



It takes a parish



Texas Catholic Conference  
of Bishops

Foster Care Initiative:  
St. Joseph Ministry

Bilingual  
Parish Resource Guide  
and Toolkit

More resources can be found at  
[txcatholic.org/stjosephministry](http://txcatholic.org/stjosephministry)

2018



# What is the St. Joseph Ministry?

The objective of the St. Joseph Ministry is to raise awareness of the many ways Catholics can support children who enter the State of Texas’ Child Protective Services (CPS) system. This awareness will be measured by the number of individuals, families and parishes becoming involved in foster care and adoption.

We know:

- Taking care of the orphan is a fundamental teaching of the Catholic faith.
- Being a foster/adoptive parent for children in the CPS system is very difficult. Children are often older. Regardless of age, they also often have mental, emotional, psychological and/or physical challenges. Many have siblings also needing care and they wish to be together.
- Children in foster care move on average three times because the foster family is not adequately prepared to care for them. Moving and inconsistent care can add to the trauma experienced in the original abusive environment.
- It takes a village to raise any child, but especially children who have experienced trauma. There are many roles and ways we can wrap a foster child and their families – biological, foster and adoptive -- in a nurturing network of support.

## Call to Action

Being a foster parent is a special calling, similar to God’s call to people to be a “forever” parent, or to the vocation of marriage. Not everyone has this calling to be a foster parent, and sometimes people find themselves moved to be a foster parent later in life.

Regardless, by our baptism, each of us is called to love our neighbor and to serve one another with a spirit of generosity. Therefore, each of us has a role to play in supporting foster parents.

This resource kit offers practical ways for a parish to discern how it can be a community of support and love for children in the foster care system and their families, both foster and biological. Each parish has a unique set of gifts and challenges which must be honored as parishioners discern their engagement.

## Table of Contents

Prayer for foster children.....	page 5
Oración por los niños de crianza temporal.....	page 6
Resource Guide .....	page 7
Foster Family Survey .....	page 11
Discernment Guide .....	page 13
Discernment Handout: Every Child Deserves a Loving Home .....	page 16
Guía del líder del discernimiento comunitario .....	page 17
Todo menor merece un hogar en el que sea amado.....	page 20
Calendar of Events .....	page 21
Liturgical Resources: homily notes and Prayers of the Faithful.....	page 22
How Do Children Enter the Foster Care System? .....	page 25
¿Como entran los menores al Sistema de crianza-temporal? .....	Page 26
What Role Will You Play: Five Areas of Needs.....	page 27
¿Qué función desempeñará? .....	page 28





## A prayer for foster children

Dear Joseph, foster father of Jesus  
and protector of the Holy Family,  
in you we contemplate  
a model of courage and compassion.

Help us be more courageous  
in making space for God in our lives,  
so we may be better guardians of the vulnerable,  
especially the children and their families  
seeking our care.

As we contemplate your role,  
alongside the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
as first teacher of the faith to Jesus,  
may we recognize our own call  
to live with conviction and fidelity  
God's mercy and faithfulness.

Help us to be more compassionate,  
so we may be present and faithful to all,  
but especially to those children  
whose lives are chaotic, anxiety-filled  
and too often marred by violence.  
As we contemplate the Holy Family's moments  
of stress in Jesus' young life – your betrothal  
to the Blessed Virgin Mary, your flight to Egypt,  
losing Jesus in the Temple –  
may we recognize our own call  
to give tender care and protection  
to those whom God brings to us.

Help us to be strong and wise in our faith,  
yet tender and open to love, as you were.  
May God grant that our families,  
including our parish family,  
be places of communion and prayer,  
authentic schools of the Gospel.  
Amen.

*Icon of St. Joseph written by Franciscan Father Nathanael  
Theuma. ©Renáta Sedmáková – Adobe Stock*





## Oración por los niños de crianza temporal

Querido José, padre adoptivo de Jesús  
y protector de la Sagrada Familia,  
en ti contemplamos  
un modelo de valentía y compasión.

Ayúdanos a ser más valientes  
para hacerle espacio a Dios en nuestras vidas,  
de modo que podamos ser  
mejores guardianes de los vulnerables,  
especialmente de los niños  
que necesitan de nuestro cuidado, y de sus familias.  
Que mientras te contemplamos  
junto a la Santísima Virgen María,  
como primer maestro de Jesús en la fe,  
podamos reconocer nuestra propia llamada  
a vivir la misericordia y la fidelidad de Dios  
con lealtad y convicción.

Ayúdanos a ser más compasivos,  
estando presentes para todos y siéndoles fieles,  
pero dedicándonos especialmente a esos niños  
cuyas vidas están colmadas de caos y ansiedad,  
y muy a menudo arruinadas por la violencia.  
Que al contemplar a la Sagrada Familia  
durante aquellos momentos de estrés  
en los albores de la vida de Jesús,  
como fueron los esponsales de la Santísima Virgen María,  
la huida a Egipto o la pérdida de Jesús en el Templo,  
podamos reconocer nuestra propia llamada  
para dar cuidado y tierna protección  
a quienes Dios trae hasta nosotros.

Ayúdanos a ser fuertes y sabios en nuestra fe,  
y al mismo tiempo tiernos y abiertos al amor,  
como lo fuiste tú.  
Que Dios conceda a nuestras familias,  
incluida nuestra familia parroquial,  
ser ambientes de comunión y oración,  
auténticas escuelas del Evangelio.  
Amén.

*Ícono de San José, escrito por el Padre Franciscano  
Nathanael Theuma. ©Renáta Sedmáková – Adobe Stock*

# Resource Guide For Parish Leaders

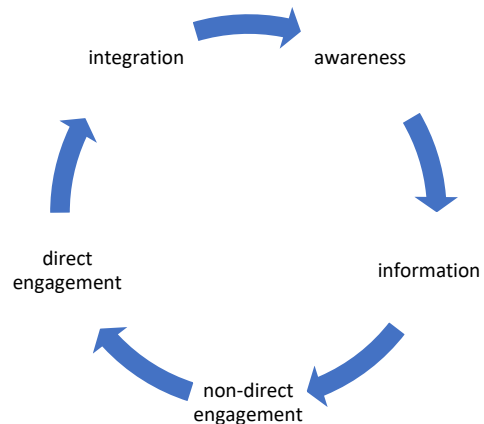


## Where to start?

This resource guide provides tools for each phase of implementing the St. Joseph Ministry into parish life. There are most likely parishioners involved in every aspect of the child welfare system, but parish leadership may not be aware of them. This can range from having been a child in the foster care system themselves to being adoptive/foster parents, having family members in the system, being a social worker, teacher, law enforcement personnel or other professional whose work touches the foster care system, to being a volunteer -- such as a Vincentian who makes home visits -- who is aware of the reasons why children enter the foster care system.

However, often foster parents report feeling isolated or invisible in their communities. Foster children's needs can be so overwhelming they do not know how to ask for help or what is reasonable to request from the parish.

### Life Cycle of a Parish Initiative



The diagram illustrates a life cycle for adoption of a cause into parish life.

## Phase One: Awareness

Provide an opportunity for parishioners to be aware of the calling of foster parenting and how people can support those with this calling.

### Evaluate

First, assess what your leadership knows. This leadership can include the parish staff, pastoral and finance councils, and ministry leaders. Ask:

1. Do we have any parishioners who are foster/adoptive parents?
2. Who has children/grandchildren in the state's child welfare system? How can we offer them support or include them in the ministry?
3. Do we know of grandparents who have custodial rights of their grandchildren? Anyone who works directly in the child welfare system?
4. How can we assess what the parish is doing right now for children and their guardians in the child welfare system?
5. What ministries do we have right now which might naturally integrate support for foster families, such as Gabriel Project, youth ministries, home/meals services, etc.?
6. Ask current foster parents to complete the Foster Family Survey (Page 13).

## **Establish a Core Committee**

Provide a clear mandate to the Core Committee. Determine if the Core Committee will be of support to current ministries/services of the parish so they can integrate a focus on foster families in already existing programs, or if the Core Committee must establish new programs.

Provide the Core Committee with this resource guide, contact information for potential collaborators within the parish (this includes parish staff, ministries, and individuals), and your firm support.

The Discernment Guide offers one way to structure the initial meeting of the committee.

Consider a survey of the parish to understand current challenges and opportunities.

## **Liturgical awareness**

Review the calendar of events and the liturgical resources for ways to incorporate prayers for foster families and to refer to their needs in homilies.

## **Compassionate awareness**

Provide a training for parish clergy, staff and key volunteer ministers on “trauma-informed ministry.” A parishioner who is a licensed therapist can assist in locating a local resource. This scientifically-based training increases compassion for children who have been removed from their families by explaining how trauma affects the brain, behavior and self-worth.

## **Phase Two: Information**

By reviewing the parish’s annual calendar, integrating events relevant to foster families and using the resources in this guide, you’ll be able to keep parishioners informed of the ways they can support foster families.

**Calendar of events** – consider how the parish can highlight foster care in liturgies and activities during events already happening in the parish. Review the calendar of holy days and holidays on page 19 for ideas.

**Handouts** – these can be used in meetings, as bulletin inserts or distributed in other means.

1. A Prayer for Foster Children
2. How do children enter the foster care system?
3. What role will you play?

**Wanted: Family** – This series highlights one child or family seeking a home (sample, page 29). The photo and article can be placed in bulletins, newsletter, websites, etc. Contact the TCCB staff at [StJosephMinistry@txcatholic.org](mailto:StJosephMinistry@txcatholic.org) to subscribe to the series, which is provided at no cost by the Texas Department of Family Protective Services.

**Onsite display** -- [Heart Gallery](#) is a national organization with regional sites which provides professional photography of actual adoptive children. Willing to come to a parish or event with an attractive display, it provides a realistic, yet uplifting, presentation of the children.

**Presentations** – The [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services](#) has staff assigned to support faith-based organizations in each region of TXDFPS. Other agencies are also available to provide onsite or online presentations.



## Phase Three: Non-direct engagement

This is the easiest level of engagement and allows for the greatest number of people to become involved. There is little or no direct contact with children in foster care. The commitment is typically short term or one time. Current parish ministries can integrate this engagement into already existing programs.

While the state of Texas provides some reimbursement to foster parents, it is not enough to cover basic needs. Parish ministries can provide additional support.

Implementation of non-direct engagement will have the greatest impact if it is used to guide people to a deeper level of engagement with children and their families in the child welfare system. Opportunities for reflection and renewal should be provided to all involved in this level.

Examples of non-direct engagement:

1. Prayer
2. New material goods: Abused and neglected children do not deserve abused and neglected items!
  - Gifts for birthdays and holidays
  - Children's clothing and shoes
  - School supplies
  - Blankets
  - Portable Play Yards (Pack and Play)
  - Car seats
  - Diapers
  - Formula
  - Personal hygiene items
3. Other material support: tuition assistance, beds and dressers, supplies for celebrations, household/laundry cleaning supplies, vehicles, etc.
4. Services: meals; personal care (hair stylists, etc.); home repairs; home cleaning; vehicle maintenance; services for special events (prom, birthdays, holidays, etc.); transportation for appointments, hospital visits, school and parish events, etc.
5. Support groups for child welfare case workers, including providing material support for their clients.
6. Provide meeting space, refreshments or other services for classes and meetings.
7. Material support for older children "aging out" of the child welfare system: deposits, vehicle or other transportation, insurance, meals, job placements, budget/financial planning, resume writing/interview skills, etc.
8. Donations to Catholic Charities and other agencies working directly with the State of Texas in placement of children in foster/adoptive homes.

Collaborating entities for non-direct engagement:

- The [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services](#) accepts volunteers for a variety of needs.
- The [Care Portal](#) connects parishes to children and families with vital needs through the caseworker. The caseworker makes a request via the website about the needs of the family; the request is then relayed to participating Care Portal churches within a certain radius of the family, which then respond to the specific needs.
- [Rainbow Rooms](#) are 24/7 resource centers usually located within Child Protective Services (CPS) offices. You can [volunteer or donate resources](#) to a Rainbow Room.
- The [Christian Alliance for Orphans](#) is a national foster care initiative. It offers a program around a children's book, "Farmer Herman and the Flooding Barn," which can be used in classrooms and by families, and which is accompanied by a Classroom Leader's Guide and a three-part family devotional guide.

## **Phase Four: Direct Engagement**

Fewer parishioners will identify with this level of engagement. Often, training and background checks are required. Ongoing, consistent interaction with children and their families provide the greatest results. Having parish staff and leaders trained and with appropriate background checks will improve engagement by parishioners. Providing a foundation of faith and spirituality allows people to find fulfillment and support in challenging circumstances. Training and information on trauma-informed ministry is essential at this level of engagement.

Examples of direct engagement:

1. Hosting celebrations: picnics, holiday gatherings, birthday parties, etc.
2. Academic tutoring
3. Mentoring/apprenticeships/"career days" for children aging out of foster care
4. Respite care for foster/adoptive parents
5. Counseling/parenting courses
6. Addiction recovery support
7. Retreats and days of reflection/renewal
8. Legal services for children, families of origin, foster and adoptive parents
9. [CASA](#) (Court Appointed Special Advocates) trains and supports people who stand up for the best interests of children who have been abused or neglected. Appointed by judges, they speak up for the child's needs in the courtroom and community.

Collaborators:

Connect with the regional representative of the Texas Department of Family Protective Services' [faith-based coordinators](#) to find local collaborators for these specific services.

[Open Table](#), a national coalition, provides a means for faith-based communities to engage groups of volunteers that make a year-long commitment to act – through relationship — as a team of life specialists, encouragers, and advocates. Texas' First Lady is recommending using the Open Table process to assist children who are aging out of the system. The national field director is located in Austin; contact Tim Dale at 512.784.0546 or [timdale@theopentable.org](mailto:timdale@theopentable.org).

## **Phase Five: Integration**

As families become aware of the needs and gifts within the children in the child welfare system, they will become aware of their role in nurturing and supporting the children. This integration will allow deeper awareness of the Holy Spirit and ensure a growing network of care and support.

A robust foster care support network can also spur deeper reflection on the criminal justice system, educational improvement and societal responses to end the root causes for children being removed from their family of origin.

# Foster Family Survey



Your Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have family in town or a small group who supports you? YES | NO

Names of children and ages:

Specials snacks, treats, or activities your children enjoy?

Favorite foods or meals?

Please describe a day of the week that is challenging because of transportation issues, heavy activity or homework .

Please list you and your spouse's (if applicable) favorite things on this list:

Restaurant?	Activity to relax or have fun?	Drink or coffee flavor?	Dessert or treat?
Favorite color?	Sports teams?	Flower	Song/music

Is there anything you would like to add or think would be helpful for us to know about your family?



# Holy days and holidays



## **March 19**

Feast of St. Joseph, patron of foster parents

## **April**

Child Abuse Prevention Month

## **Last Sunday in April**

[Blue Sunday](#) (National Day of Prayer for Victims of Child Abuse)

## **May**

Month of Mary, Mother of God

National Foster Care Month

Mother's Day

National HELP (Honor, Encourage, Love and Pray for) [Child Welfare Professionals Week](#)

## **June**

Father's Day

## **July 26**

Feast of Sts. Anne and Joachim, Jesus' grandparents

## **October**

Respect Life Month

## **November**

National Adoption Month

## **December**

Feast of the Holy Family



# Scripture resources

## Homily notes



homily notes | reflection: Feast of St. Joseph, March 19

## St. Joseph: a model to address foster children's needs

Even after news reports of children sleeping on office floors, or worse, their tragic deaths, Texas' foster crisis continues. We need more foster parents ready to serve God's children who are caught in the state's beleaguered child welfare system. It would be so simple if Christians heard the Scripture's call to "let the children come unto me" and opened their homes to the thousands of children needing safe families. But fear and circumstance hinder many of us from answering this call.

As Paul reminds the Romans in today's second reading, God's promise to Abraham was not fulfilled by the law, but by faith. God's promise to Abraham and Sarah seemed preposterous: they were elderly and had no children. Yet God promised Abraham he would be the father of many nations.

The Gospel of Matthew tells us when Joseph learned of Mary's pregnancy, he intended to divorce her quietly and leave the child fatherless. Despite being a righteous man, taking on the care of a child that was not "his" was more than he could bear. The angel of the Lord appears to him in a dream telling him, "Do not be afraid." Through Joseph's courage, he became our Lord's foster father; he became the protector of Jesus and Mary. Later, another angel tells Joseph, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Egypt." Through obedience to God, Joseph shielded our Lord and our Blessed Mother from Herod's wickedness.

As the foster children of Texas wait, we must have the courage to heed this same message: "Do not be afraid." Yes, the needs of these children are many, and you may not feel adequate. Let's be honest, you probably aren't. Abraham and Sarah probably felt the same way. But just as God promised Abraham and Sarah the seemingly impossible, so does he promise, through our parish today, the support and resources to help you. Like the magi who brought gifts to the Holy Family, ministries and non-profits stand ready to assist you in providing for the needs of these children. While we may not experience angelic dreams calling us to action, foster children in Texas need us to be attentive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit telling us to rise up and take care of these beloved children. Will you consider the call?

## Foster care: an ancient, great work of love

Christians have always cared for abandoned children and orphans, and welcomed those otherwise without a family into the universal family we call the Church. This practice does not come out of a vacuum but from the long, rich tradition of our Jewish ancestors.

In many biblical stories, God seeks out the poor, the vulnerable, and the abandoned of the world and calls upon his people to embrace them. From Moses, to Ruth, to Esther – just to mention a few – we see how God blesses his people when we open our hearts to others.

Jesus continued this practice of hospitality, exhorting his followers, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” Inspired by the Holy Spirit, St. Paul also used filial imagery to describe how we are all children of God through adoption, and can now call God “Abba” or “Father.” In response to such merciful love, we offer specific works of mercy.

The first Christians would rescue infants abandoned to death from exposure. During the Middle Ages, monasteries and convents accepted children from parents who could not care for them. In modern times, Christian ministries and missionaries have established schools, hospitals, and orphanages around the world to care for children. Nuns and other courageous men and women have rescued thousands of children from the Holocaust, prostitution, human trafficking, and war.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church calls on all Christians to become involved in this sacred ministry, as individuals, families, and members of society:

*The family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor. There are many families who are at times incapable of providing this help. It devolves then on other persons, other families, and, in a subsidiary way, society to provide for their needs: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction....” (2208, quoting James 1:27).*

Today, there are 30,000 Texas children in the foster care system, and there are many ways to care for them and their biological, adoptive and foster families. The bishops of Texas have provided resources at [www.txcatholic.org/StJosephMinistry.org](http://www.txcatholic.org/StJosephMinistry.org). They are encouraging each parish to discern how it can be part of the solution so that every child can grow up in a loving home.

Please pray for children who are not loved as they ought to be; pray they are offered loving homes and are surrounded by professionals and volunteers who provide them with support and unconditional love. Please consider how you can answer your own baptismal call to help them – whether that is providing a meal to a foster family, driving someone to an appointment, offering respite care, being a foster parent, or in some other way.

Serving these children and their families is how we can say “yes” and honor the God who has welcomed us – indeed, loved us – into his own family.

# Prayers of the Faithful



## Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

For all children in foster care, who are waiting for adoptive parents or who are in danger because of their family's circumstances, that they may experience God's healing love through the love and care given to them by all involved in the child welfare system...

For those who work in the child welfare system – judges, attorneys, guardians, social workers, support staff, therapists and others – that they may shower God's goodness and love upon the children and the families with whom they come in contact...

For foster parents, who often stand in the gap for children who suffer emotional, physical and spiritual pain from their families' circumstances, that they may know their foster children as gifts from an eternal God, who deserve to be cared for as God's precious children...

For foster parents and those who work in the child welfare system, that they may be the hands, feet, eyes, voice and heart of our loving God to children in foster care...

For our parish, as we strive to be a witness of God's love in action, that we may embrace children in the child welfare system; their families – biological, adoptive and foster; and the volunteers and professionals in this work, and that we may sincerely seek ways to minister in this often difficult, yet essential, work...

For our parish community, that we may be more courageous in making space for God in our lives, so we may be better guardians of the vulnerable, especially children and their families seeking our care through the child welfare system...

For our parish community, that we may be more compassionate, so we may be present and faithful to all, but especially to children whose lives are chaotic, anxiety-filled and too often marred by violence...

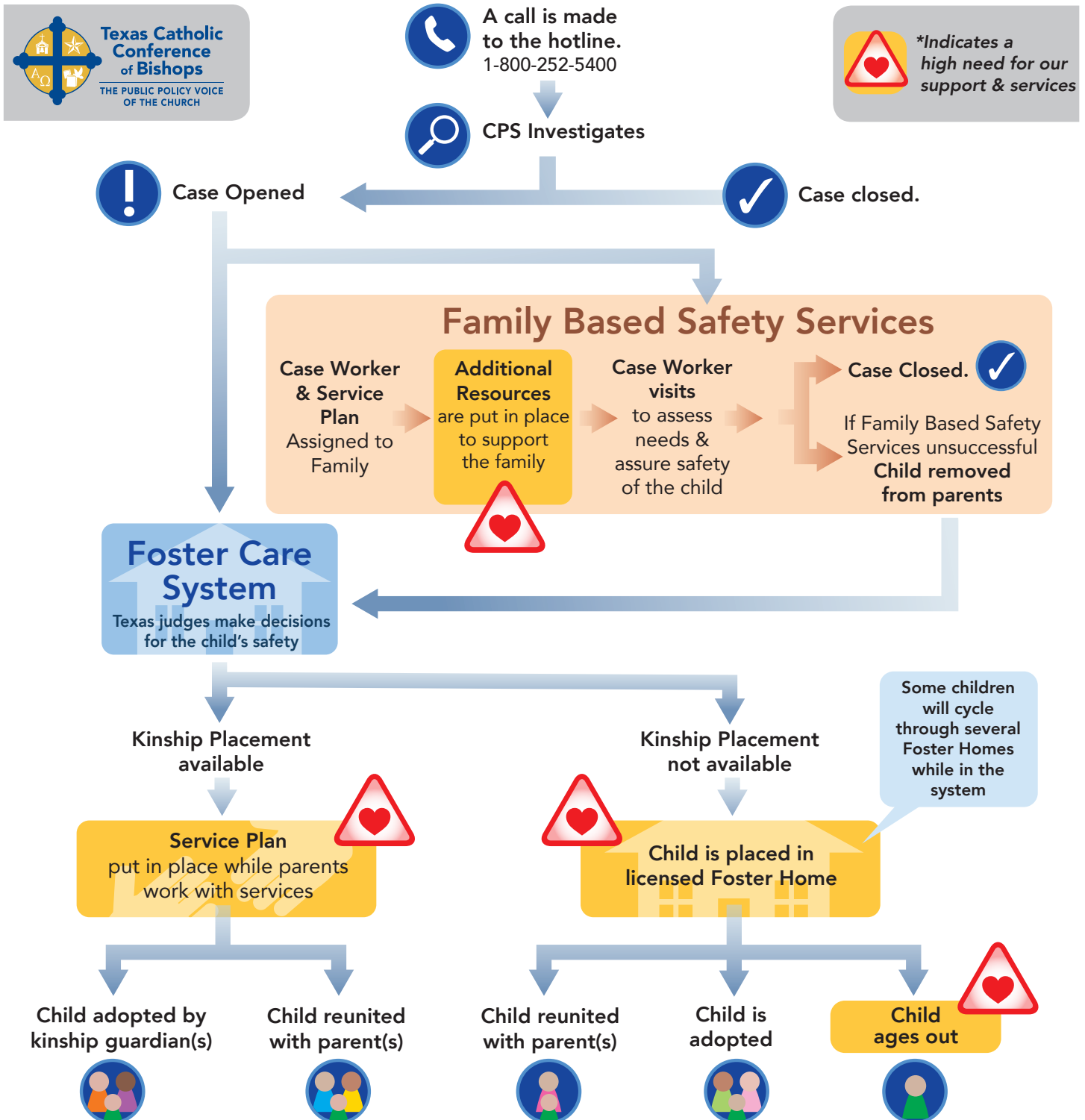
For our government leaders, that lawmakers and agency directors may make wise decisions in the funding and operation of our state's child welfare system, so the children and their families have the resources and services they need to flourish ...

For young people who have aged out of the foster care system, that they might find mentors to help them navigate life wisely and a community willing to support them...

# Foster Care Initiative: St. Joseph Ministry

St. Joseph Ministry, initiated by the Texas Catholic bishops, cares for children and their families - biological, foster and adoptive - in our state's child welfare system. Visit [www.txcatholic.org/StJosephMinistry](http://www.txcatholic.org/StJosephMinistry).

## How do children enter the foster care system?

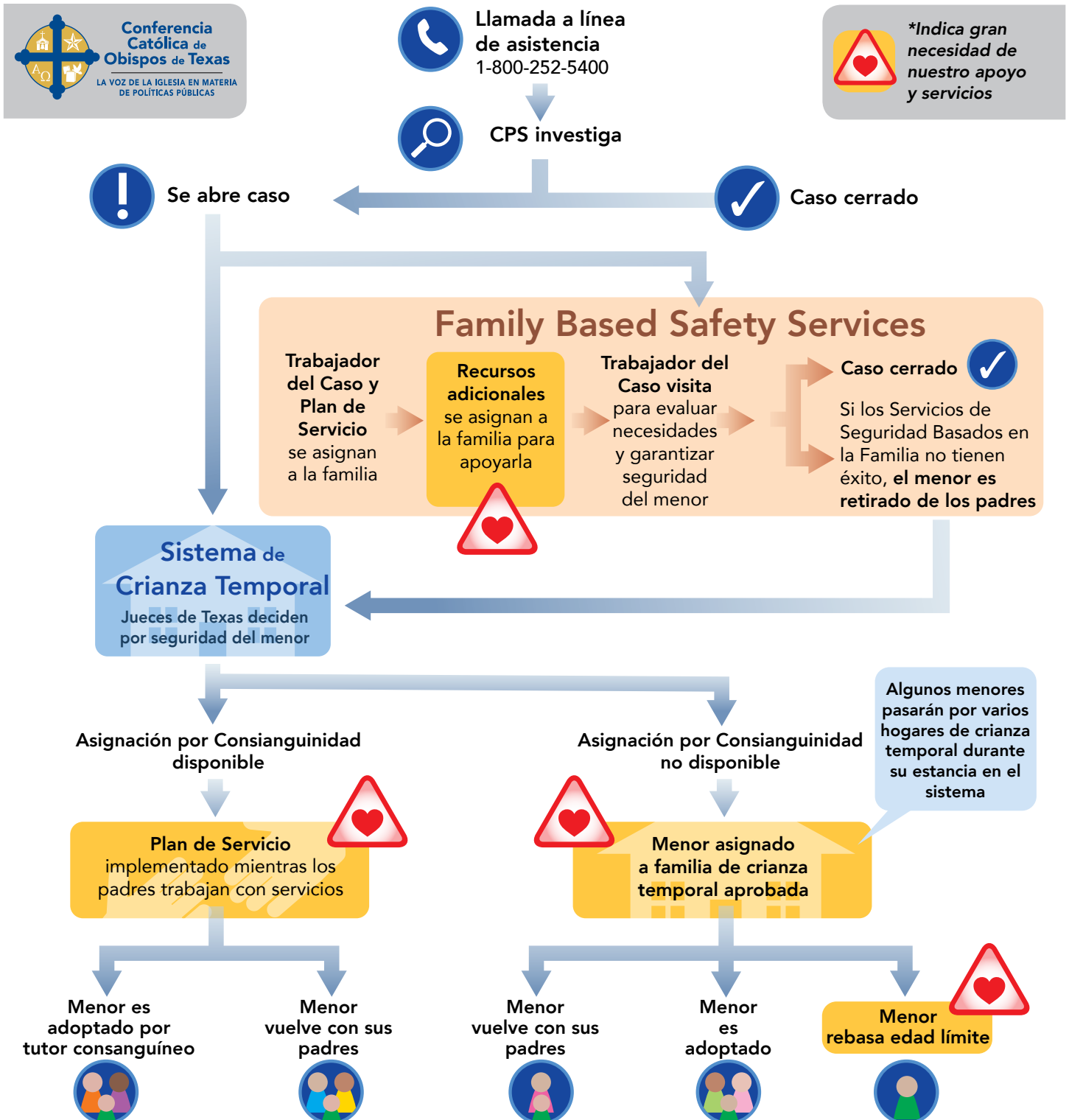


# Iniciativa de Crianza Temporal: Ministerio San José



El Ministerio San José, iniciado por los Obispos católicos de Texas, se preocupa por los menores y sus familias, ya sean biológicos, de crianza o adoptivos, que se encuentran en el sistema de bienestar infantil de nuestro estado. Visite [www.txcatholic.org/StJosephMinistry](http://www.txcatholic.org/StJosephMinistry).

## ¿Cómo entran los menores al sistema de crianza temporal?





# Foster Care Initiative: St. Joseph Ministry



## What role will you play? Five ways to help build loving homes

1

### FOSTER CARE

- 30,000 children in foster care in Texas.
- Foster homes are most needed for children age six and older.
- Children in the state of Texas' child welfare system can move on average three times - often not due to the system, but because the foster family is not prepared to care for the child.
- Moving and inconsistent care can cause more trauma in a child than the original abusive environment.
- Foster parenting is a calling. Resources such as parenting training, respite care and "wrap-around care" are important supports for foster parents.

2

### BIOLOGICAL FAMILY SUPPORT

- About one in every three children will be reunited with their biological families
- After ensuring safety, the State's top priority is to return children to their families.
- Biological families need more support than the minimum State requirements to break cycles of abuse, poverty, addiction, etc.

3

### AGED-OUT TEENS & YOUNG ADULTS

- At age 18, teens are given the choice to extend their time in foster care until 21 or they can leave.
- Without a strong support network, these young people are vulnerable to being homeless, having difficulties with the law or becoming pregnant
- Long-term relationships are required to change the future of aged-out teens.

4

### ADOPTION

- Minority ethnic group children over two years old are more likely to age out of the system without the opportunity of being adopted.
- Nearly 7,000 children in Texas' child welfare system are ready for adoption- many are sibling groups or teens.
- Adoption from the foster care system costs little to nothing.
- All children, including those adopted at infancy, experience trauma. But healing can occur, if parents have both professional help and the support of a community.

5

### IT TAKES A PARISH

- Isolation is often a family's first and most problematic response when they are in crisis with a child, whether it is their biological, foster or adopted child.
- A parish can offer spiritual, material, emotional and psychological support to children and adults. This support is often similar to ministries already in the parish, such as meals provided through a bereavement or hospice committee; car seats, infant formula, diapers, clothes provided through Gabriel Project; respite care with monthly childcare provided at the parish; religious education for children with special needs, etc.
- Prayers during liturgies which recognize foster and adoptive families, raising awareness of the needs of children impacted by serious trauma, and a hospitable environment which embraces trauma-informed ministry can nurture families who feel overwhelmed or unworthy of their ministry as a parent.
- Each of us is unique and none of us can completely understand another person's decisions or journey. However, we can support children in the child welfare system, their biological and foster families, and all who care for them with respect, compassion and merciful care.



**Texas Catholic  
Conference of Bishops**

THE PUBLIC POLICY VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. Joseph Ministry, initiated by the Texas Catholic bishops, cares for children and their families - biological, foster and adoptive - in our state's child welfare system. Visit [www.txcatholic.org/StJosephMinistry](http://www.txcatholic.org/StJosephMinistry).

# Iniciativa de Crianza Temporal: Ministerio San José



## ¿Qué función desempeñará? Cinco maneras de ayudar a construir hogares amorosos

1

### CRIANZA TEMPORAL

- 30,000 niños en crianza temporal en Texas.
- Los hogares de crianza temporal son más necesarios para los niños de seis años en adelante.
- Los niños en el sistema de bienestar infantil del estado de Texas suelen mudarse en un promedio de tres ocasiones, a menudo no debido al sistema, sino porque las familias sustitutas no están preparadas para cuidarlos.
- La atención móvil e inconsistente puede causar más trauma en un niño que el ambiente abusivo original.
- La crianza temporal es un llamado. Recursos tales como capacitación para padres, relevo de cuidado y “cuidado integral” son apoyos importantes para los padres sustitutos.

2

### APOYO DE LA FAMILIA BIOLÓGICA

- Aproximadamente uno de cada tres niños se reintegrará a su familia biológica.
- Después de garantizar la seguridad, la principal prioridad del estado es devolver a los niños a sus familias.
- Las familias biológicas necesitan más apoyo que los requisitos mínimos establecidos por el estado para romper los ciclos de abuso, pobreza, adicción, etc.

3

### ADOLESCENTES QUE HAN REBASADO LA EDAD LÍMITE Y ADULTOS JÓVENES

- A la edad de 18 años, los adolescentes tienen la opción de extender su tiempo en crianza temporal hasta los 21 años o pueden irse.
- Sin una red de apoyo sólida, estos jóvenes son vulnerables a quedarse sin hogar, tener dificultades con la ley o quedar embarazadas.
- Se requieren relaciones a largo plazo para cambiar el futuro de los adolescentes mayores de edad.

4

### ADOPCIÓN

- Los niños mayores de dos años pertenecientes a grupos étnicos minoritarios tienen más probabilidades de quedar fuera del sistema al rebasar la edad límite del mismo, sin la oportunidad de ser adoptados.
- Casi 7,000 niños en el sistema de bienestar infantil de Texas están listos para ser adoptados. Muchos son grupos de hermanos o adolescentes.
- La adopción a través del sistema de crianza temporal cuesta poco o nada.
- Todos los niños, incluso aquellos adoptados en la infancia, tendrán un trauma, pero todos ellos pueden alcanzar niveles prodigiosos de curación a través de la paternidad preparada para lidiar con traumas.

5

### SE NECESITA UNA PARROQUIA

- El aislamiento suele ser la primera y más problemática reacción de una familia cuando está en crisis con un niño, ya sea su hijo biológico, de crianza temporal o adoptivo.
- Una parroquia puede ofrecer apoyo espiritual, material, emocional y psicológico a niños y adultos. Este apoyo a menudo es similar a los ministerios que ya existen en la parroquia, como son las comidas que se brindan a través de un comité de apoyo para situaciones de duelo o de cuidados paliativos; asientos para auto, fórmula infantil, pañales, ropa provista a través del Proyecto Gabriel; relevo de cuidado con guardería mensual proporcionada en la parroquia; educación religiosa para niños con necesidades especiales, etc.
- Las oraciones durante liturgias, que reconocen a familias adoptivas y de crianza, generando conciencia sobre las necesidades de niños afectados por algún trauma serio y un ambiente hospitalario que incluye un ministerio para el tratamiento de traumas, pueden alimentar a las familias que se sienten abrumadas o indignas de su ministerio como padres.
- Cada uno de nosotros es único y ninguno de nosotros puede entender completamente las decisiones o el camino de otra persona. Sin embargo, podemos apoyar a los niños en el sistema de bienestar infantil, a sus familias biológicas y sustitutas, y a todos los que los cuidan con respeto, compasión y atención misericordiosa.



### Conferencia Católica de Obispos de Texas

LA VOZ DE LA IGLESIA EN MATERIA DE POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

El Ministerio San José, iniciado por los Obispos católicos de Texas, se preocupa por los menores y sus familias, ya sean biológicos, de crianza o adoptivos, que se encuentran en el sistema de bienestar infantil de nuestro estado. Visite [www.tx catholic.org/StJosephMinistry](http://www.tx catholic.org/StJosephMinistry).