



“I was forced to drop out of school so I could go work in the sugar plantations . . . [but] I’m now back in school!”

» Chitsanzo, age 17, describing the benefit of a community-based child protection program

Caring for Orphans and Vulnerable Children

A Study Guide for
Journeys of Faith

SESSION 4

Key Strategies for
Strengthening
Families and
Community-Based
Care, Part 2



Learn to do good. Seek justice.
Help the oppressed. Defend the
cause of orphans. Fight for the
rights of widows.

Isaiah 1:17 NLT

Caring for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
A Study Guide for *Journeys of Faith* (Sessions 1 – 6)
The Faith to Action Initiative, 2015.
Photo credits: Firelight Foundation and World Vision

This series is designed to support small group study accompanying *Journeys of Faith: A Resource Guide for Orphan Care Ministries Helping Children in Africa & Beyond*. The series includes six downloadable sessions and a facilitator guide, which together equip small groups with the tools, resources, and information needed to engage participants through discussion, readings, videos, group activities, and prayer.

The Faith to Action Initiative serves as a resource for Christian groups, churches, and individuals seeking to respond to the needs of orphans and vulnerable children. Through our publications, website, and workshops, we offer practical tools and resources and up-to-date information on key strategies and research to help guide action.

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WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

 2 minutes

Welcome to Session 4 of *Caring for Orphans and Vulnerable Children*. In this session, you will:

- Discuss what you read and watched in your individual study (see “On Your Own,” page 17, in Session 3, as well as any notes you may have taken on pages 18–19).
- Continue the study you began in Session 3 on the 12 key strategies for strengthening family- and community-based care of vulnerable children.

Before starting your discussion, begin your time together with prayer, inviting God to open your hearts and minds as you seek to learn more about caring for orphans and vulnerable children.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Checking In

 10 minutes

Check in with each other about what you’ve learned and experienced since your last gathering.

1. In Session 3, you discussed “Twelve Strategies for Churches Responding to the Needs of Orphans and Vulnerable Children.” As you reflect on your discussion, what key ideas or themes stand out most to you from what you learned about the 12 strategies? (For a brief summary of the strategies, see page 8).

VIDEO

“Connecting the Dots: A Child Protection Model from Malawi”

 7 minutes

Produced by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), this video shows how CRS in Malawi led a consortium of 12 partners to implement CRS-IMPACT, a program that trains volunteers to actively protect children in their communities. In four years, the program strengthened families by training over 7,700 volunteers and reached over 40,000 children and adults with child protection services.

Use an Internet-connected device such as a laptop, tablet, or smartphone to access this video at the Faith to Action website: <http://faithtoaction.org/videos>. As you watch, use the outline below to follow along or to take additional notes on anything that stands out to you.

Video Notes

Antonio Kosote, OVC Technical Quality Coordinator, CRS-IMPACT Program

In Malawi, two out of three children have been abused before they reach age 18.

Antonio Kosote, OVC Technical Quality Coordinator, CRS-IMPACT Program

It is very important to have community involvement at grassroots level in child protection because the child lives in the community. . . . So IMPACT employed the family care volunteer model.

Dyna Khonde, Senior Program Manager, CRS-IMPACT Program

A family care volunteer is a trained member of the community who looks after 10 to 15 households, who visits these households regularly, and builds relationships with the children.

Antonio Kosote, OVC Technical Quality Coordinator, CRS-IMPACT Program

The family care volunteers are very important because they are the first point of contact for the child and the family to be linked to external service providers. . . . The representatives of the family care volunteers at the village level form what we call the OVC (Orphans and Vulnerable Children) committee.

Rosemary Mahata, District Social Welfare Officer, Chikwawa, Malawi

The villages have changed their [legal] bylaws to be more protective of children. If traditional leaders are involved, we know that these issues will be resolved.

Fredson Peterson, Group Village Headman, Meja

It is a child's right to go to school. Pregnant women should attend antenatal care and deliver at the hospital. These are some of the bylaws I gave my chiefs.

Antonio Kosote, OVC Technical Quality Coordinator, CRS-IMPACT Program

For bigger violations, like defilements, early marriages, the OVC committee will make a referral. With the support of the traditional leader, they will take it up with the help of the community child protection worker, who is a government point person. They will refer that case to other service providers like the police, the health centers.

Rhoda Betchani, Family Care Volunteer

At first, people in our area were very defensive. . . . But we never gave up. We were persistent and we showed the community how the committee works.

Muzandifuna Sande, Project Participant

I know that if my neighbor had not come to counsel me and intervene to stop me from abusing my children, I know that I could have even gone as far as taking their lives. That was me, but I've left it behind. Our relationship is so much better now, and we love each other very much.

Antonio Kosote, OVC Technical Quality Coordinator, CRS-IMPACT Program

The final outcome with this system created, with this referral mechanism, is that the child is adequately protected. The child has got a circle of players, a circle of stakeholders, who are providing the much-needed protection for this child.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Strengthening Families



15 minutes

2. As time permits, use two or more of the questions that follow to discuss the video “Connecting the Dots.”
 - The video begins and ends with three children—Anna, Chitsanzo, and Blessings—whose lives were changed by a community-based child protection program. How might their stories have turned out differently if CRS had chosen another approach—such as building an orphanage—rather than strengthening local communities to care for vulnerable children?
 - Children grow best in families, but they may also experience abuse in families. In what ways do contributing factors—such as the stresses of poverty, lack of parenting skills, generational patterns of abuse, and lack of community awareness—make supporting family-based care both more complex and more necessary? How did CRS-IMPACT address some of these contributing factors?
 - The CRS-IMPACT Program is designed to put a circle of stakeholders around vulnerable children. How was the benefit of this approach evidenced in the story of Muszandfunu Sande, the mother who used to abuse her children?
 - How does the story of Muszandfunu and Rhoda (the family care volunteer) demonstrate strategy 3, “reduce stigma and discrimination”?
 - What unique contributions did community members such as family care volunteers and traditional leaders make to the successful implementation of the CRS-IMPACT Program?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

*Three Stories of Partnership**



26 minutes

3. In Session 3, you began your study of “Twelve Strategies for Responding to the Needs of Orphans and Vulnerable Children.” Page 8 briefly summarizes these strategies (for the complete article, see Session 2, pages 17–19). Here, you’ll continue to explore the 12 strategies by breaking up into smaller groups to discuss how the strategies are demonstrated in one of three stories of partnership.

Divide the group into three smaller groups and assign one of the following partnership stories to each group:

- Partnership Story 1: Mission Community Church, Visionledd, and Somebody Cares (pages 9–12)
- Partnership Story 2: Watermark Community Church and African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries (pages 12–15)
- Partnership Story 3: Willow Creek Community Church, Bright Hope, and the Samfya Community of Care Providers (pages 15–18)

Together in your smaller groups, read through the summary of your partnership story and use the questions provided for discussion. After 26 minutes, you’ll gather back together as a large group to debrief your partnership stories together.

* These partnership stories are based on *Journeys of Faith* (2011) as partnership examples that exemplify key strategies for strengthening family care. Statistics from *Journeys of Faith* have been updated for this series, but program details may not reflect current program operations for each partnership story.



Twelve Strategies for Responding to the Needs of Orphans and Vulnerable Children*

The 12 strategies that follow are endorsed by a broad range of faith-based and international agencies serving children. They affirm that efforts to support families and children should consider all aspects of a child's wellbeing, including the importance of family-based care.

1. Focus on the most vulnerable children, not only orphans.
2. Strengthen the capacity of families and communities to care for children.
3. Reduce stigma and discrimination.
4. Support HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention strategies, particularly among youth.
5. Strengthen the ability of caregivers and youth to earn livelihoods.
6. Provide material assistance to those who are too old or ill to work.
7. Ensure access to health care, life-saving medications, and home-based care.
8. Provide daycare and other support services that ease the burden on caregivers.
9. Support schools and ensure access to education, for girls as well as boys.
10. Support the psychosocial as well as material needs of children.
11. Engage children and youth in the decisions that affect their lives.
12. Protect children from abuse, gender discrimination, and labor exploitation.

* For examples of these strategies in action, see "Twelve Strategies for Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children," in *From Faith to Action* (pages 18–23), accessible at <http://faithtoaction.org/resources>.

PARTNERSHIP STORY 1: Mission Community Church, Visionledd, and Somebody Cares

Go around the group and have a different person read aloud one or two paragraphs at a time from pages 10–12, which summarizes the first partnership story from last session’s reading, “Mission Community Church, Visionledd, and Somebody Cares” (for the complete story, see *Journeys of Faith*, pages 28–33).

- Which of the 12 strategies are most evident in the partnership among Mission Community Church, Visionledd, Somebody Cares, and the Chikudulire community?
- Somebody Cares operates on the principle that low-cost, sustainable change emerges from the community itself. How is this principle evident in both their partnerships and the programs they developed together?
- How has the partnership strengthened Chikudzulire’s capacity to address the needs of orphans and vulnerable children within its own community? Consider the impact on children of programming for pastors, for youth, and for widows.
- What insights or lessons from this partnership story stand out most to you? How would you use these insights to inform the efforts you, your church, or your group might take?

PARTNERSHIP STORY 1

Mission Community Church, Visionledd, and Somebody Cares

In 2007, Mission Community Church, a 4,000-member church in Gilbert, Arizona, began a journey to respond to the AIDS pandemic in Africa. The church sought the guidance of an experienced intermediary, Visionledd, an international organization that builds partnerships between North American and African churches. Visionledd introduced the church to the work of Somebody Cares, a ministry in Malawi that works with churches and communities to reach out to the poor and those affected by HIV and AIDS. The partnership has helped to restore the community of Chikudzulire, a collection of 48 villages ravaged by drought, hunger, and disease. Operating from the principle that low-cost, sustainable change emerges from the community itself, Somebody Cares partners with local communities to help pastors, churches, and community members unite for the cause of the orphaned and widowed.

Multiple Programs to Meet Multiple Needs

When Mission Community Church joined a pastors' learning trip to Malawi to see the work of Somebody Cares in Chikudzulire and other communities, they looked to Theresa Malila, founder of Somebody Cares, and the Visionledd staff for guidance about the direction their partnership should take.

"We were committed not to force our own agenda," said Mark Connelly, Mission's lead pastor. Together, the three groups determined that Chikudzulire, where Visionledd and Somebody Cares had been working to mobilize pastors and the community for the past year, was the best match for partnership.

As churches and community members in Chikudzulire stepped up their outreach to the poor and those affected by HIV and AIDS, they were in a good position to utilize additional support from Mission Community Church in a way that built on, rather than discouraged, community initiative. The pastoral training and development of home-based care programs for the ill had strengthened the community's capacity to address its own needs, while also providing a solid foundation for partnership.

Community childcare center. With support from Somebody Cares, Chikudzulire mobilized local resources to begin building a community childcare center to serve a wide range of needs. When Mission Community Church became an active partner, they funded the drilling of a borehole

next to the center site to provide clean water to 5,000 people. The next year they raised funds and returned with church volunteers to help finish the center's construction.

A variety of programs operate from the center, providing services that meet the needs of children, youth, widows, and HIV-affected families. Programs include early childhood development (daycare) and orphan feeding programs, widows' support and skill training groups, and home-based care.

Women for Orphans and Widows (WOW). Each morning, while their children attend the daycare center, orphan caregivers and widows meet at the center for mutual support, training, and encouragement. WOW functions as both a peer support group and a training group, equipping women with income-generating skills such as soap making and bead making.

HIV and AIDS care training and support. The community center provides a central location for home-based care training and HIV and AIDS support groups that form a network of community volunteers trained to visit the homes of families living with AIDS. Home-based care acts as an additional layer of support to orphans and vulnerable children who benefit from regular visits from caring volunteers.

Mission Community Church provides ongoing support to the center's programs. For example, they have provided funds to expand the children's feeding program and have launched a home-based care sponsorship program in which church members individually pledge \$35 a month to help cover the cost of home-based caregiver packets that include medicines, food parcels, and other supplies.

Sustaining a Long-Term Commitment

Mission Community Church has committed to serve and learn over the long term. They remain active in Chikudzulire, supporting the community center, sponsoring income-generating activities, funding pastoral training, and organizing medical clinics and distribution of Bible resources. Theresa Malila, head of Visionledd, visits the Arizona church once a year to share updates and inspire the congregation. Visionledd supports and guides Mission in their partnership and works closely with Somebody Cares to ensure that all efforts are in alignment with priorities on the ground in Chikudzulire.

Three Lessons Learned

1. **Consider working with a trusted intermediary.** A trusted local intermediary is key to many successful partnerships. While mission trips will help your congregation understand the realities in the communities you may be called to serve, an intermediary organization with strong roots in the community will provide essential support.
2. **Be flexible and responsive.** Mission Community Church originally wanted to partner only with one community in Malawi—Chikudzulire—through Somebody Cares. Concerned that

sending a team four times in a year to the same community would foster jealousy among community leaders and dependency in the community, Somebody Cares encouraged the church to visit other communities in need as well. The church wholeheartedly agreed.

3. **Target your investments and commitment to make a sustainable difference.** Your partner will appreciate understanding your long-term intent. Having open conversations about a realistic time frame for ongoing support of programs helps local ministry partners plan more effectively for sustainability.

PARTNERSHIP STORY 2: Watermark Community Church and African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries

Go around the group and have a different person read aloud one or two paragraphs at a time from pages 13–15, which summarizes the second partnership story from last week’s reading, “Watermark Community Church and African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries” (for the complete story, see *Journeys of Faith*, pages 34–38).

- Which of the 12 strategies are most evident in the partnership between Watermark Community Church and African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries (ALARM)?
- Discuss ALARM Uganda’s expansion of their work from church leadership training to care and protection of orphans and vulnerable children. How was this a natural extension of their ministry?
- In *Journeys of Faith* (page 36), you read the story of Robert, age 15, who cares for his three younger siblings. How were you affected by this story? How does providing support for a youth-headed household stretch your definition of family? How does it enhance your understanding of programming that supports family-based care and strengthens families?
- What insights or lessons from this partnership story stand out most to you? How would you use these insights to inform the efforts you, your church, or your group might take?

PARTNERSHIP STORY 2

Watermark Community Church and African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries

Watermark Community Church, a 2,000-member church in Dallas, Texas, began partnering with African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministries (ALARM) in 2006 to support pastoral leadership training in conflict-affected areas in Africa. It was through this work that Watermark came face-to-face with the needs of orphans and vulnerable children in Uganda. Together with ALARM, the church expanded its engagement to serve children in need. With Watermark's support, ALARM Uganda has grown its orphan care ministry and increased support to children laboring in rock quarries and living in youth-headed households.

ALARM's leadership in Uganda had come to understand that the stability and viability of the communities they were trying to reach with the gospel of reconciliation were directly linked to the wellbeing of families and children. Accordingly, they had initiated ministries to meet the needs of children living in desperate situations and found a supportive partner in Watermark.

At the time Watermark was introduced to a small orphan outreach program initiated by local ALARM leadership, the program was serving fewer than 20 children. Seeing the extent of the need and the potential to reach many more children, Watermark provided needed resources, enabling ALARM Uganda to establish a paid staff position and to train a cadre of volunteers. ALARM's orphan outreach now touches the lives of over 600 children with a range of community-based programs, including educational support, mentoring, support for youth-headed households, and skills training.

Ministering to Children and Families in Greatest Need

Watermark and ALARM were drawn together by a deep sense of compassion for children and families struggling against enormous odds. Prior to the partnership, ALARM Uganda was already ministering on the margins of Ugandan society. The resources and encouragement offered by Watermark built on this foundation.

ALARM volunteers began reaching out to families living near a rock quarry in Kampala when they found out that children were working alongside their mothers to produce a yield of rocks worth roughly \$1 a day. An initial response led by the wife of the ALARM Uganda country director was to reach out to the mothers and offer training in bead making—one of few livelihood options for women living near a stone quarry. In addition to skills training, the program instituted a compulsory savings program and assisted the women, many of whom were widows, in selling in the local markets. The program, though small, helped to improve the families' livelihoods.

Partnering with Watermark, ALARM Uganda expanded its outreach to the children of these women with a feeding program, school sponsorship, and mentoring. Because of the support provided, mothers no longer felt compelled to have their children work in the quarries to avoid starvation. Hundreds of local children have been brought out of child labor and many are now attending school.

In Gulu (five hours north of Kampala) ALARM began helping several youth-headed households living in and around internally displaced persons (IDP) camps by providing food, spiritual support, and help accessing education. The camps were established to house and protect nearly 2 million displaced children and families. Thousands of children were born in these camps, and an estimated 25,000 youth were kidnapped or recruited to serve in rebel armies between 1989 and 2007. Despite the fact that the Ugandan government had been reallocating land and helping families leave the camps to resettle in nearby communities, life in the IDP camps left families dependent on food aid and produced a generation of youth ill-equipped to provide for themselves.

Meeting the Needs of Youth-Headed Households

At the heart of ALARM Uganda's work with children is family strengthening. In the face of orphanhood due to HIV and AIDS, conflict, and other causes, keeping loved ones together often means embracing different types of families, each with its own needs. Youth-headed households are some of the most vulnerable families, requiring extra protection and support. With support from Watermark, ALARM Uganda has been able to sponsor over 50 children living in youth-headed households. Youth are given educational opportunities and vocational training to earn livelihoods as well as emotional and spiritual support. Without this support, the children would most likely be split apart, live in extreme poverty, or be vulnerable to recruitment into gangs and rebel activities.

Growing Together in Service

Future plans for the partnership include even more support for youth-headed households, expanding income-generating activities to promote livelihoods for widows and a vocational school for youth. ALARM Uganda ministers directly to children and families in need and also continues to equip pastors to lead their communities to do the same.

Just as ALARM Uganda's advocacy and outreach has broadened the ministries of local churches to address the needs of children, Watermark's vision and ministry has also grown. For the Watermark Church, the journey of caring for orphans and vulnerable children in Africa has been a path of discipleship.

Three Lessons Learned

1. **Empower and equip the local church.** Pastors equipped with the right tools and training can better lead their congregations in responding to the needs of orphans and vulnerable children. ALARM Uganda and Watermark were able to use an existing framework (pastoral training, leadership, and peace building) and adapt it to respond to the growing numbers of orphans and vulnerable children in Uganda.

2. **Be willing to expand your understanding of ministry.** Watermark began their journey with an interest in church leadership development. When confronted with the realities on the ground in Uganda, they allowed themselves to see beyond this original vision. This meant adjusting their involvement in a well-established training program to support ALARM Uganda's efforts on behalf of vulnerable children.
3. **Preserve and support families.** Even in a conflict zone, preserving the family can still be a priority. Rather than removing children from their families and communities, ALARM Uganda and Watermark are working together to rebuild communities ravaged by HIV and AIDS and civil war. The focus on support to youth-headed households demonstrates a willingness to draw from the resources of local churches to keep families intact.

PARTNERSHIP STORY 3: Willow Creek Community Church, Bright Hope, and the Samfya Community of Care Providers

Go around the group and have a different person read aloud one or two paragraphs at a time from pages 16–18, which summarizes the third partnership story from last week's reading, "Willow Creek Community Church, Bright Hope, and the Samfya Community of Care Providers" (for the complete story, see *Journeys of Faith*, pages 40–45).

- Which of the 12 strategies are most evident in the partnership among Willow Creek, Bright Hope, and the Samfya Community of Care Providers?
- What lessons can we learn from the 24 churches from different denominations who came together around a common goal? Discuss the potential challenges and keys to making this work. How do you think they are able to avoid dissension?
- Consider the following statement from Prisca Mwela, SCCP's microloan coordinator: "We teach that the church should be the solution to community problems. Church leaders are mandated to address poverty." Do you agree that the church should be involved in the solution of community problems related to extreme poverty? If so, what role should the church play? In what ways might the role of the church both support and be distinct from the role of local government, traditional leadership, and other services?
- Discuss your understanding of microlending. How do microloans support families? What cautions and priorities would a church need to exercise to grant microloans as a ministry?
- What other strategies might be needed to ensure the success of a microloan program? For example, what if caregivers are too elderly or ill to work, lack business skills, or have no access to day care, etc.?
- What insights or lessons from this partnership story stand out most to you? How would you use these insights to inform the efforts you, your church, or your group might take?

PARTNERSHIP STORY 3

Willow Creek Community Church, Bright Hope, and the Samfya Community of Care Providers

Willow Creek Community Church is a 22,000-member church based in South Barrington, Illinois. With the help of Bright Hope, an international mission organization, Willow Creek partnered with the Samfya Community of Care Providers (SCCP)—a network of 24 churches that helps children stay in school, delivers home-based care to the ill, and offers microloans enabling families to provide for children.

Laying the Groundwork for Partnership

Guided by Bright Hope, Willow Creek was introduced to the Samfya Community Care Providers (SCCP) in Zambia in 2004. Bright Hope was already working with SCCP and saw in Willow Creek a well-matched partner for the good work already underway. On an assessment trip to Zambia, Willow Creek met with SCCP and learned about hundreds of orphans who had been taken in by foster families through the local churches. Many of these families needed help to pay for school fees and uniforms so children could access education. Willow Creek responded quickly to these and other immediate needs, raising \$600,000 following a World AIDS Day service that called attention to the situation in Africa. The funds were used to support Samfya as well as other African partners.

From the beginning, SCCP's approach was to ensure that children remained in family care. "Samfya already had a great model," said Warren Beach, director of Willow Creek's Global Connections. "If a child was orphaned but family could be located, the child was placed in their extended family. If a child has no surviving family, the church identified a family from the congregation and asked them to take in the child. We didn't change their model, we asked, 'What can we do?'"

In response to SCCP's priorities, Willow Creek provided resources for school scholarships and food supplements for those living with HIV and AIDS. At the request of the Samfya school district, Willow Creek annually assembles "Hope Packs" for children, which include toiletries, school supplies, T-shirts, Bibles, and mosquito nets. In addition, the partnership moved toward more sustainable efforts, such as kitchen garden and microloan programs enabling families to provide for children in the longer term.

Local Churches Working Together

The Samfya Community Care Providers brought together a group of churches in the community, across denominations, to fight the scourge of AIDS, promote education, and foster orphans. Church leaders share their burdens and pool their limited resources. The work is held together by strong commitment to a common purpose—a recognition that it is collective action that can transform their community. A local church leader states, “There is no dissension among the churches or different denominations, because we have come together for a common passion—to help the widows and orphans.”

Self-Sufficiency Through Microloans

One of the most valuable and successful aspects of the partnership is the growth of the SCCP microloan program, supported jointly by Willow Creek and Bright Hope. Since its inception, the microloan program has provided loans to more than 850 members of the Samfya community and trained over 50 loan officers. A dedicated SCCP staff person oversees the microloan program, ensuring that churches running these programs have adequate support. While only modest resources are needed to start and maintain microloan programs, the programs require experienced oversight to yield results. Prisca Mwela, the microloans program coordinator for SCCP, states, “We teach that the church should be the solution to community problems. Church leaders are mandated to address poverty.” The impact on participating families has been transformative, with many families increasing the number of meals they provide daily, investing in small businesses, and contributing to their children’s education. Microloans have also enabled more families to welcome foster children whom they would have otherwise turned away because of lack of resources.

From Relief to Sustainable Solutions

The programs in Samfya supported by Willow Creek and Bright Hope continue to thrive. The number of families participating in the microloan program is growing. Through the efforts and initiatives of local churches, this program has expanded to two other communities in Zambia. The partners continue to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the ministries to children and families. The partnership in Samfya has progressed from providing relief to supporting development and more sustainable solutions. It serves as a compelling example of churches breaking through denominational barriers to care for the needs of their community. With help from Willow Creek and Bright Hope, SCCP and its network of churches continue to grow, with nearby communities seeking to replicate the model.

Three Lessons Learned

1. **Invest in and empower families.** An investment in empowering families (through advocacy, training, and microlending) resulted in more community members being sensitive to the needs of children and willing to foster orphans. The lives of thousands of children have been

transformed by the dynamic collaboration of Willow Creek, Bright Hope, and SCCP. There are also many “testimonies” from caregivers and heads of households who have received support, training, loans, and counseling and are now better able to care for children in the long term. The SCCP approach has helped to build resiliency in the community, rather than dependency.

2. **Build trust and take responsible, well-informed risks.** Because collaboration between Willow Creek, Bright Hope, and Samfya is rooted in trust, Willow Creek was willing to take responsible risks, such as investing in a new microloan program administered by SCCP. Willow Creek could easily have established their own programs. Instead, they invested resources in an existing viable community structure. Bright Hope provided sound technical expertise and training to SCCP, enabling them to implement and manage the microlending program. Working together, the three partners each brought particular strengths, resulting in a program that strengthened the ability of families to provide for their children.
3. **Seek to fill gaps and complement resources.** Willow Creek filled in critical gaps identified by their local partners, and often provided needed resources to complement the support that was already in place. Leveraging and complementing resources helps to enhance work on the ground that may already be funded by other programs—it invites more partners to the table and ensures a more holistic approach to care.

Three Stories of Partnership Debrief



15 minutes

4. Gather the whole group back together. As time permits, use one or more of the following questions to debrief your small group discussions.
 - How has studying the stories of partnership shifted your thinking about what it means to care for orphans and vulnerable children?
 - To provide holistic care is to care for the whole person—physical, emotional, social, economic, and spiritual. What did you learn from the partnership stories about the provision of holistic care to strengthen families? How did partners combine their strengths and resources to accomplish multiple objectives on behalf of vulnerable children and families?
 - Based on what you’ve learned from the partnership stories, what are the key insights you want to apply to your own efforts to help orphans and vulnerable children?

Making a Personal Connection: Biblical Partnership

 15 minutes

5. Among the Greek words New Testament writers use for “partnership” is the word *koinonia* (koy-nohn-ee-ah). Here is how the apostle Paul uses it in two of his letters:

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership [koinonia] in the gospel from the first day until now.

PHILIPPIANS 1:4–5

I pray that your partnership [koinonia] with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ.

PHILEMON 1:6

You might also be familiar with the meaning of *koinonia* as the kind of close relationship shared among those in the Body of Christ:

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship [koinonia], to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

ACTS 2:42

Still other translations of this rich biblical word include the following:

For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution [koinonia] for the poor among the Lord’s people in Jerusalem.

ROMANS 15:26

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation [koinonia] in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

PHILIPPIANS 3:10–11

And do not forget to do good and to share [koinonia] with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

HEBREWS 13:16

- How do all of these uses of the word *koinonia* enrich your understanding of what it means to engage in partnership on behalf of vulnerable children and families?
- In what ways do the three stories you discussed demonstrate this kind of rich expression of *koinonia* in partnership?

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time together with prayer.

As an option, you might use the following prayer to close your meeting. To quiet your hearts and center your focus on God, consider allowing a few minutes of silence before reading the prayer.

God, we thank you for the privilege of partnering with you to care for vulnerable children and families. We ask that you not only fill our hearts with love and compassion, but that you also give us unity around a shared vision and lead us into wise and practical action. Help us to live out a true faith of koinonia—in our families and friendships, in our group, and in our efforts to love and support vulnerable children, families, and communities. In all we do, may we honor you and honor those we seek to serve.

Amen.



On Your Own

Between now and the next group meeting, set aside 15 minutes to read, watch, and then reflect on the following:

- “Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions: Haiti,” 4:20 minutes, produced by The Chalmers Center (access the video online at <http://faithtoaction.org/videos>).
- “Principles of Partnership,” *Journeys of Faith*, pages 46–49 (accessible and downloadable at <http://faithtoaction.org/resources/journeys-of-faith/>).
- “Guiding Principles for Short-Term Mission Trips,” *Journeys of Faith*, pages 50–51 (accessible and downloadable at <http://faithtoaction.org/resources/journeys-of-faith/>).
- Reread the sidebars on missions in *Journeys of Faith*, pages 18–38 (accessible and downloadable at <http://faithtoaction.org/resources/journeys-of-faith/>).

Note any insights or questions in the space provided on pages 22–23. You’ll discuss what you’ve read and watched in your next meeting.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Online

- The Faith to Action website features a variety of ongoing stories from around the world that illustrate the 12 strategies discussed in this session. See especially “HelpKids Centre: Supporting the Love of Families in Sri Lanka” (accessible online at <http://faithtoaction.org/stories/>).
- “Because We Care: Programming Guidance for Children Deprived of Parental Care,” Elizabeth Oswald, World Vision (accessible online at <http://faithtoaction.org/resources/more-resources/best-practice-strategies-in-family-community-based-care/>).
- “Supporting Family and Community Strengthening to Prevent Child Abandonment,” SOS Children’s Villages, Bolivia (accessible online at <http://faithtoaction.org/resources/more-resources/best-practice-strategies-in-family-community-based-care/>).
- “A Matter of Belonging: How Faith-Based Organizations Can Strengthen Families and Communities to Support Orphans and Vulnerable Children,” Christian Aid and UNICEF (accessible online at <http://faithtoaction.org/resources/more-resources/best-practice-strategies-in-family-community-based-care/>).
- “Symposium Report: Keeping Children and Families together with Economic Strengthening,” FHI 360 (accessible online at <http://faithtoaction.org/resources/more-resources/best-practice-strategies-in-family-community-based-care/>).

Video

- “Webinar 3: Strategies to Strengthening Family Care,” 23 minutes (accessible and downloadable at <http://faithtoaction.org/videos/webinars/>).



