

EVERYONE — CAN DO — SOMETHING



Creating space for everyone to engage in your church's foster care and adoption ministry.

Jason Johnson _____
National Director of Church Ministry Initiatives

**SPACE FOR
EVERYONE**

WE'RE NOT ALL CALLED TO DO THE SAME THING, BUT WE'RE ALL CERTAINLY CAPABLE OF DOING SOMETHING.

The proper functioning of the people of God to fulfill the purposes of God are most often portrayed in communal terms, not individualistic ones. While one role may be more visible and another more subtle, both operate on a cooperative level of equal codependence, to the extent that if even one seemingly "small" part suffers, like stubbing a toe, it effects the larger whole, like bringing a grown man to his knees in pain.

Likewise, when one part fulfills its role, like a hand holding a fork, the larger whole benefits, like a mouth chewing and a stomach being satisfied. This is what it means for the different parts of the body to be "members of one another." We are far more intricately linked than we realize.

Specifically, as we look at how the cooperative efforts of the Body of Christ work themselves out through the care of the orphaned and vulnerable, we find the same premise to hold true - **we're not all called to do the same thing, but we're all certainly capable of doing something.** We all have a role to play - some more visible, some more subtle - all of significant importance in serving vulnerable children and families well.

In the Body of Christ, there are no insignificant parts. The same is true for your ministry - everyone has a role to play, and they are all important!



The imagery of a human body is consistently used throughout Scripture to illustrate the identity and activity of the Church – how the people of God relate to one another and function together. Some are hands and some are feet. Some are fingers and some are toes. Some eyes and some ears. We’re a collective diversity of unique individuals coming together – all with different gifts, passions, resources, experiences and capacities – recognizing our differences and bringing them together for the common good. Scripture likens it to the way a physical body works - different parts, same purpose.

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. 1 Corinthians 12:14-20

THE BODY OF CHRIST

In the Body of Christ, **no one is called to do everything, but everyone is created to do something.** That’s how our physical bodies work and that’s how our churches work as well. Unique gifts are given to unique individuals, not for their own good but for the common good of the whole body.

This message continues to reinforce the [identity-oriented decision making paradigm](#). The goal is not to fit a “square peg into a round hole,” but instead to help people discover the unique gifts, talents, resources and passions God has given them and how they might be able to use those to serve kids and families. It helps answer the question, “What does someone like me do in a situation like this?”

This becomes the consistent baseline narrative of your foster care and adoption ministry: **Everyone can do something...FIND YOUR SOMETHING!**



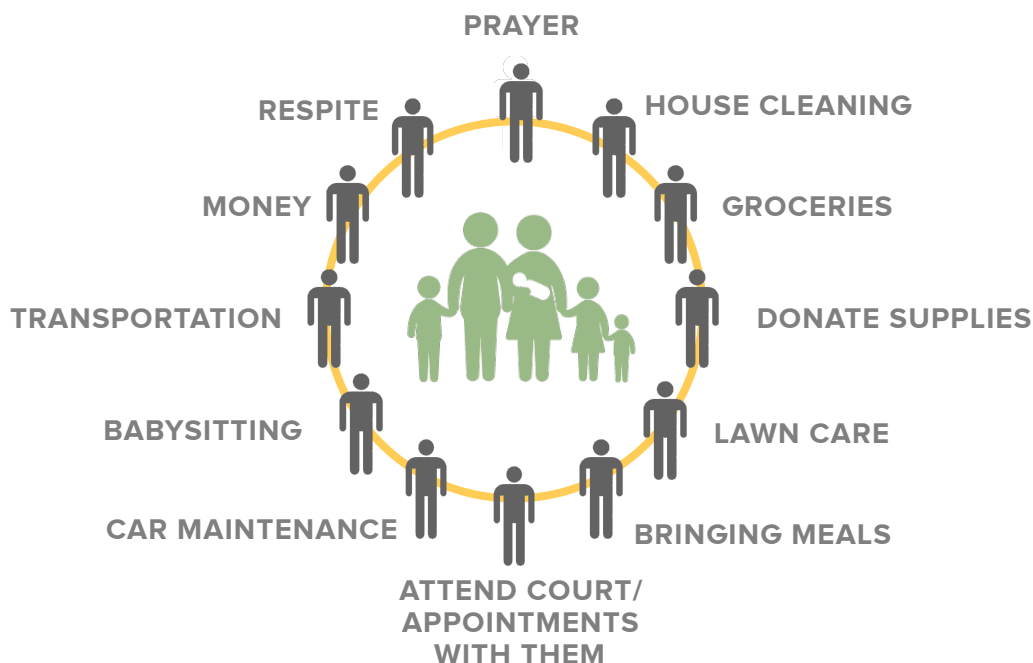
ZAHNARZT IN ALTONA

We're not
all called to
do the
SAME THING.
but we're
all certainly
capable of
doing
SOMETHING.



AN “EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING” MODEL

This is just one example of what “everyone can do something” could look like. It can be one family bringing children into their homes while a whole team, in unique yet equally important ways, gathers around to serve and support them. Sometimes **the best way to communicate your message is to show people what that looks like - visibly, tangibly and practically.** Consider using an illustration like this:



What would happen if everyone felt like they had to do the same thing? Or if no one ever told them of the different opportunities there were to get involved? This picture would look very different - incomplete and lacking all the necessary parts.

Ensure your message is clearly and consistently communicating - both with words and visually - the “everyone can do something” model.

What could “everyone can do something” look like in your church?

SUPPORTING YOUR MESSAGE

As you establish your clear, consistent “everyone can do something” message, it is essential you build an infrastructure of opportunities to support that compelling call to action.

For example, if you tell people one way to support foster families is by becoming certified babysitters, it is important to educate them on the path they need to take in order to do that. Who do they talk to? When is the next class? What steps do they need to take? Can we do it at the church? Do we have to go somewhere else? Or, if people in your church want to help fund adoptions for families, ensure you have a clear path established for them to be able to do that. Does your church have an adoption fund? How do people designate their giving towards that?

The “rule” is simple - **don’t tell people there are a variety of ways to get involved without providing some clear, concrete and simple platforms for them to do it.**

A THREE-TIERED STRUCTURE

It also is important that your “everyone can do something” message meets people where they are. Some are ready for higher levels of engagement while others need simple, “low-hanging-fruit” opportunities to get started. Consider structuring your levels of engagement into three primary categories, with a few opportunities to get involved under each. Here are a few examples: (lists are not exhaustive)

TIER 1 (Less commitment)	TIER 2 (Increased commitment)	TIER 3 (Highest commitment)
Bring meals Donate supplies Prayer	Babysit Financial support Transportation/run errands	Foster Adopt Respite/Safe Families

Your “everyone can do something” message should include a variety of “on-ramps” for people to engage with a variety of commitments levels - that meet them where they are and help move them into deeper levels of engagement.

FULL OF CREATIVITY

The opportunities for the people in your church to get involved in caring for vulnerable kids, and supporting the families that do, are endless and full of creativity. Some ways are more “prescriptive” like babysitting, financially supporting, providing respite or donating supplies. Others might be more “descriptive” - unique and custom-tailored to the gifts, resources and opportunities of the individual. Either way, the opportunities to get involved are as unique and diverse as each individual member of your church.

Your clear and consistent “everyone can do something” message is designed to inspire your people to consider their role and empower them with the courage they need to take the next step.

I recently met a man in Kansas City. Mid to late 60's. He told me he makes the best BBQ in the state (a bold claim!) and LOVES to cater any foster care ministry related event at their church including respite nights for couples, info meetings for those considering getting involved and even taking meals over to families homes who have had a new child placed with them. Here's a guy who has said, "I know what I can't do, and I know what I can do; I'm going to do what I can do well." He told me that while he and his wife may not be in a position to bring a child into their home, they can certainly do their best to bless those who are. I couldn't agree more.

What kind of “Kansas City BBQ” stories do you have in your church?

Perhaps it's...

- A mechanic who gives foster families free oil changes.
- A restaurant owner who gives foster and adoptive families free kids meals.
- A landscape company owner who gives discounts to foster and adoptive families.
- A beauty spa owner who gives foster and adoptive moms discounted services.
- A college student who can't foster or adopt but can definitely babysit!
- A web developer who builds platforms of communication for his church's ministry.

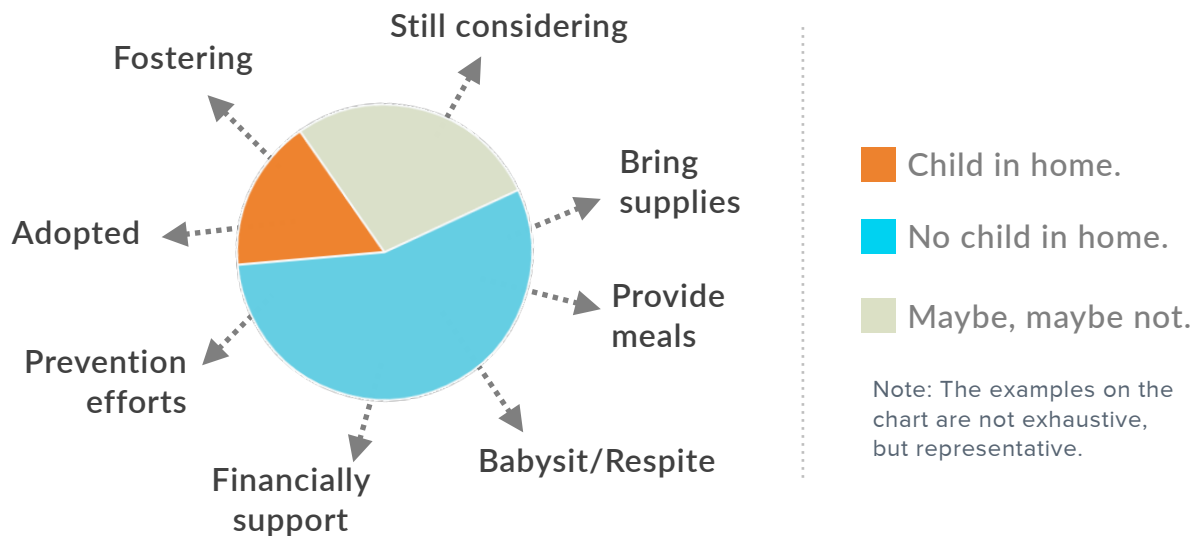
The list could go on. The opportunities are endless, full of creativity and as unique and diverse as each individual member of your church. **The goal of your clear and consistent message is to inspire and empower them to “find their something.”**



SHARING A DIVERSITY OF STORIES

It's important that your ministry is consistently sharing stories of how God is moving in the lives of families in your church. It's even more important that your use of stories is helping, and not unintentionally hurting, the broader vision of your ministry. When using stories – whether video, print or live interview style – ensure they are reinforcing the “everyone can do something” message. Otherwise, if it's only stories about families bringing children into their homes, the message being communicated is loud and clear...and confusing to those who likely won't ever do that.

Here's a simple graphic to help visualize this idea:



Consider sharing stories of people who have never brought children into their homes but have still found unique ways to be involved. Share stories of those who have financially supported adoptions, have wrapped around foster families, have come alongside families in crisis to help prevent foster care from becoming a part of their story, or even of those who have not yet done anything but are in the process of prayerfully considering how God is calling them to get involved. What has God taught them in those spaces? How have they been impacted as a result?

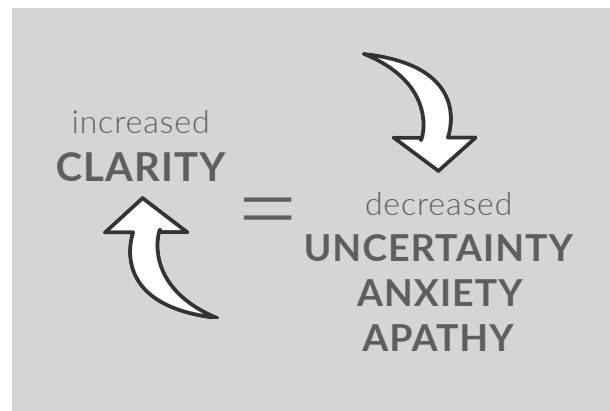
The reality is that the majority of people in your church will likely never bring a child into their home, but will in the end be the bearers of some of the most powerful stories of what God is doing through your ministry and in your church.

APATHY, OR LACK OF CLARITY?

It seems no one gets lost anymore. When was the last time you stopped to ask for directions? With GPS tracking technology and little “Siri” voices in our phones, there’s rarely a lack of clarity about how to get to where we need to go. With the increase of clarity brought about through technology, our levels of uncertainty have decreased - even when traveling to places we’ve never been before. Why? Because Siri will tell us how to get where we’re going.

In their book, “Switch”, Chip and Dan Heath speak to the issue of clarity when they say, “What looks like resistance is often just a lack of clarity.” In other words, it might appear like someone doesn’t care, but what if they actually do care and just don’t know how to care? That’s a big difference.

The point is, **when we increase clarity for people we help decrease things like uncertainty, anxiety and apathy in them.** When they know how to get where they want to go it helps build confidence for them to act. The “everyone can do something” message brings the clarity many need to engage in something they’ve always cared about but were never just quite sure how to care about it!



This changes everything about the assumptions we make and the strategy we take. Rather than assuming people don’t care and placing the burden on them to start caring, perhaps it's appropriate at times to assume people do care and place on the burden on us, as leaders, to show them how to care!

QUESTION:

What aspects of your ministry’s message are not increasing clarity and decreasing uncertainty for people? What changes can you make to help bring more clarity to what an “everyone can do something” ministry looks like?

CONCLUSION

We're not all called to do the same thing, but we are all capable of doing something.

This is your constant, consistent, compelling message and is reinforced every time anything is ever publicly said or written about the vision of your foster care and adoption ministry. Everyone. Can. Do. Something. Singles, college students, newly married, young families, empty nesters and retirees. Everyone.

Let's recap a few helpful things to consider as you continue to build out your "everyone can do something" culture:

- I Theologically outline the design and function of the Body of Christ.
- I Visually communicate a strategy that everyone can plug into.
- I Build "tiers" of engagement for people to meet them where they are.
- I Share stories that reflect the creativity and diversity of opportunities.
- I Flip assumptions and pursue clarity in your ministry's messaging.

The goal of your message is simple: to empower people to use the unique gifts, passions and resources God has given them for the good of the whole. Each individual member doing its part so the whole body can function better together for vulnerable kids and families.

That's the goal.



EVERYONE
— CAN DO —
SOMETHING

This guide is a sample section of the more extended resource, “Engage Your Church”, set to be released early Fall 2017.

To access more resources like this for your church, simply visit

www.cafo.org/ncmi/ebooks

Copyright 2017 | All Rights Reserved

A ministry resource provided by Christian Alliance for Orphans

Written by Jason Johnson | johnson@cafo.org



www.cafo.org