

# SAFE FAMILIES SUNDAY 2022 GUIDEBOOK



Children *SAFE* Families *TOGETHER*

PARTNERSHIP IN PREVENTION

# SAFE FAMILIES SUNDAY



Thank you for your participation in Safe Families Sunday 2022. Your church is a pivotal partner to strengthening families in the community! Whether you are a new church recently joining our efforts or currently partnering with us, we celebrate your commitment to love and support families facing hardship and crisis. Thank you for saying "Yes" to keeping children safe and families together.

Safe Families Sunday is purposely celebrated in April to coordinate our efforts with National Child Abuse Prevention Month and National Volunteer Appreciation Month. We desire to bring awareness and celebrate with you our partnership in prevention.

First, use Safe Families Sunday to **celebrate your church's commitment to love and serve the community**. During the past two years filled with change and hardship, families in your churches have opened their hearts and homes to host children and support parents. We are so grateful to have such amazing volunteers willing to demonstrate radical hospitality and disruptive generosity in loving their neighbors.

We desire to honor them on this special Sunday and this guide provides specific and integrative ways for pastors and church leaders to do just that in your weekly services and extending into the days and months ahead.

For instance, consider some ways to celebrate Safe Families Sunday.

- **Recognize** Safe Families volunteers in your services in order to celebrate God's faithfulness as you continue walking alongside of families facing hardship and crisis in your community.
- **Highlight** some of the local stories of grace in your homes and show a SFFC video.
- **Pray** for vulnerable children and families in your community who are isolated and alone
- **Join** countless others across the US in the month of April in displaying pinwheels as a visible sign of your commitment to children vulnerable to abuse.

Second, use Safe Families Sunday to **grow the movement already launched in your church**. The number of children entering the foster care system continues to climb while communities suffer from the impact of the pandemic.

You may want to consider inviting our local staff to help develop a plan to expand your ministry to strengthen families. Or you might consider hosting a volunteer training or partnering with other churches to strategically reach families in your school systems and neighborhoods.

Please know how grateful we are that you would be a part of Safe Families Sunday. Above all, we thank God and value your partnership and commitment to helping keep children safe and families together.

# WHAT'S BEHIND THE PINWHEEL?

In 2008, Prevent Child Abuse America launched the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign as a grassroots effort for individuals and organizations across the United States to take action. The campaign promotes family strengthening while raising awareness to prevent child abuse and neglect – before it ever happens. Over 6 million children will live in a home where child abuse and neglect take place. Prevention is the key and displaying the pinwheels shows your community you care about supporting vulnerable children and families.

## Why Pinwheels?

Prevent Child Abuse America introduced the blue pinwheel as the nationally recognized symbol for prevention because it represents the great childhoods all children deserve and the prevention efforts that help them happen. Today, it inspires all of us to play a role in providing the best possible environment for families to flourish and thrive.

## Displaying your Pinwheels

- Plant a pinwheel garden outside your church entrance
- Place pinwheels around the church in a vase, planters, or in bouquets to show your support
- Create pinwheel bouquets to display in community spaces in your church

The Pinwheels for Prevention campaign share awareness and shows support for prevention efforts in your community for family strengthening .

Find out where your local Prevent Child Abuse Chapter is by visiting:  
<https://preventchildabuse.org/where-we-work/>.



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# Celebrating Our Partnership in Prevention

We invite all churches across the country to participate and show your support for the community's efforts in strengthening families. Strong families create strong churches. Here are several suggestions to consider when thinking about prevention and awareness for your church.

- Show your support and commitment to prevention by displaying the blue pinwheels. You can put them in your planters or plant a Pinwheel Garden. Reach out to your local Prevent Child Abuse Chapter or SFFC Chapter.
- Provide helpful training for your staff and/or congregation on Family Strengthening Protective Factors.
- Host a Safe Families 101 where we can share ways your church can be involved in prevention efforts to keep vulnerable children safe and families together.

Safe Families also invites your church to participate in **Safe Families Sunday on April 24th** by celebrating how God is working in your congregation. Here are some ways to celebrate and thank volunteers.

- **Five-Minutes on a Sunday:** Use this time to celebrate and acknowledge volunteers and your church's efforts to strengthen families in the community. Have a volunteer share how their family has been impacted by opening up their heart and home to families facing crisis.
- If you are a new church partner, use this time to spotlight ministry and consider hosting a Safe Families 101 for your congregation).
- Show Appreciation Video for SF Sunday 2022
- Social Media Campaign: Share our provided social media images and messaging on your church's platforms to thank volunteers
- Small Group Discussion-We have put together a small group discussion and prayer guide on How Churches Can Strengthen Families.



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# ADDITIONAL WAYS TO GROW THE MOVEMENT

- Have a time of prayer for the Safe Families for Children movement, locally and nationally.
- Write letters of encouragement for kids and their parents to receive when hosting starts.
- Read/study a book on compassion, hospitality, or generosity with your small group
- Deliver a sermon themed on hospitality, compassion, generosity, or serving in the community
- Commission Safe Families volunteers
- Invite a placing parent, helped by volunteers, from your church to speak or be interviewed
- Invite a Host Family, Family Friend, or Family Coach to speak
- Plan a Safe Families fundraiser
- Take up a special love offering
- Show a film or video that emphasizes family preservation, child abuse prevention, compassion, etc.
- Kickoff or relaunch your Safe Families ministry
- Start a scholarship fund for daycare expenses, camp fees, etc.
- Have a dedicated space in your church, on your website or on your social media platforms for people to get information and get involved.



# Small-Group Discussion Questions

## Family Strengthening Protective Factors

**Parental Resilience:** Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma (Philippians 4:6-7)

- **Stress = worry = fear = anxiety.** If families are to grow in the ability to manage stress, what does it look like for them to successfully, regularly, leave their stress with God in prayer?
- What ways of thinking aid in the rejection of stress, anxiety, and reliving the past?

**Social Connections:** Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental, and spiritual support (II Timothy 2:1-2).

- What empowerment has God made available to our families to progress through their current circumstances and how do we live in that empowerment?
- How do we skillfully pull someone into discipleship relationships as well as into community?

**Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:** Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development (Psalm 127:3-5).

- What are we fighting for and what are we fighting against in the way(s) we guide our children?
- How do we bring our children into a way of life that equates to our entire family living in a unified victory?

**Concrete Support in Times of Need:** Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges (Ruth 2:1-2).

- How do we intentionally live as the kind of Christian community where those who come into our community know-how and where to get physical needs met?
- How do we intentionally live as the kind of Christians that relieve the stresses of life off of one another?

**Social and Emotional Competence of Children:** Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships (Ephesians 2:12-15).

- What are some good strategies for helping children be consistent, whether a parent is present or not?
- How does complaining and disputing (or grumbling) affect emotional health and what are some things you can do to replace complaining and disputing in your daily life?



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# GENERAL FAQ'S ABOUT SAFE FAMILIES AND SAFE FAMILIES SUNDAY

Safe Families for Children (SFFC) hosts vulnerable children and creates extended family-like support to under-resourced and under-served families. SFFC serves parents through a community of devoted volunteers who are motivated by compassion to keep children safe and families together. We help prevent abuse and neglect, help deflect children from the child welfare system and help to strengthen and stabilize families. In short, we support families in crisis with a caring, compassionate community through the local church.

**Safe Families Sunday** is organized and led by local church volunteers to help spotlight the needs of families in the community and celebrate the ministry that local church volunteers have done.

## **Why Safe Families Sunday?**

Safe Families for Children is a ministry for the local church. God's desire is for his people to live out lives of hospitality, compassion, and generosity, especially to those who are at-risk, vulnerable, and socially isolated. Safe Families Sunday is an opportunity for the church to be reminded of that call and motivated to act.

## **When are Safe Families Sunday taking place?**

The official Safe Families Sunday date is on April 24, 2022 because April is Child Abuse Prevention and Volunteer Appreciation Month. In the event that date doesn't work on a local church's calendar, the event can take place anytime from April - May 2022. We just want to set aside a time to specifically thank churches and engage volunteers.



# GENERAL FAQ'S ABOUT SAFE FAMILIES AND SAFE FAMILIES SUNDAY

## **What is the impact of Safe Families for Children?**

Nearly all the families served are at-risk, socially isolated, and under-resourced. Safe Families is preventative and proactive in nature, so we are able to help prevent children from getting abused or neglected (which often come during times of stress and crisis) and help deflect children from entering the foster care system. We've hosted over 50,000 children since we started 18 years ago. The average cost of a child in foster care is over \$25,000, while the average cost to host a child in Safe Families is only \$1,200. That's a potential savings of \$870 million dollars!

Volunteers that serve with Safe Families have a tremendous opportunity to 1) serve as a family (most of our Host Families have their own children in the home) and 2) serve as a community. A Safe Families "Circle of Support" is made up of Family Coaches, Family friends, and Resource Friends, who are often in a small group or class together, or otherwise relationally connected through their church. The opportunity for spiritual growth and discipleship is limitless! As Safe Families becomes a ministry of a local church, that church now has a dynamic way to serve their community. Safe Families is a big, important step beyond a backpack, diaper, or food drive as the chance to personally impact lives presented. The local church with a Safe Families ministry is doing local mission work that makes a tangible difference!

## **How can I present our impact to my local congregations?**

Hosting a child costs approximately \$1,200. This includes all of our volunteer engagement, training, mobilization, outreach, intake or oversight efforts. Individuals or churches can give one-time gifts or recurring gifts to their local Safe Families chapter. If your church would like to tangibly help keep five kids out of foster care, a goal of \$6,000 can be set, achieved and provided!





# FAQ'S FOR PASTORS/MINISTRY LEADERS

## **What is the relationship with the local church?**

Safe Families in a “pro-church” ministry. This means that our desire is for local churches to adopt Safe Families as one of their internal local outreach ministries. The local Safe Families chapter then provides all of the training, screening, resourcing, and support your church and the volunteers need to succeed. The Safe Families Chapter will also handle all of the referral calls, screen them and connect appropriate needs to your church volunteers.

## **What does it look like for my church can be involved?**

The first component is embracing the value of Safe Families and how it can add value to your local church ministry. Our local Safe Families staff will work alongside your key leadership to help your church progressively deepen your partnership, serving, growth, and impact. A partnership with Safe Families includes: developing a Safe Families Ministry Lead Team, recruiting and developing volunteers, and providing financial support for the Safe Families ministry.

## **Is the church liable for any unforeseen circumstances or difficult situations?**

Every Safe Families chapter has a sponsoring faith-based social service agency that is providing supervision, training, and facilitating background checks. Safe Families volunteers are legally volunteers of the agency, and the agency provides the necessary liability coverage.



## FAQ'S FOR PASTORS/MINISTRY LEADERS (CONT'D)

### How is Safe Families funded?

Through a combination of generous individual donors, church partners, and various grants. Some chapters secure contracts with state authorities to work alongside existing child welfare agencies. Due to our volunteer nature, we are able to keep the cost of Safe Families very affordable. We are able to operate at approximately 10% of the cost of a child in the foster care system.

### Am I, as the pastor, responsible for the leadership of Safe Families in my church?

The best model is to identify and recruit a volunteer Ministry Lead and Leadership Team that will bear the responsibility of recruiting, training and supporting the ministry. The team is supported and resourced by the local Safe Families chapter. The team should report to a pastor on staff, most often the staff responsible for local missions, for oversight, support and pastoral care.

  
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