, we recommend you familiarize yourself with the content by working through the **[Pause Campaign devotional](#)** before you launch your campaign.

The Global Need

The work of Show Hope exists *to care for orphans by engaging the Church and reducing barriers to adoption*. There are an estimated 15 million children in the world who have lost both parents. Many children who have been orphaned encounter significant early challenges and trauma related to malnutrition, abuse, neglect, and/or unaddressed medical needs. Show Hope's work is centered on addressing the most fundamental need of these children—the love and security of a family.

And this need isn't just far away—it also exists in your very own community. Today, there are more than 400,000 children being cared for in the U.S. foster care system. More than 125,000 of those children have had parental rights terminated and are in need of the permanency of a family through adoption.

The implications of these needs are far-reaching. They cross international borders, racial divides, and economic classes. The scope of the issue can be staggering, leading many to wonder how and why the need is so vast.

Though this list is not exhaustive, here are three significant factors that can contribute to children becoming orphaned:

1. Global Pandemics

Worldwide, there are millions of children under the age of 18 who have been impacted by global pandemics like HIV/AIDS and, most recently, COVID-19. Many children who have been orphaned live with a positive HIV status, in addition to losing one or both parents to the disease. And with the recent COVID-19 outbreak, children with acute medical and special needs as well as those in migrant populations are among the most vulnerable.

2. Poverty

Much of the world's population lives on just a few dollars a day, meaning a majority of people struggle to provide adequate nutrition, shelter, and care to meet the needs of their children. Poverty can also create a fragility in social structures, often leading to the breakdown of family units—not due to a lack of love and commitment but rather a sheer lack of resources to meet the most basic human needs.

3. War and Civil Unrest

Children may lose their parents in the physical act of war and civil unrest. Countries torn apart by such conflicts—especially developing nations—face difficulties in maintaining the infrastructure needed to care well for children who have been orphaned. This can exhaust the capacity within child welfare systems, leading to an increase in unregulated adoptions, child abductions, and/or the trafficking of children. Furthermore, due to safety concerns, countries that suffer from civil unrest may have to suspend, either temporarily or indefinitely, intercountry adoption programs.

Although the reasons leading to children becoming orphaned are broad and complex, there *is* hope. Because we believe God calls each of us to care for orphans through the gifts he has entrusted to us, he *will* go before us in the effort.

Learn more about the needs of orphans and Show Hope's work:

- › [The Need](#)
- › [Show Hope's Use of Statistics About Children Who Have Been Orphaned](#)

Using Positive Language

It is important to approach conversations around adoption and orphan care thoughtfully and carefully. The manner in which we speak about adoption and orphan care can impact the perceptions of those around us. It is crucial that our words preserve, protect, and affirm the inherent worth and dignity of children and their families. Seek to use positive, people-first language whenever you approach these sensitive subjects. People-first language honors the person and his/her inherent dignity before adding any qualifier or descriptor.

Below are some examples of positive ways to talk about adoption and orphan care:

- + Say "a child with special needs" versus "a special needs child."
- + Say "biological/birth parent" instead of "natural parent."
- + Say "intercountry adoption" versus "foreign adoption."
- + Simply say "child" instead of "adopted child."

If you have questions or concerns as you lead conversations surrounding adoption and the needs of orphans, feel free to reach out to us at pause@showhope.org.

GETTING STARTED

At Show Hope, we strongly believe that students can make a difference in the lives of children who have been orphaned. In fact, Show Hope's beginnings can be traced back to the experience of a student—Emily Chapman Richards. Emily is now the Executive Director of Show Hope and first learned about the needs of orphans during a trip to Haiti when she was 11 years old. During this trip, a passion to do something that would make a difference in the lives of waiting children was born in her heart.

Emily and her family's faith journey eventually led to the adoption of her three sisters and also served as the catalyst to her parents, Mary Beth and Steven Curtis Chapman, co-founding Show Hope. Now, years later, the fire that first ignited in an 11-year-old's heart has gone on to impact the lives of thousands of children. We believe students of all ages can make an impact in the lives of waiting children by using their gifts and passions to make a difference.

Recruiting Students

Recruiting students to participate in Pause Campaign can oftentimes be challenging. You can recruit students by inviting them to join your campaign via word of mouth, social media posts, text messages, or any other preferred method of communication. You can also use content from the "Media Materials" section of the [Pause Campaign Leader Resources](#) to help you create interest in the campaign. We would also be happy to provide posters or brochures (at no cost) to help you cultivate interest for your campaign.

You can invite your friends, classmates, small group or Bible study members, youth group, or other student groups to join you. Introduce Pause Campaign as a week-long devotional and educational resource designed to teach students about the needs

of children who have been orphaned and equip them to make a difference, all while pausing from personal social media to engage in prayer and scripture.

Also, be sure to let students know the dates you will be leading, or present a few date options and ask students to decide which week works best according to their schedules.

Launch Party Tips

A great way to get your students excited about starting Pause Campaign is to host a launch party the day before your group dives into the devotional and educational materials.

Get creative with this initial meeting. You can host a pizza party, game night, or documentary showing. You may also invite a family in your community impacted by adoption or foster care to share their story with your group.

PAUSE CAMPAIGN: DAY BY DAY

Below is the Pause Campaign devotional and educational content you will be walking your students through along with helpful tips and suggestions for enhancing your students' experience. We also encourage you to draw on your own creativity and discretion as you walk through the week with the unique needs of your group and students in mind.

Introduction to Pause Campaign:

Provide your group with an overview of Pause Campaign before your launch. Let them know that, as a group, you will be stepping away from social media for a week. Together, you'll use this time to work through a daily devotional and educational resource designed to teach about the needs of children who have been orphaned, equipping your students to make a difference—not just in the future but today.

+ Preparation tips:

- If you are participating as a small group or Bible study within a church, announce you will be participating in Pause Campaign, and provide an [overview](#) for your congregation.
- › Show students the Pause Campaign Challenge videos, featuring Shaoey and Stevey Joy Chapman.
 - [Shaoey's Story Pause Campaign](#)
 - [Pause Campaign Challenge](#)

Not all students are active on social media. Encourage these students to consider stepping away from the thing or activity that is most likely to distract their attention away from the week of Pause Campaign. You can suggest they take time away from video games, TV/streaming services, music/podcasts, or other forms of media that may consume their time.

Introduce Students to Show Hope:

- Use information from the [“About Show Hope”](#) section of this guide to provide your students with an overview of Show Hope’s work.
- › Share videos to help tell Show Hope’s story:
 - [The Need + Our Mission](#)
 - [Adoption Aid Story](#)
 - [Pre+Post Adoption Support Story](#)
- › Share personal stories of why caring for children who have been orphaned matters.
 - If any of your students have any personal experiences with adoption or foster care, give them the opportunity to share if they feel comfortable (asking them privately, in advance).

Launch Pause Campaign:

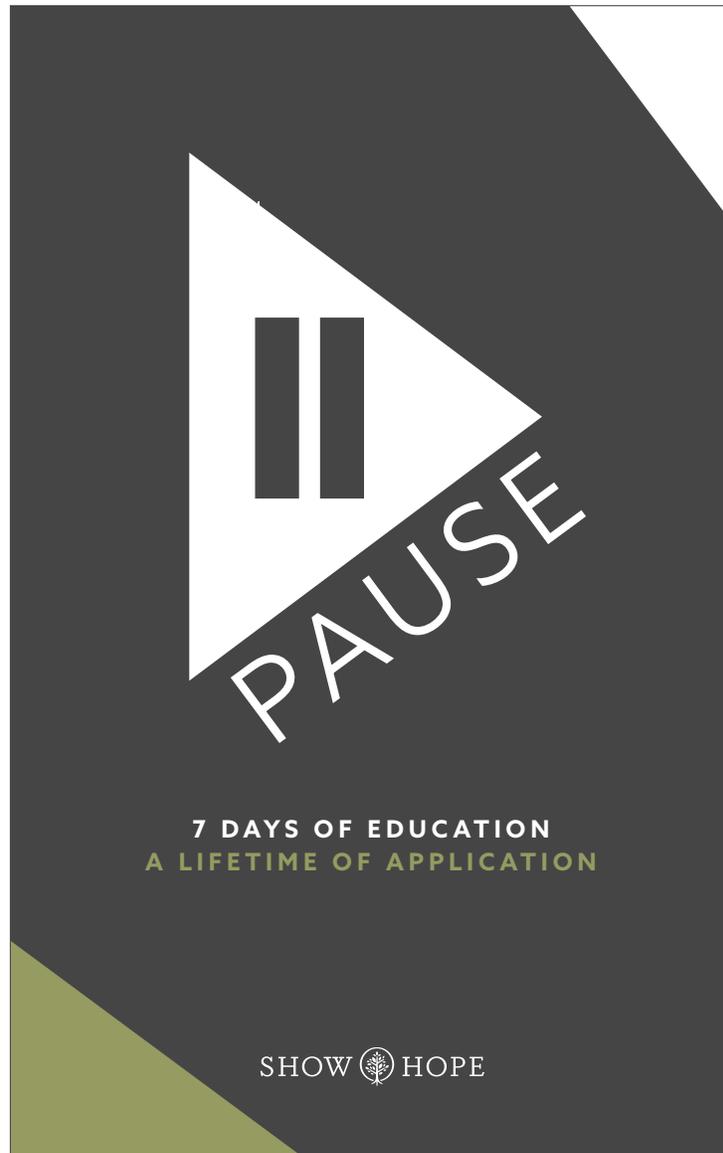
- › Distribute Pause Campaign devotional booklets (one per participant).
- › Send your students the “Pause Campaign Profile Picture” JPG file to post on their accounts during their week-long break from social media.
 - [Download the Pause Campaign Profile Picture](#)
- › Encourage students to delete social media apps for the week in order to reduce temptation.
 - Suggested Activity:
 - » Have your students check their phones to get an idea of how much screen time they use each day.
 - For iPhone users: Go to Settings, then select Battery. Select “Last 24 Hours” for the amount of screen time over the past day.

- For Android users: Go to Settings, select Digital Wellbeing, then click on the diagram for an overview of app usage by day.
 - » Then, have your students calculate the amount of time they will have spent on their phones over the next 10 years based on their usage pattern over the past 24 hours—overall number of hours spent on their phones (or hours spent on specific apps) during the day x 3,650 [365 days a year x 10 years].
- » Reflection Questions:
- How do you feel about the amount of time you spend on your phone each day? In what ways is it helpful, and in what ways does it distract you from other things you value?
 - What are your thoughts/feelings regarding the amount of time you are projected to spend on your phone over the next 10 years if you stay on track with your usage in the last 24 hours? How much time do you feel is best for you?
 - In what ways would you like to be more intentional with your phone usage, whether it be the amount of time you spend on your phone or how you are using that time?
 - In what ways could you invest possible available time away from distractions to bring good to yourself and others?
- » Encourage accountability and discussion among group members throughout the week:
- Create a group text or chat using an app such as GroupMe to offer guidance and encouragement.
 - Serve as a resource for your students if they have questions or need support. We highly encourage you to participate with them.
 - » Tip: Schedule a mid-week meeting during the campaign to gather, discuss the devotional, debrief, and pray.

- › Send students off by reminding them that caring for children who have been orphaned is an invitation to more fully understand what is close to God's heart (James 1:27).
 - Remind them that they can make a difference now:
 - » **Students Can Change the World**

DEVOTIONAL CONTENT

This version of the Pause Campaign devotional includes optional additional content, including graphics, videos, blogs, and reflection questions that can be found at the end of each day. You may share this content as a way to check in with your group and prompt further discussion and reflection throughout the week.



DAY 1 – THE GLOBAL NEED

EMILY'S STORY

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: PSALM 10:14,17-18

Emily learned about the needs of orphans on a trip to Haiti when she was 11 years old. There, she made new friends—many her age—who did not have the love, protection, and security of a family that many of us take for granted. And Emily promised to carry their stories with her.

When Emily returned home to the U.S., her heart had changed forever. She felt a passion to do something that would make a difference. She prayed about her response, and she challenged her parents, Mary Beth and Steven Curtis Chapman, to pray about what it would look like for their family to make a difference in the lives of waiting children. Emily and her family's faith journey eventually led to the adoption of Emily's three sisters and also served as the catalyst to her parents founding Show Hope. In a way, the impact of that trip in Emily's life resulted in you reading this sentence as you consider how your gifts and talents might also make a difference in the lives of waiting children.

All those years ago in Haiti, God knew exactly what he was doing. He knew the stories Emily carried home with her would continue to send ripples of hope into a waiting and watching world. God planted a seed in someone in the same place you are now in life—a student—and it ignited something larger than anyone could have ever dreamed.



THE GLOBAL NEED

As we begin this journey, it's helpful to understand the gravity of the situation. There are an estimated 15 million children in the world who have lost both parents. Many children who have been orphaned encounter significant early challenges and traumas related to malnutrition, abuse, neglect, and/or unaddressed medical needs.

Just as it's necessary to understand the scope of the need, it's equally important to not let the overwhelming size of the need discourage you from taking action. Instead, let it move you to make a difference. Each number represents a face and a name—a unique story God is telling in the life of a child. God doesn't ask us to individually solve the whole world's problems, but he does invite us into his work, to experience his love in new ways, and to enter into the journey with him in caring for waiting children.

PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

As you think about the 15 million children who have lost both parents, what comes to your mind and heart?

Before we move forward, it's important to consider how you plan to stay engaged with your group and this devotionals over the next few days. What might make it challenging to take a break from social or other forms of media?



God used Emily's life and gave her a passion that would extend beyond her and her family. Perhaps there has been a time in your own life when God planted a seed of change and impact. How have you tended to that seed?

- ✦ The need is great. Allow this prayer from the early church to guide you.

Lord, as you will, and as you know, have mercy.

Repeat this prayer throughout the day, and carefully look for places in your life where God may be creating space for you to step into adoption advocacy and orphan care.

ACTIVE REFLECTION

The need isn't just far away—it also exists in your very own community. Today, there are more than 400,000 children being cared for in the U.S. foster care system. More than 125,000 of those children have had parental rights terminated and are in need of the permanency of a family through adoption.

How do you feel when you read these statistics? What can you do to help? It can be as simple as starting a conversation with your friends and family, sharing the knowledge you have gained so far.

- ✦ To learn more about how to care for the needs of children currently in foster care and how you can get involved right now, consider making an appointment with a caseworker from your local social services agency. There are often opportunities to volunteer for events or gather supplies to help children as they transition into the care of social services.
- ✦ How can you come alongside families in your church who have been impacted by adoption or foster care? How can you get involved with outreach ministries that focus on the needs of children?

Additional space for notes in back of booklet



Additional Content for Leaders:

- [Video: The Need and Our Mission](#)
- [Blog: Show Hope's Use of Statistics About Children Who Have Been Orphaned](#)

DAY 2 – HOW DID WE GET HERE?

FROM PRISONER TO SAINT

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: DEUTERONOMY 10:17-19

Hundreds of years ago, a soldier named Jerome lay in a prison cell after being captured at an outpost town near Venice, Italy. He was not a religious man, and his life was a mess. While the chains of that dark dungeon restrained his body, Jerome felt freedom in his soul as God began teaching him how to pray.

He eventually escaped prison and returned to Venice. There, following the plague and famine that swept northern Italy, Jerome dedicated his life to serving the Lord by loving those who were most vulnerable. Jerome saw rampant poverty and hunger, and he began to care for people directly through his own personal resources. As he worked to care for others, his eyes were opened to the many children in his city who had been orphaned due to these societal factors.

Jerome resolved to devote his life to children who had been orphaned. He built a hospital and three orphanages and founded a congregation of clergy dedicated to the care of orphans.

Jerome's entry into caring for the needs of others came in an unexpected way to him but not to God. His life was dedicated to this work, and today, we know him as Saint Jerome Emiliani, patron saint of orphans.



WHY IS THERE A PROBLEM?

The causes of children being orphaned are as varied as they are complex, with each child holding his or her own unique story. Though this list is not exhaustive, here are three significant factors that can contribute to children becoming orphaned:

- 1. Global Pandemics:** It is estimated that millions of children have lost one or both parents due to global epidemics like HIV/AIDS and COVID-19, leaving pandemics as one of the largest contributing factors to the number of children who have been orphaned.
- 2. Poverty:** Nearly half the world's population struggles to provide for their children's basic needs, like nutrition and shelter. Poverty can also create a fragility in social structures, often leading to the breakdown of family units—not due to a lack of love and commitment but rather a sheer lack of resources to meet the most basic human needs.
- 3. Civil Unrest:** Wars and violence lead to civil unrest, causing many children to lose one or both parents. Not only are parents lost, but child welfare systems are often compromised, leading to unregulated adoptions, abduction, and/or trafficking of children.

To read more about this global issue, visit showhope.org/the-need.



PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

What about Saint Jerome's story stood out to you? One thing that inspired us was Jerome's openness to God's presence and love. When he felt the Lord calling him while in prison, Jerome responded by having an open heart to see and help meet the needs of those around him.

- ✦ Just as Jerome's heart needed to be transformed in order to serve others, what parts of your heart need to be transformed in order to love others well? Use the space below to write your own prayer asking God to work in those parts of your heart.

- ✦ *God, show me my need for you, and transform my heart to be more like yours. Show me the needs of others and the ways you have gifted me to serve those needs through your Spirit. Just as you care for me, help me care for others. Thank you for your love. Help me give it freely, just as you have given it freely to me.*

ACTIVE REFLECTION

Jerome's life serves as an example of how a need can be an invitation from God. As we learn more about some of the causes that can lead children to be orphaned, we have an incredible opportunity to step into those very same spaces to make a difference. Write down some of the needs you see around you, and consider ways you can meet the needs of others.

Additional space for notes in back of booklet



Additional Content for Leaders:

- › **Graphic:** [Romans 12:2](#)

- › **Additional Reflection Question:** How is your understanding of the needs of orphans beginning to change?

DAY 3 – GOD’S HEART FOR ORPHANS

HIS PRESENCE IN PAIN

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: PSALM 139:13-14

We serve a God who cares deeply for children who have been orphaned. Throughout scripture, we see God’s compassion for the poor, the needy, the vulnerable, and the lonely.

God made clear his vision for his followers in the words of James 1:27: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”

God is the great protector and loving Father of all. He cares uniquely and passionately for each of his children, and he invites us into this holy work as an expression of true faith.

Psalms 68:5 reads, “Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.” The same God who numbers the hairs on our head intimately walks with and holds dear those who are often and easily overlooked by others. He is at work to bring goodness and life.



PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

- ✦ What types of challenges can you imagine a child growing up without a father or mother would face? What if that loss included extended family, friends, safe community, and a place to call home?
- ✦ Millions of children around the world live outside the safety, protection, and permanency of a family every day. What are some ways we can work to impact their lives and make a lasting difference while also trusting God’s promise to be “Father to the fatherless?”

Join in this prayer from Psalm 67 and “The Book of Common Prayer”:

Make your ways known upon earth, O God, your saving power among all peoples. Help us to lighten the burden of anyone we can and to seek justice and peace for all.

ACTIVE REFLECTION

The role of loving caretakers is vitally important in our lives. In the ancient Near East, which is the context for much of scripture, father figures were central to society. A family without a father had no financial support, social standing, protection, or inheritance. It is in this setting of loss, insecurity, and hurt that we learn of God’s heart for the fatherless.

- ✦ Take time to think through some of the loss, insecurity, and hurt in your own life. Be honest as you consider what it means to find God’s heart in each of these vulnerable spaces. If you are comfortable, ask one or two trusted mentors to talk and pray with you about your experiences and feelings, asking God to bring hope and healing where there is brokenness and gladness where there is pain.

Additional space for notes in back of booklet



Additional Content for Leaders:

- [Video: Littmann Family Adoption Story](#)
- [Graphic: Psalm 36:7](#)

DAY 4 – ORPHAN CARE RESPONSES

YOU'RE AMAZING, BUT YOU'RE NOT A HERO

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: 1 JOHN 4:19

In his book "Radical," David Platt writes, "It is important to realize we adopt not because we are rescuers. No. We adopt because we are rescued."

While Platt is writing specifically about adoption, this beautiful thought is true of all approaches to orphan care. Humility in love is central to living out the way of Jesus. As we seek to serve the most vulnerable among us, may we cling to the words from Philippians 2:3, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."

We don't serve because we are somehow better than others or in an effort to attract attention to ourselves. No, we serve, give, and love because Jesus has abundantly done all of that and so much more for us: "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). That should be our motivation, guiding principle, and strength.

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS

As our desire to reflect God's heart for vulnerable children grows, it is important to approach orphan care in a way that protects children's best interests. With the wide range of factors contributing to children becoming orphaned, there are several ways to get involved, and one helpful tool in better understanding these contributing factors is the P.R.A.Y. acronym:

- P – PRESERVATION
- R – REUNIFICATION
- A – ADOPTION
- Y – YOUTH SUPPORT



Preservation means doing everything possible to preserve the integrity and unity of a child's family of origin. Governments, organizations, and individuals can all do something to effectively address factors that undermine the security and stability families need to thrive.

Reunification, following preservation, is the process of placing a child in a temporary home with the goal of reuniting the family. Reunification efforts shape the model for foster care in the U.S. and sometimes include placement with extended family members. While reunification can be the best option for a child, it is important to seek timely solutions, so the child is able to find security and permanency sooner rather than later.

Adoption is the most familiar approach to orphan care. When a child is unable to stay in his or her family of origin, adoption is often the best solution available to preserve, protect, and meet the needs of that child. If possible, it is beneficial for a child to come into a family in his or her country of origin, but we must also affirm intercountry adoption when a domestic placement is unlikely.

Finally, *youth support* involves taking action for children who are unable to remain with their family of origin and/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 support would be mentorship programs that pair children with role models. Another example of youth support would be residential care, job training, and educational resources that help youth transition successfully into adulthood.

The P.R.A.Y. acronym is a helpful framework to begin building an understanding of orphan care solutions. Real, impactful, life-changing work is never easy and rarely happens quickly. It requires prayer and a willingness to step into the needs of others. It will certainly cost you something, but God has already given you everything you need to step into the places he calls you.



PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

In Jeremiah 1:4-10, God calls Jeremiah to boldness. In verse 7, he says to Jeremiah, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak." Being a student does not disqualify you from making a difference in the world or in the life of a child. You can make an incredible difference right now.

- ✦ How do God's words to Jeremiah encourage or challenge you today? What hinders you from believing God can use your gifts and talents right now to make a difference? Use the space below to share your thoughts. We encourage you to ask God to show you the depth of his love for you, praising him and thanking him for his grace and mercy and asking that he would open your heart to how he wants to use you to love others today.

ACTIVE REFLECTION

"Not everyone is called to adopt, but everyone is called to do something." — Mary Beth Chapman

- ✦ Caring for the needs of orphans is a much broader endeavor than simply advocating for adoption or adopting a child into your family. Take time to consider the various aspects covered in the P.R.A.Y. acronym. Think of how the needs of children can be met in your own community through preservation, reunification, adoption, and youth support. How can you, your youth group, campus ministry, or service club join in meeting those needs? We invite you or your group to make a video sharing three ideas you have for how to make a difference in your community. Email it to us at pause@showhope.org.

Additional space for notes in back of booklet



Additional Content for Leaders:

- › [Graphic: Ways to Engage in Orphan Care](#)
- › **Group question:** As you learn about different ways to get involved in caring for orphans, what areas do you want to learn more about?
- › For specific opportunities to join Show Hope in prayer, please read the blog post [How You Can Join Us in Prayer.](#)

DAY 5 – ADOPTION

LET'S TALK ABOUT ADOPTION

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: JOHN 1:12; 1 JOHN 3:1

"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are ..." — 1 John 3:1

In God's rich grace and mercy, he has opened the door for us to enter into his eternal family through the reconciling work of his son, Jesus.

For many, adoption does indeed offer a glimpse of the gospel. In a blog about the vision for Show Hope's Adoption Aid work, Co-founder Mary Beth Chapman spoke of the first moment she held Shaohannah Hope (Shaoey), her first daughter who was welcomed into their family through adoption. Mary Beth wrote, "God was gracious to give me an incredibly beautiful gift as I began to understand anew the great depths of God's love for His children. God, our Father, as the relentless pursuer of love sought after me, adopted me, and made me His—forever, for better, for worse."

As God works through the adoption journey, children are welcomed into the care and permanency of a loving family. The adoption journey provides an opportunity for families and their communities to experience and learn more about what it means to love and to be loved, unconditionally, as children of God.



THE FINANCIAL BARRIER TO ADOPTION

Adoption is just one way to help care for children who have been orphaned. It is not a cure-all nor is it the right answer in every context. But adoption is a journey that can help bring hope, healing, love, and permanency to a child who is waiting.

Every year, countless individuals consider growing their family through adoption, but only a small percentage of those actually move forward. A major reason for this is the financial barrier, as the average cost of adoption can range between \$25,000 and \$50,000.

The work of Show Hope is dedicated to restoring hope to the millions of children who have been orphaned. We do this by engaging the Church and reducing the barriers to adoption. Through providing Adoption Aid grants to families in the adoption process, Show Hope has helped more than 6,800 children from more than 60 countries, including the U.S., come home.

The barriers that accompany adoption, particularly the financial barrier, can be daunting. But as families navigate the challenges, there are opportunities for others to come alongside them and do something to help waiting children on their journey home. Here are a few ways you can help:

- ✦ Pray for children and families impacted by adoption and foster care as well as those still waiting.
- ✦ Participate in/plan adoption fundraisers for families in your community.
- ✦ Lend skills to help raise funds (artistic skills, event organization, graphic design, etc.).
- ✦ Offer complimentary wraparound services to adoptive families (babysitting, meals, errands, etc.).



PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

Reflect on this promise from Jesus: "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18).

Spend time thinking about what it means to know the love and permanency of a family. As you do this, think about the reassurance of the unconditional love we have in Christ. He *will* not leave us.

- ✦ What does this promise mean to you? How does this promise affect or change how you live your life?

There's an inherent tension in adoption—it is a beautiful reflection of love, but it only exists because a profound loss has occurred in a child's life. In many ways, this is a picture of God the Father's adoption of us as his children, only possible through his son's sacrifice.

- ✦ How can we embrace this tension? How can we rejoice in its beauty while also honoring the presence of incredible loss?

ACTIVE REFLECTION

Do you know a family in your church or community that is growing through adoption or providing foster care? What would it look like for you to offer meaningful support and help to that family?

Pick a date in the next two months to do something tangible to encourage that family. It can be as simple as writing a note or sharing their adoption fundraising page with others. Perhaps it is contributing an anonymous donation or taking them a meal.

If you do not know a family in your community that is pursuing adoption or seeking to provide foster care, ask your pastor, youth leader, or parents to point you in the right direction.

Additional space for notes in back of booklet



Additional Content for Leaders:

- › **Graphic: [The Love of a Family](#)**
- › **Video: [Wetzel Family Adoption Story](#)**

DAY 6 – CALL TO ACTION

A MESSAGE FROM STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN

Hey, I'm Steven Curtis Chapman, and I'm a firm believer that students can change the world. You read my daughter Emily's story at the start of this week, so I've seen with my own eyes the difference a student can make. Emily's challenge to my wife and me began a faith journey that led us to adopt our three daughters and, ultimately, led us to found Show Hope.

We believe when we give students an opportunity to help care for vulnerable children in the world, here or abroad, they can bring about change of epic proportions. We often say things like, "Students are the next generation of orphan care leaders, adoptive parents, orphan care providers, and activists!" And that's true ... but I'm convinced students, if they become passionate about it, can be today's orphan care leaders and agents of significant change. That's why we have provided an opportunity for students, like you, to take a stand and make a difference in the lives of waiting children.

Join us in caring for orphans by launching a movement in your community. Together, we can accomplish more than you can imagine ... right now, right where you are.

Are you ready? Let's do this!

— Steven Curtis Chapman



JOIN THE MOVEMENT

It's easy to be passive. We can watch life go by through screens in front of our eyes—posting photos, sharing opinions, and binge-watching our favorite streaming services without ever really engaging. But as Christians, we are called to a life of action. Isaiah 1:17 says, "... learn to do good; seek justice; correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause."

Notice the action words that start off each sentence in Isaiah 1:17:

- > LEARN
- > SEEK
- > CORRECT
- > BRING
- > PLEAD

God invites us to act. We are called to pursue justice, inspired by the work of Christ and empowered by his love.

Now that you have learned a bit about the needs of waiting children, orphan care, and adoption, you have been invited to join the good fight. The Bible tells us in James 2:17, "So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." As we step out in faith, we are reflecting God's heart to a waiting and watching world. By God's grace, anyone can play a part in showing the world what his love looks like.



PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

Lord, help me to follow your example to care for the vulnerable among us. Open my eyes to see the needs of those around me; give me strength and courage to take action; and give me a heart to passionately chase after you. When the journey seems too difficult, give me grace and perseverance to follow you with all that I am. Thank you for your love. Amen.

ACTIVE REFLECTION

Set five attainable goals for ways you can care for waiting children in your community and around the world.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____



Additional Content for Leaders:

- > [Video: Students Can Change the World](#)
- > [Blog: Using Social Media for Good](#)

NEXT STEPS

+ **Wrap Up Campaign**

- › After completing the social media fast, regroup to celebrate the completion of Pause Campaign and debrief students' experiences.
- › Follow-up is not required but is strongly encouraged as a way to fellowship and grow together as a group, with each student having the opportunity to share what he or she learned and experienced with one another.

+ **Call to Action**

- › Present students with opportunities to *apply* what they've learned during their week away from social media. Here are some ideas:
 - Raise funds to help cover the cost of adoption. Your group can help a waiting child enter the love and protection of a family through adoption by helping provide a Show Hope Adoption Aid grant. The following are some ideas on how to make that happen:
 - Host a movie, game, or craft night, and charge admission.
 - Hold a car wash or dog wash with a suggested donation.
 - Host a dodgeball tournament with an admission fee.
 - Hold a yard sale or bake sale, or create a pop-up thrift shop.
 - Ask students to share their Pause Campaign experiences with the church congregation, and request an offering as a donation to Show Hope.
 - Get creative in coming up with a fundraising idea of your own. Let us know what you dream up.
 - **Set up a Show Hope fundraising page** for your students as an outlet for them to help give the hope of a family to a waiting child through the work of Show Hope.
 - Have students consider becoming Pause Campaign leaders

themselves.

- Students can lead their own campaigns for their school, church, family, or friend groups.
- They can email pause@showhope.org to get started.
- Become an advocate.
 - Create a minute-long “elevator speech” about the needs of orphans that can be shared with others.
 - Speak up on behalf of the needs of waiting children. You really can make a difference!
- Pray.
 - Continue to lead your group in prayer for children in your community and across the world who have been orphaned.
 - Join us in asking God to bless the work of Show Hope and other advocacy and professional organizations providing important resources.
 - » For more specific ways on joining Show Hope in prayer, read our [How You Can Join Us in Prayer blog post](#).
 - » Pray for God to reveal how he is calling each student to get involved in making a difference in the lives of children who have been orphaned.
- Get involved.
 - Consider making an appointment with a caseworker from your local social services agency for your group to learn more about the needs of children in foster care in your community. They may also connect you with local organizations or ministries that are in need of volunteers.
- [Continue Learning](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

About Show Hope

Overview:

After having their own eyes and hearts opened to the needs of orphans and being personally impacted by adoption, Mary Beth and Steven Curtis Chapman founded Show Hope in 2003 with its mission *to care for orphans by engaging the Church and reducing barriers to adoption.*

Every year, millions of people consider growing their family through adoption, but only a small percentage of those who consider adoption actually move forward. The financial barrier that exists within adoption is one of the main reasons for this. Through its cornerstone work, Adoption Aid, Show Hope has impacted more than 7,000 children from more than 60 countries, including the U.S., by awarding financial grants to families who are on the adoption journey.

As a way to give back to the country that entrusted to them three beautiful daughters, Mary Beth and Steven Curtis Chapman longed to help provide care for children who had been orphaned, specifically in the country of China. For more than a decade, Show Hope supported a network of Care Centers in China with an aim of providing care for children with acute medical and special needs—even building, furnishing, and supporting the flagship Care Center, Maria's Big House of Hope, named in honor of their daughter Maria who is now with Jesus. To date, more than 2,700 children have been impacted by Show Hope's involvement in the work of the Care Centers, and while its funding of the Care Centers in China no longer continues, each child who received care there is a testament to God's faithfulness and an expression of hope through the Care Centers Legacy.

To that end, Show Hope launched a new endeavor—Medical Care grants—to address not one but two barriers to adoption: financial and medical. Many children who have been orphaned live with medical needs, with limited access to adequate healthcare. And once home within the love and permanency of a family, rising medical costs and access to treatment can be overwhelming for families. SEEing this need, Show Hope now offers Medical Care grants to financially assist families who have adopted children experiencing healthcare needs.

Additionally, many children impacted by adoption and/or foster care have experienced abuse, trauma, neglect, and/or early attachment injuries. Through its Pre+Post Adoption Support program, Show Hope works to provide practical teaching and resources to better equip parents, caregivers, church leaders, and professionals in order to help restore hope to children and families on the healing journey.

And with a focus on the future, Show Hope's Student Initiatives work aims to educate and empower today's students—and our next generation of leaders—to effectively care for and make a difference in the lives of children who have been orphaned—not just for tomorrow but for today.

Show Hope's mission is made possible with God working in and through the lives of passionate donors, supporters, prayer partners, and student leaders. Thank you, again, for joining us in Pause Campaign.

Further Resources

Want to learn more about Show Hope and how you can help meet the needs of orphans? Here are some resources to help you dive deeper.

Books:

"Choosing to SEE" by Mary Beth Chapman

"Between Heaven and the Real World" by Steven Curtis Chapman

"The Connected Child" by Drs. Karyn B. Purvis and David R. Cross and Wendy Lyons Sunshine

"When Helping Hurts" by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert

"Radical" by David Platt

"Reframing Foster Care" by Jason Johnson

Films:

"The Drop Box" Director Brian Ivie

All Rise: For the Good of the Children - From the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at TCU

Podcasts:

That Sounds Fun Podcast With Annie F. Downs: Episode 135 With Emily Chapman Richards: spoti.fi/2CcQHJK

PARENT EMAIL TEMPLATE

Below is an email template that may be used to notify parents of their student's participation in Pause Campaign. Urge parents to support their students and encourage them as they pause from social media. In fact, parents can also join in Pause Campaign themselves!

Dear Parents,

I am writing to tell you about an exciting campaign our youth group will be participating in—Show Hope's Pause Campaign. Show Hope is an organization with a mission to care for orphans by engaging the Church and reducing barriers to adoption. Pause Campaign will give us the opportunity to step away from social media for one week and create space to learn about God's heart for orphans as we dive into devotional and educational material. Pause Campaign will run from (date) to (date), and we encourage you to support your student as they participate in the campaign. Ask them questions. Find out what they're learning. Be their accountability partners. And if you're up for the challenge, join us by pausing from your own social media for a week as well.

Here's a short video from Show Hope's Founders, Mary Beth and Steven Curtis Chapman, to help you learn more about the campaign! showhope.wistia.com/medias/bxa8nrhjau

If you have any questions, please let me know. You can also check out Show Hope's website at showhope.org for more information.

*Blessings,
(Your name)*

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENT TEMPLATE

If you are participating in Pause Campaign as a youth group or small group, let your church know what you're doing. Submit an announcement for your church's bulletin or newsletter. See suggested template below:

The youth group is excited to share with you about an opportunity they have been given to make a difference in the lives of children who have been orphaned. Show Hope—a faith-based, nonprofit organization founded by Mary Beth and Steven Curtis Chapman that seeks to care for orphans by engaging the Church and reducing barriers to adoption—has invited us to be part of their Student Initiative, Pause Campaign. During the campaign, our students will take a break from social media, dive into devotional and educational material, and learn how they can make a difference in the lives of children who have been orphaned. If you are interested in learning more, ask our youth pastor for more information.

WHY SOCIAL MEDIA?

Your students may struggle with the idea of giving up social media for a whole week or have questions as to why stepping back from social media for seven days is beneficial. See below for some talking points on why we ask students to pause from their social media accounts:

Our lives seem to be dominated by social media. Think about how you spend your spare time. Most of us scroll mindlessly for hours each day, dedicating much of our time to liking, subscribing, and sharing on a screen. Social media can be great—it enables connection and creative expression. But our time is incredibly valuable. What if we spent more of it bringing awareness to the 15 million children who have been orphaned?

Social media is not inherently bad or negative. In fact, it can be a great catalyst for change. We hope that Pause Campaign helps you consider ways in which you can use your social media pages as platforms to create awareness, help others, and impact change. Because of social media, the individual influence of students is greater today than ever before in history. Here's an opportunity to use that influence to really make a difference in the lives of others. Join us in seeing what is possible through Pause Campaign.

THANK YOU

Thank you for serving as a Pause Campaign leader. We hope you and your students were able to learn and grow together through your experience. We appreciate your choice to partner with Show Hope as you encouraged students to get involved in caring for orphans. Please let us know how we can support you in the future.

Now that you have completed Pause Campaign, please take a few minutes to share your experience with us. Email student testimonies, leader testimonies, and/or group photos to pause@showhope.org. We would love to feature your group on our social media!

We also greatly appreciate any feedback or new ideas you'd like to offer as we continue to develop our curriculum to help serve students and student leaders best. [Click here](#) to access the Pause Campaign feedback form.

Keep in touch! Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) or reach out anytime at pause@showhope.org.