

hephzibah62:4

PRAYER AND MOBILIZATION *guide*



Seeking God's direction for holistic discipleship in seven
key areas of engagement with vulnerable children

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all
your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight.

HOW TO USE THIS PRAYER GUIDE:



God has given Hephzibah62:4 the mission of equipping and mobilizing local Wesleyan churches to transform the lives of vulnerable children, in every North American zip and postal code where a Wesleyan church exists.

Hephzibah62:4 focuses on seven key areas of engagement, each vital to meeting the great needs of vulnerable children in our communities. There is much room for discernment and creativity within these areas. No one person and no single church can do everything, but everyone can do something according to their unique contexts, spiritual gifts and resources.

Pray through this guide alone or, even better, in community with your brothers and sisters in Christ. May the Holy Spirit reveal opportunities and roles for you and your church, as you take this next step of obedience. As God leads, explore deeper into the seven areas of engagement through hephzibah.org.

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TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE:

› THE NEED:

Science and research reveal the impact of early trauma and toxic stress on brain development, long-term health and the degree to which children may struggle in many areas of life.

› GO DEEPER:

How will looking through, as well as outside, the lenses of your unique personal experiences lead to empathy and more effective connection with vulnerable children and families?

› NEXT STEPS:

Is God calling you to learn about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and their impact on a child's mind, body and spirit? To discover how Christians and local churches can offer hope and healing by investing in ministries that focus on ACE prevention? To learn about trauma-informed care principles as discipleship tools that help increase resilience among those who have experienced ACEs?

› PRAYER:

Dear Lord, help us to see others the way You see them, and learn to love as You love.

ROMANS 8:38-39

...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.



SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE:

› THE NEED:

As Christians, we understand that all life is a gift from God. Millions of innocent lives are lost annually through abortion.

› GO DEEPER:

When lives are saved from abortion, children may still be born into vulnerable situations. When parents choose life, how do we take our sincerely held beliefs about the sanctity of human life to the next level of action, to provide support that promotes healthy parenting and child welfare?

› NEXT STEPS:

Is God calling you to be an advocate for the unborn? To help change laws to protect the unborn? To befriend and mentor a single mom and her child? To bring a baby into your family, for whom a birth family has chosen to place for adoption?

› PRAYER:

Dear Lord, show us how You would direct us to effectively protect the unborn, while making ourselves open and available for further redemptive work You may call us to do.

JEREMIAH 1:5

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart...



SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY:

› THE NEED:

Families of children with special needs are less likely to attend church and church activities. Children with special needs may benefit from spaces and experiences intentionally designed to accommodate their different abilities and/or support people to help them assimilate into a more traditional worship and fellowship environment.

› GO DEEPER:

How can we serve individuals with special needs while appreciating what they have to offer and providing them opportunities to use their God-given gifts to benefit the Kingdom?

› NEXT STEPS:

Is God calling you to become a friend/support to a child or family impacted by special needs? To start or serve in a special needs program in your church? To start or serve in a special needs outreach in your community?

› PRAYER:

Dear Lord, show us how to most effectively understand, love, and reach children and families impacted by special needs, in our church and community.

† JOHN 9:2-3

His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned”, said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God may be displayed in him.”



ANTI-TRAFFICKING:

› THE NEED:

Recruitment of vulnerable children and adults for sex and other forms of trafficking happens in all our communities. Because the resulting bondage seems so dangerous and invisible, even compassionate Christians often feel they can't make a difference.

› GO DEEPER:

Youth who have experienced trauma, foster youth in unstable or group home situations, and those who have aged out of the system without a permanent family are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers. How can we be involved in increasing resilience, by ensuring that each vulnerable child in our community is connected to and cared for by at least one loving adult?

› NEXT STEPS:

Is God calling you to become more aware of the human trafficking crisis and the specific opportunities to help in your community? To help educate your church? To get involved in rescuing victims? To provide hope and healing for survivors through an aftercare ministry?

› PRAYER:

Dear Lord, give us the knowledge, direction and courage we need to enter the dark places of the world, in order to offer the hope and healing power of Christ.

† ISAIAH 61:1

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners...



FAMILY PRESERVATION:

› THE NEED:

Families in crisis often lack a healthy support system and resources to maintain a safe, nurturing environment for children.

› GO DEEPER:

Sometimes families need long-term support once they stabilize to help them continue to thrive. How can we remain helpful and hopeful while being prepared to address possible relapses into past circumstances, and keep children safe? How do we most effectively connect, to influence change in generational patterns to decrease vulnerability in children?

› NEXT STEPS:

Is God calling you to become a mentor to a child/teen in poverty? To give support to a single parent who's struggling? To bring children into your home temporarily to help a family resolve a crisis? To start a church outreach program to struggling youth and families in your community?

› PRAYER:

Dear Lord, help me to move outside my areas of comfort to places where families are hurting. Equip me with grace, wisdom and courage to enter messy situations, in order to have opportunities to point children and families to the One who can bring hope and healing for generations to come.

† GALATIANS 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.



FOSTER CARE:

› THE NEED:

Thousands of children are removed from their families annually due to abuse and neglect. The primary goals of foster care are keeping children safe and reunification with the birth family whenever possible. In most communities, there are not enough foster parents for every child to have an ideal placement. Instability in the foster care system often leads to compounding Adverse Childhood Experiences and resulting life challenges.

› GO DEEPER:

An often-overheard phrase regarding foster care is, “I could never get attached, then give a child back.” Are we willing to trust God to give us the strength to take on challenging roles He may call us to when we know we aren’t equipped to handle them in our own strength?

› NEXT STEPS:

Is God calling you to support birth parents working to reunify? To support aging out youth? To become part of the support system of a foster family you know? To begin a foster care support ministry in your church or a network in your county? To become a foster parent?

› PRAYER:

Dear Lord, expand my heart for those involved in the foster care system in my community: children in foster care, birth families, law enforcement officers, child welfare workers, lawyers and judges, mentors, teachers, foster and adoptive families and many others.

† PHILIPPIANS 4:13

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.



ADOPTION:

› THE NEED:

In situations where parents have died, or when timely reunification or parenting by birth parents is not best or possible for a child, identifying a loving adoptive family is often the best choice.

› GO DEEPER:

Adoption is certainly something to celebrate; however, every adoption comes after great loss. Are we willing to live in the tension between the joys that adoption brings, while making room for grief and healing to occur in adopted children and birth families?

› NEXT STEPS:

Is God calling you to give financially to help make adoption affordable to loving, Christian families? To support an adopted child or adoptive family who is struggling? To bring a child into your family through adoption?

› PRAYER:

Dear Lord, help us to check our motivations for adoption, and give us wisdom for parenting and providing support to children and families impacted by adoption.

† PSALM 68:5-6A

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families...



Transforming the life of the vulnerable child

YOU AND YOUR CHURCH CAN PLAY VITAL ROLES IN TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN YOUR COMMUNITY. VISIT HEPHZIBAH.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES.

No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord will take delight in you...

ISAIAH 62:4



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