

Orphans and Widows Sunday

November 10, 2024



2024 PRAYER GUIDE

Pray for Vulnerable Families Around the World

“Pure and undefiled religion before God is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress.”—James 1:27

When you hear the statistic “150 million orphans,” are living in the world, you may think that number means that 150 million children are living alone, without an adult living relative. This is a misconception.

Most of these 150 million children do, in fact, live with family—a mother or father, brother, sister, aunt or grandmother. The word ‘orphan’ by definition, can mean a double orphan (a child that has lost both parents), or single orphan (a child that has lost one parent). There are far more single orphans than there are double orphans, and even children that have lost both parents are still most often cared for by other family members.



However, there are still around 5 million children residing in orphanages around the world. While up to 80% of those children have parents and almost all have extended family members, they are still living in institutional care facilities due to a combination of generational poverty, illness, lack of resources, mental health issues, abuse and many other hardships.

Years of research has proved that orphanages are not the best places for a child to grow up.

Send Relief is working to ensure children are placed in loving homes. Often, that’s through reunification with family. Send Relief also prevents separation by strengthening families and communities.

**To be a part of an orphan’s journey home,
scan the QR code.**



One Send Relief partner, Shelter Yetu, is working tirelessly to reform orphan care in East Africa.

Shelter Yetu transitioned away from an orphanage model 10 years ago. Since that time, they have been able to help more than 600 children living on the streets reunite with family.

One of the young boys at Shelter Yetu, Thomas, was separated from his single mother when she could no longer afford the school fees for all eight of her children.

After Thomas was rescued from the streets, Shelter Yetu staff got to work trying to find his mom and began the process of reunification.

She was discovered working at a local construction site, breaking rocks for \$1 a day.

Thomas was overjoyed to see her again! For now, he is continuing the program at Shelter Yetu while our partners work with his mother to make a reunification plan that is sustainable.

She also has joined the Shelter's family empowerment program, where she is receiving training to start a small business that will support her and her children for years to come.

Pray for Thomas and his family to experience wholeness again and for the many children like him living on the streets to find shelter and care as soon as possible.

With only one guardian in the home and seven other siblings, Boniface grew up under the weight of knowing that he would need to help provide one day.

Simple mistakes could cost his family their livelihood, and that kind of pressure on a child is damaging to their self-confidence and mental health.

Last year, Boniface was making the journey home from school when he realized he'd lost two of his books—books his mother had worked hard to be able to afford.

The next day, his teacher informed him that he couldn't come back to class until he had paid for the materials in full. With a sinking pit in his stomach, Boniface took to the streets to try to earn enough money to pay the school—he knew his mother didn't have the funds for another set.

After some time begging in the slums, Boniface fell in with the wrong crowd.

Pressured to use drugs to escape his dark reality, Boniface quickly formed a habit and felt too ashamed to return home.

A Send Relief partner found him and, with his consent, enrolled Boniface in a children's shelter program.

After three months of hard work and healing, and a promise from shelter staff that they would pay for his books, Boniface felt ready to return home.

Today, he is reunified and back in school, meeting with a social worker regularly to ensure Boniface can never call the streets "home" again! Pray for the hundreds of children like Boniface who fall victim to drugs, abuse and labor trafficking on the streets.

Pray for their guardians to be successful in finding them and for their perpetrators to find the hope of the gospel.

In sub-Saharan Africa, 62% of the population is under the age of 25, and millions find themselves living on the streets due to poverty or family breakdown.

Many of these vulnerable children live and work on the streets of Nairobi every day collecting cans, combing through dumpsters and begging for money and food.

And one Send Relief partner, Evans Okeyo, used to be one of them.

“Living on the streets after my parents died, I remember the hopelessness I felt—the same hopelessness that I see staring back at me when meeting with orphans now,” he shared. “Boys are physically hungry but also hungry for someone to sit and care, to hear their story and pay attention.”

Today, Okeyo uses his own painful experience to help other children walking the slums.

He gets down in the dirt with them as equals, listening to their stories of heartbreak and sharing the new life that he found in Jesus. Then, if the boys are ready, Okeyo takes them to a children’s shelter where they finally have access to hot meals, loving guardians and warm beds.

While at the shelter, children receive trauma counseling, help with schoolwork, Christian discipleship and life skills training to prepare them for the world outside.

Pray for the precious boys at this shelter to be placed in safe, loving homes and for men like Evans who know their struggles to reinvest in the next generation and help get boys off the streets of Nairobi.

Your gifts and prayers don’t just impact children who have lost a parent...

Often, your generosity spills into other children’s lives as well!

Amani dropped out of school in fourth grade.

Her parents had recently separated, and she was placed with her mother, who was struggling to navigate life with the sudden loss of her husband’s income.

Stuck at home and grappling with her new situation, Amani quickly became a target for early marriage.

Some of Amani’s relatives pressured her to begin “domestic work” in exchange for groceries.

At night, Amani felt overwhelmed by loneliness and dreamed of returning to school and creating a new life for herself and her mother.

Because a Send Relief partner had recently rescued her brother from the streets and brought him back home, Amani was able to meet with the social worker and ask for help re-enrolling in school. Because of your support, Amani was able to change her story and escape a life of servitude. Today, she is working hard in school so that she can support her mother upon graduation!

Pray for Amani to succeed in her educational efforts and for her and her mother to come to know Christ as the giver of light in the darkness and hope in the unimaginable. And pray for other children to encounter Send Relief social workers and have the courage to advocate for their needs!



**You and your
church can
be a part of
an orphan's
journey home.**

Send Relief

