

# Together *for* Adoption

## BREAKOUT SCHEDULE

All breakout topics are offered twice. The first group of breakouts is offered in Breakout Sessions I & II. The second group is offered in Breakout Sessions III & IV. All breakouts will be given on Saturday, October 3rd. See [conference schedule](#).

Choose your top four topics from each breakout group in order of preference. Send your breakout selections to [brittnie.wilbanks@TogetherforAdoption.org](mailto:brittnie.wilbanks@TogetherforAdoption.org).

Please note that seating is limited so preferences will be honored on a first come-first served basis.

### **Group One - Breakouts Available for Sessions I & II:**

**An Adoptee's Perspective: Nature vs. Nurture**, [Lizette Beard](#), Project Manager for LifeWay Research - Lizette will share from her experiences what it is like to grow up with a God-given natural disposition that is quite different from her parents. She will highlight the blessing and challenges she encountered by navigating family, life, and the journey of becoming who God has created her to be.

**Baby Steps: Getting Started in Int'l Orphan Care**, Casey Scheberl, [VisionTrust International](#) - There are so many needy children around the world, and it can feel overwhelming at times to think about making a dent. This breakout session will outline helpful tips to identifying where and how your church can get involved with caring for needy children around the world. We will discuss simple ways you can create interest among your church congregation and leadership in orphan care, as well as practical steps you can follow to help meet the tangible needs of orphans around the world. If you think God may be calling your church to engage relationally and strategically to help orphans around the world, but you just aren't sure where to start, come and learn how to take the hardest step: the first step.

**Beginning the Adoption Journey: How to Get Started**, [Laura Godwin](#), Nightlight Christian Adoptions - Most couples spend about two to three years "just thinking about adoption." If you are ready to begin adopting a child but are unsure of just which direction to go, this workshop will help you decide what is the best path to building your family and how to start the process.

**Birth Mothers and Adoption Stigma**, Lisa Florian, [Member of Christ Community Church's Adoption & Foster Care Ministry](#) - We often hear from adult adoptees about their experience in connection with adoption, but less frequently hear from the birth mother. We want the conference attendees to be able to hear a birth mother's perspective on what it means to make that choice for her child. As well, we hope to address the stigma that appears to be prevalent among high school girls that choosing adoption makes you a bad mother, so much so that many see even abortion as a better and more accepted option.

**Both Hands: Innovative Way to Help Both the Widow and the Orphan**, JT Olson, [Both Hands Foundation](#) - Hear about a unique approach to fundraising that not only impacts the financial needs of the adoptive family, but at the same time gives aid and comfort to widows. We will talk about the concept and the details behind the idea and you should be able to determine whether or not it's the kind of plan that could work for you. We will explore how to get your friends and a community involved in a fundraising effort that culminates with 10-20 of your friends spending a day working on a widow's house. Everyone walks away blessed.

**Church-Centered Orphan Care**, Elizabeth Styffe, [Saddleback Church](#) - God has primarily called the church, not just individuals, to care for orphans. So what does it mean for the *church* to care for orphans in their distress? Come learn about how the church can fulfill this critical calling.

**Implementing a Balanced Orphan Care and Adoption Ministry in Your Church**, [Johnny Carr](#), Bethany Christian Services - This session will help you think through the philosophy behind your ministry with practical suggestions for leading people to deeper involvement. We will talk about educating and engaging everyone in the congregation, many in the congregation, and then a few in the congregation. At each level, the education and engagement will get deeper and be more involved. A sample calendar will be available to give you practical ministry ideas.

**Mobilizing the Local Church to Serve Children in Foster Care**, John Schechter, [4KIDS of South Florida](#) - Opportunities to serve children in foster care are sometimes overlooked by churches wanting to respond to God's heart for the orphan. Yet, local church involvement is critically important to the lives of these precious children. This session will provide an overview of the needs of children in care and the many ways that the church can become involved.

**Moving from Success to Significance...Becoming Orphan Advocates**, [Andy Lehman](#), LifeSong for Orphans - Many Christians today have great experience, expertise, and energy to serve the orphans and fatherless. This season of life is ripe to redirect time and skills for the Kingdom! This session will focus on how God can use Christian businesspeople and "everyday people" to become effective orphan advocates.

**Overcoming the Financial Challenge of Adoption**, Nick Lyndon, [Show Hope](#) - The financial cost of adoption is a real challenge for many families. However, the local church can help Christian families meet this challenge through innovative funding tools, and there are many resources and opportunities that can help you overcome the financial barriers to adoption, from grants, fund-raisers, and church adoption assistance funds.

**Special Children, Special Needs**, Dan and Gretchen Rauter, Adoptive Family from [Christ Community Church](#) - Personal testimony, discussion and Q&A with adoptive families of special needs' children — How are "special needs" defined? Are some special needs too special? How is the special needs adoption process different from that of a "healthy baby"? Doctors, medical insurance, surgery, oh my!?!

**The Comfort that the Doctrine of Adoption Brings**, Kevin Twit, Founder of [Indelible Grace](#) - In this seminar we will explore the way adoption into God's family should affect our hearts, and not just our heads. In justification we become God's friends, but in adoption we are brought into His family. Come explore the important link between the doctrine of adoption and the assurance of our salvation.

**Transracial Adoption and the Multi-Ethnic Family of God**, Jason Kovacs, [ABBA Fund](#) - For many the thought of adopting trans-racially is exciting but also filled with many questions and fears. This breakout will look at the biblical basis for transracial adoption as well as address practical issues such as what to do when parents or grandparents disapprove, dealing with racism, and how to respect your adoptive child's culture.

**We Have Room: The Weimer Family's Journey Through Adoption...** [Heidi and Kirk Weimer](#), parents to 9 (3 biological and 6 adopted from Ethiopia), will share their personal story of adoption and how God has taken them from 3 kids to 9 kids in just 1 1/2 years. Come and hear how God rocked their lives, reminded them that their lives are not their own, and grew their family three by three by three. Issues addressed will include older child adoption and integrating international children into a new culture.

## **Group Two - Breakouts Available for Sessions III & IV:**

**A Mirror, Little Green Army Men, & a Slingshot**, Jason Young, [Orphan Epidemic](#) - A visual & interactive journey on how college students and twenty-somethings CAN change the landscape of orphan care.

**Adoption by Faith Alone**, Kristin Wong, Author of [Carried Safely Home: The Spiritual Legacy of an Adoptive Family](#) - Orphan care and adoption bring with them vulnerable hope, heart-wrenching sorrow and splendid joy. Each of these comes with temptation to turn away from God – and precious opportunity to draw near to Him. In this workshop, we will explore how our adoption and orphan care adventures can be wonderful vehicles for a growing faith in the living God. We will discuss together how to wrestle to live by faith as we care for children, and will move towards a "when I am weak then I am strong" attitude that exalts in God through all ups and downs of adoption.

**Foster Care and Adoption**, Panel Discussion, Chad Crow, Linda Roley, Deana Ferguson, and Corinna Zipp - Foster kids are often thought of as unwanted children but these "forgotten children" are like any other children waiting for forever families. Many adults fear the challenges that may arise from a child that has been neglected, abandoned or abused but "fear is false evidence appearing real" . . . come hear from parents that changed the future of a child that was in state custody. If you are not in a position to foster or adopt, there are other ways to serve (advocates, mentors, or community volunteers) -- all serving valuable roles in a child's life.

**Funding Your Adoption: Resources for Families and Churches**, Jason Kovacs, [ABBA Fund](#) - For most couples, the greatest obstacle to adoption is the cost. This workshop will look at a Biblical and practical perspective on how to fund an adoption. We will cover God's promises and God's provisions through interest-free adoption loans, tax-credits, grants, and creative fundraisers. We will also look at the benefits of establishing local church adoption funds.

**Hope for 100: A Wholistic Church Campaign for the Fatherless**, Dwain Gullion, [ABBA Fund](#) - Learn how to challenge your church to care for the fatherless. Churches around the country are challenging their congregations to adopt and foster and take part in orphan care projects around the world. This breakout will look at one church's campaign to see 100 children adopted and fostered and how your church can do the something similar.

**How to Start an Orphan Ministry in Your Church**, Paul Pennington, [Hope for Orphans](#) - Getting started can often be the most difficult step in moving forward, This session will provide eight easy steps you can follow to launch a successful orphans ministry in your church. The session is ideal for any church wanting to start an adoption, foster care or international orphan care ministry.

**International Adoption 101**, Tammy Bass and Amanda Clark Lawrence, [Bethany Christian Services](#) and [America World Adoption](#) - Are you interested in adopting internationally? Join representatives from Bethany Christian Services and America World Adoption as they share an overview on the international adoption process. Very generic about countries are agencies service and Hague versus non-Hague immigration paperwork.

**Mentoring At-Risk Kids in Your Community**, Arnie Adkison, [Buckner International](#) - For 130 years, Buckner has loved and mentored orphans and at-risk children. Recently Buckner began working directly with KidsHopeUSA, a mentoring program where a church adopts a school and provides mentors to elementary children with the goal of preventing them from entering the cycles that lead to tragedy and set them up for success in life. You can change the trajectory of a young child's life through mentoring working with Buckner and KidsHopeUSA—here's how...

**Orphan Sunday: Grow Commitment to Orphans in Your Church and Community**, Jodi Jackson Tucker and Elizabeth Wiebe, [Christian Alliance for Orphans](#) - November 8, 2009 is Orphan Sunday. Churches, community groups, pastors, lay-leaders, and students across the country will harness this day to shine a spotlight on God's mandate to care for the orphan—and what we can do in response. Locally-led events range from sermons and Sunday School classes to concerts, fundraisers and prayer gatherings. Taken together, hundreds of simple grassroots events will echo nationwide. How can you seize the opportunities presented by Orphan Sunday? Learn how people across the country are using this day to expand energy and engagement in their churches and organizations on behalf of orphans, and how the Christian Alliance for Orphans can help you develop your own local activities.

**Starting a Regional Orphan Care and Adoption Alliance**, Middle TN Church Alliance for Orphan Ministry, Panel Discussion, Debi Armstrong ([Christ Community Church](#)), Marty Schwieterman ([Fellowship Bible Church](#)), Greg Buzak ([Grace Chapel](#)), Eve Boger ([Covenant Presbyterian Church](#)), Cheryl Jenks ([Brentwood Baptist Church](#)). - Come learn how different ministries can join together into one voice for the orphan in a regional setting.

**Strengthening the Church by Engaging and Mobilizing for Orphan Care**, Alan Hunt and Michael Vinson, [World Orphans](#) - What if the church needs the orphan as much as the orphan needs the church? Come to this session to learn about the greatest kingdom building opportunity in our lifetime. God has an army of 143,000,000 orphans strategically positioned throughout the least reached places on the earth. Come hear how you and your church are being called to respond.

**Wholistic Care for Orphans**, Elizabeth Styffe, [Saddleback Church](#) - An important aspect of caring for orphans is to address the wholistic needs of orphans. This session will focus on effective ways every church can address the medical needs of the orphan and effectively minister to those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.