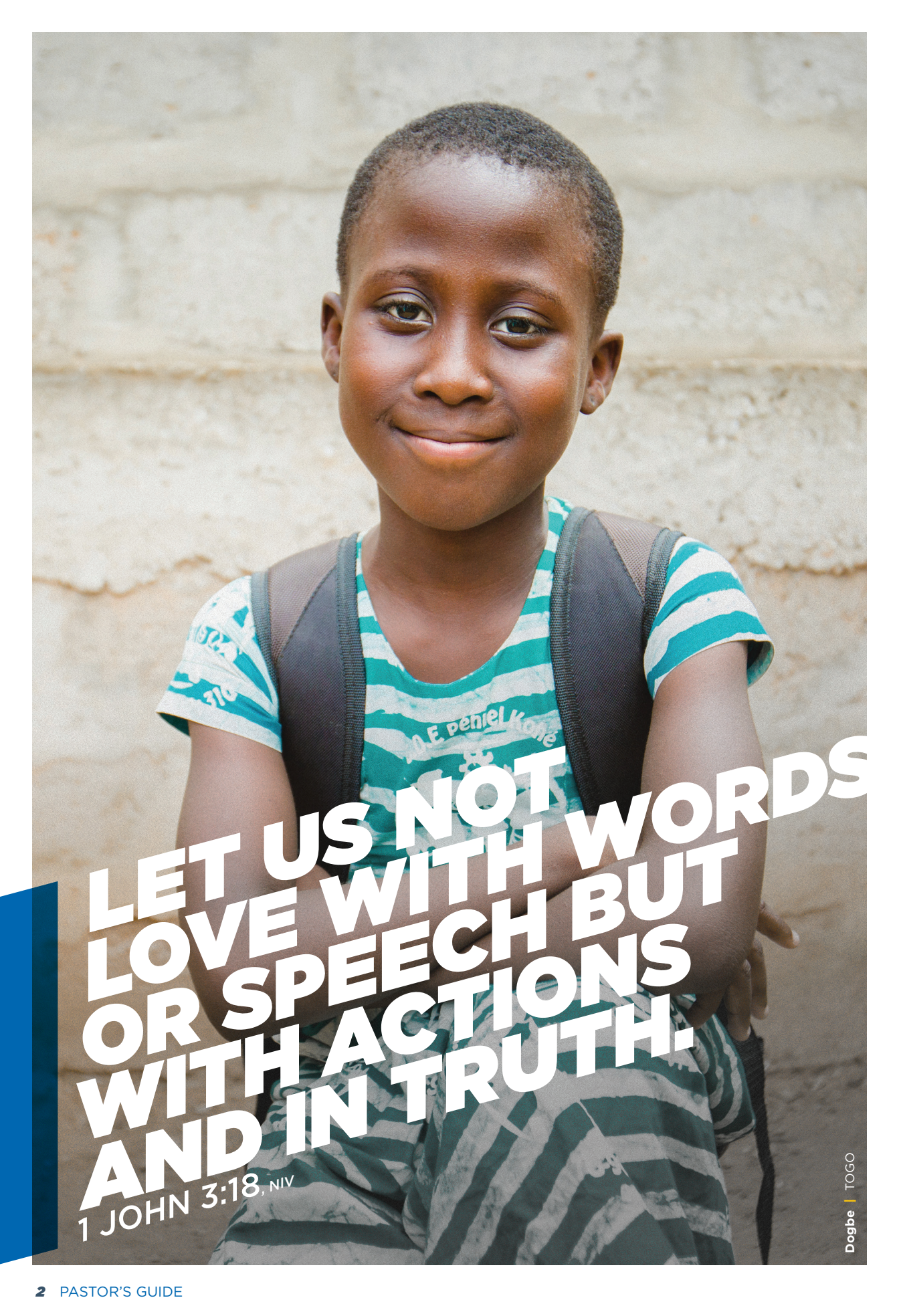


2024
PASTOR'S
GUIDE

COMPASSION *sunday*

LOVE WITH ACTIONS & IN TRUTH



**LET US NOT
LOVE WITH WORDS
OR SPEECH BUT
WITH ACTIONS
AND IN TRUTH.**

1 JOHN 3:18, NIV

DEAR PASTOR,

I can't emphasize enough how much I admire the work you do. In this time of great division, thank you for sharing the unifying message of the gospel.

When the world's challenges seem too big to comprehend, I take heart in the power of the global Church moving together as one body. At Compassion, we see churches like yours, and those we partner with around the world, as our neighbors. And when a global neighborhood bands together to take action in the name of Jesus, incredible change happens.


Compassion is here to support the work God is already doing through you and your ministry. My hope is that, as you flip through this booklet, you'll be inspired to engage your church around a critical common cause: releasing children from poverty in Jesus' name.

One chance to do this is through a powerful experience called Compassion Sunday, which you'll learn all about in this booklet. Depending on your church's needs, a Compassion Sunday event can consist of a host sharing their story during a church service, a short addition to your announcements or — new this year — a multiweek experience to develop your congregation's heart for children in poverty. During a Compassion Sunday event, your church members will be challenged to love well — not just in words but with actions and in truth. They'll have an opportunity to partner with the global Church to help break generational cycles of poverty through child sponsorship. And as your church members live beyond themselves like this, you'll likely see them grow in compassion and generosity themselves!

We're eager to support your ministry beyond Compassion Sunday. We recently partnered with BibleProject to offer you resources like sermon outlines, videos and small group discussion guides. You'll learn more about that in this booklet.

Thank you for taking the time to consider how we can support your ministry in pursuing Jesus and serving those he loves. We'd be honored to walk beside you as neighbors in this pursuit.

Blessings to you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jimmy Mellado', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Santiago “Jimmy” Mellado
President and CEO
Compassion International

WHO IS COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL?

We are a Christian ministry that partners with churches across the globe to empower children trapped in the cycle of poverty. We believe that no child should live in poverty and that ***the best way to release children from poverty is to do it in Jesus' name — in partnership with local churches.*** The Bible clearly calls Christians to care for the poor, and that's why we are ...



CHRIST-CENTERED

When we work with our Christian neighbors to release children from poverty, we always do it in Jesus' name. His life and teachings impact every part of our organization: how we treat people, how we minister to children and how we partner with churches and nations across the world to fight poverty and share the gospel. Jesus is at the core of everything we do. And that's not going to change.



CHURCH-DRIVEN

There's no way we could ever know every need in every community where we work. That's why we partner with churches around the world. A local church is best suited to address the needs of the children in their own community. Plus, they are profoundly positioned to share the gospel with those children and their families.



CHILD-FOCUSED

We are dedicated to releasing children from poverty in Jesus' name. Our main strategy for doing so is our Child Sponsorship Program. Children and youths in the program receive physical, mental, emotional and spiritual care that empowers them to break the cycle of poverty.



A MINISTRY YOU CAN TRUST

Financial stewardship is a responsibility we take seriously. As a Christ-centered charitable organization, we carefully steward the resources you entrust to us. Our financial accountability, reporting processes and results around the globe are consistently commended. We're a founding member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability and meet the standards of the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance. We pledge to use all financial contributions wisely and with transparency.

View archived financial reports, audited statements and our most recent accountability report at compassion.com/financial.

To read more about Compassion International, go to compassion.com/about.



JESSY PADILLA / Pastor / Iglesia Emanuel, Illinois

"All those kids whom we sponsor give us the opportunity to plant the gospel in places where the church cannot go without a program like Compassion that meets the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of the kids. Compassion makes the gospel visible to those who don't yet believe."

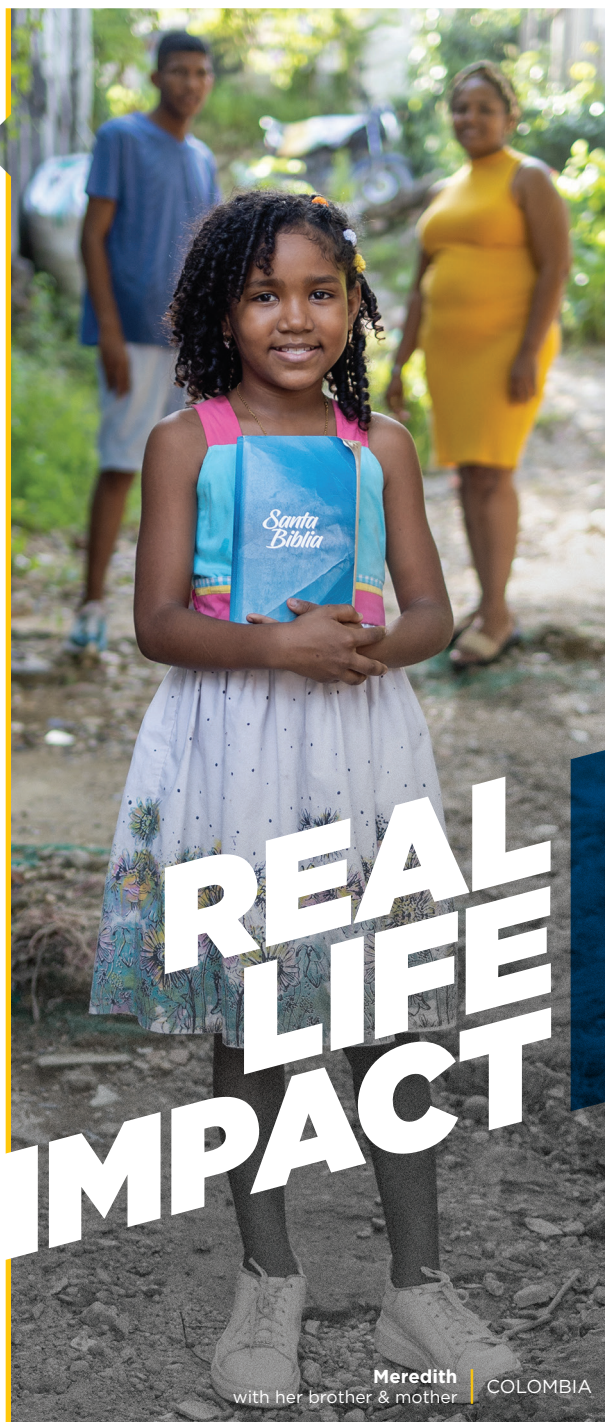
MEET 9-YEAR-OLD MEREDITH.

She lives with her mother and brother in Cartagena, Colombia. Meredith remembers hearing about the love of God for the first time when she was enrolled in Compassion's program at a church in her neighborhood. She was just 4 years old, but the love of Jesus captured her heart. She began to pray for the rest of her family to come to know Jesus too.

The staff at Meredith's Compassion center told her family about God's love, but it was the staff members' actions that spoke the loudest. When the family faced need, the staff were there to help with food, medical care and support for Meredith's education. *"The center does not just talk about God," says Belkis, Meredith's mother. "They share his love by helping families with their specific needs: food, health care or others.* Thus, they bring God's message through actions."

After several years of Meredith asking her mother to attend church with her, Belkis agreed — and experienced God's love for herself. Meredith watched with joy as her mother was baptized just a short time later. Soon, her brother also gave his life to Christ.

Sponsorship not only changed Meredith's life, but it also transformed her family. Sponsorship helped break the cycle of spiritual and economic poverty for generations.



**REAL
LIFE
IMPACT**

Meredith
with her brother & mother | COLOMBIA

WHY COMPASSION SUNDAY?

We'll get to *what* Compassion Sunday is on the next page. But let's start with *why* Compassion Sunday aligns with the work God is doing in your church.

We aren't here to tag along or distract from your ministry but to strategically support your leadership and ministry goals. Bottom line, we want to empower you as an effective leader to ...

CUSTOMIZE A MEANINGFUL MISSIONS EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR CHURCH.

Whether you are already fully engaged in missions or want to move your congregation toward a multicultural mindset for the first time, we can help you customize a Compassion Sunday experience that takes your church's involvement to the next level.

You choose where ministry happens. Your event can focus on part of the world where you're already on mission or introduce your church to different countries across the globe. Then, choose how your Compassion Sunday event looks and when you host. Align it with your ministry calendar and take creative control over how it fits into your service. You can learn more about new BibleProject resources for you and your staff on Page 11. We want to empower you to move your people toward year-round multicultural ministry while enhancing the work God is already doing through your church!

FACILITATE SUSTAINABLE, LONG-TERM TRANSFORMATION.

When you host a Compassion Sunday event, you are facilitating sustainable, long-term transformation. How can we make that claim? Because research shows that child sponsorship works. Data collected by Dr. Bruce Wydick¹, professor for the Department of Economics at the University of San Francisco, indicates that Compassion participants stay in school longer, attain better jobs and are more likely to become leaders in their communities. Those are powerful outcomes.

When you host a Compassion Sunday event, you also facilitate transformation in the lives of the people across all your ministries. Child sponsorship engages men, women and children at all life stages over a long period. It allows them to move with compassion and connect with a global neighborhood of believers.

Pastors have also reported that people who sponsor a child grow in generosity and stewardship. Instead of seeing a dip in giving from church members who choose to sponsor, pastors have shared that, in many cases, their giving increases. Child sponsorship is a powerful way for people to learn to trust God with their money. As a child sponsor sees the impact of giving a little, they learn to trust God with much more.

1. www.compassion.com/multimedia/wydick-research-summary.pdf



RAY WASHINGTON / Pastor / East Lake Community Church, South Carolina

"Compassion Sunday provided an opportunity to call our church to put feet to their faith and respond to the Word we had been preaching. We saw over 20 individuals, families and small groups align their hearts to that of the Father as they made the decision to sponsor children across the globe."



**AND DO NOT FORGET TO DO
GOOD AND TO SHARE WITH
OTHERS, FOR WITH SUCH
SACRIFICES GOD IS PLEASED.**
HEBREWS 13:16, NIV

Nina & Martin | ECUADOR

WHAT IS COMPASSION SUNDAY?

Compassion Sunday is an annual event that moves Christ followers to do Great Commission work around the world in a practical way. It provides a unique opportunity for your congregation to put their faith into action by sponsoring children in poverty. As a result, children around the world will hear the gospel from churches in their neighborhoods, have their physical and emotional needs met, and receive ongoing biblical education. And those who choose to sponsor will be able to powerfully encourage the children they sponsor through letter writing.

Most Compassion Sunday events are led by a current Compassion sponsor. It's likely that a person in your church who's passionate about child sponsorship gave you this guide. Or maybe that person is you. Either way, Compassion Sunday events allow a sponsor to share



**“FOR I WAS
HUNGRY
AND YOU
GAVE ME
SOMETHING
TO EAT.”**
MATTHEW 25:35, NIV

Children at a Compassion center | KENYA

how they have connected with God's global neighborhood through child sponsorship. Your church will hear how their life has changed by loving their neighbors in poverty the way we've been commanded — with actions and in truth.

Often a church member leads the event. Sometimes the pastor does. Or the two can work together to create an awesome experience that fits their church's needs.

And your Compassion Sunday event can even be customized to align perfectly with your ministry. For example, you can request child packets from a country your church is already passionate about serving.

TO GIVE YOU A TASTE OF WHAT COMPASSION SUNDAY IS LIKE, HERE'S WHAT A TYPICAL EVENT CONSISTS OF:



AN ANNOUNCEMENT

or short testimony from a Compassion sponsor



A SHORT VIDEO

highlighting the hope a sponsor can bring to a child's life (just three minutes!)



A CALL TO ACTION

inviting members of the congregation to sponsor a child

How a Compassion Sunday event looks and **when** you host is also up to you. Choose a date that aligns with your sermon series or overall ministry plans. Once you have selected a Sunday that you've discerned is best, you get to take creative control. We'll provide you with all you need to communicate effectively and move your people to action, connecting them with God's global work in a rich and meaningful way. If you have questions, ask your church's Compassion Sunday host to email churches@compassion.com or call **888-503-4585**.



CHARLES WHITAKER / Pastor / River of Life Church, Maryland

"Every pastor wants to be able to sow, give and invest in something that has a high return on investment; Compassion is the path we have chosen to fulfill a portion of the global mission that God has entrusted to us."

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

DECIDE WHAT'S BEST FOR YOUR CHURCH.

Now is the time to decide whether hosting a Compassion Sunday event is a good fit for your church. We really think it could be, but that's not our decision to make.

If you've been approached by a member of your church about hosting a Compassion Sunday event, work with them to make the decision. They may already have a vision for what this could look like in your church. To start, all you have to do is say yes!

Then choose whether your event will be a simple announcement, a moment for a sponsor to share their story or part of the whole service. Check out a plethora of resources at compassion.com/ForPastors to get started.

BE A SUPPORTER AND ENCOURAGER.

As a pastor, you're busy! You're already doing so much to lead your congregation in faith, values and spiritual growth. And Compassion Sunday is a simple yet meaningful complement to your ministry.

A Compassion Sunday event is a unique way for you to empower a member of your church to share their passion for partnering with the global Church to release children from poverty. By encouraging that person, you send your congregation the message that they too can further Christ's kingdom.

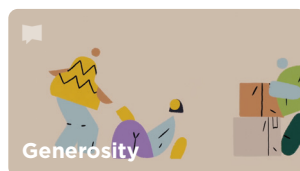
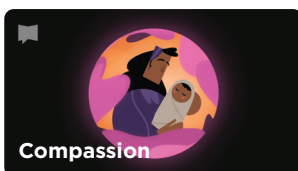
Your involvement level is completely up to you. Some pastors simply introduce the host. Others want to be more involved by presenting child sponsorship in their sermon. But we see repeatedly that the most effective Compassion Sunday events are those where the pastor leads the way.

Whatever participation level you choose, we pray you'll lend your support in some way — making your church's Compassion Sunday event even more effective in releasing children from poverty in Jesus' name.

And throughout the process, we commit to supporting you in every way we can.

If you have specific questions, please reach out to our church engagement team by calling **888-503-4585** or emailing churches@compassion.com.

GO DEEPER WITH COMPASSION AND BIBLEPROJECT



If you'd like to make Compassion Sunday more than just one day in the life of your church, we've got you covered! We've partnered with our neighbors at BibleProject to offer robust resources for you, your congregants and the church member hosting the Compassion Sunday event.

You don't need these resources to host a Compassion Sunday event. They're just a bonus for you! They include:



Videos.



Three weeks of sermon outlines.



Resources for kids and families.



Small group discussion guides on the topics of compassion, justice and generosity.

You can use them to lead your congregation through weeks of thought and prayer about poverty. There's also a 10-day journey to deepen your Compassion Sunday host's connection with God's heart for children living in poverty.

Pastor, thank you so much for reading this booklet and considering how we might unite as neighbors to move your church toward global ministry, starting with a Compassion Sunday experience!

Get your free resources from Compassion and BibleProject at compassion.com/BibleProject.



Pastor Deivis at a Compassion center | COLOMBIA



[COMPASSION.COM/FORPASTORS](https://www.compassion.com/forpastors)