

**PRAY.
GIVE.
ACT.**



**MISSION
GEORGIA**

PRAYER GUIDE



MISSION MEANS ACTION.

We learn the lesson best from Jesus Himself.

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus was known for taking action. Sometimes action began with solitude and prayer. But often His first step as He encountered people was to see their needs...and meet their needs.

It wasn't uncommon for Jesus to connect with someone who would be considered outcast by society. He even traveled at times through cities and communities that most people would intentionally avoid.

When Jesus met those people, He had compassion. He showed them His heart with His hands. In fact, before He performed some of His most popular miracles, He healed, helped, and cared for them.

Jesus showed us how to love, serve, and share. He never left people the same. That's our calling, too...to love our neighbors...in Georgia. Good works require hard work—from all of us—but there's nothing like watching eyes widen, hearts open, and lives change in our communities.

Georgia is our home. It's in our name. It's our mission.



LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR.

What does that mean to you?

Who is your neighbor?

List some "neighbors" and begin to pray for them.

FIND OUR VIDEOS AT MISSIONGEORGIA.ORG

11,000 CHILDREN NEED YOU.

That is statistically the number of children in foster care in the state of Georgia today.

Children in the foster care system may arrive at a foster care home with only the clothes they're wearing and a few belongings that were quickly thrown into a garbage bag.

As a schoolteacher and member of First Baptist Bainbridge, Delrose Betts saw the impact of the foster care crisis in her young students. Moved by the command of Christ to care for the fatherless, she began collecting clothes, shoes, toys, and other items for foster families. She set up a shop for foster families to pick out needed items. Thanks to the Mission Georgia Offering, she was able to purchase a large freezer for food. She invites churches in southwest Georgia to drop off food in the freezer so foster families can pick food up when they come to the shop. As she and others in the body of Christ serve together, the foster care community has been impacted week by week as new children come into care.

Dahlonega Baptist Church realized their small community has a big need – foster care. Recognizing the local Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) office is on the front lines of this need, they decided to take on projects to help the staff so they could better serve foster children and their families. One project was to freshen up the family visitation room. Walls were painted, decorations and furniture were brought in, and the room was given new life.

Churches have many opportunities to be a blessing in the foster community. Make it a focus to raise up families to be trained to care for children in foster care. Serving with a foster care ministry or organization, your church can set up a bed, drop off a car seat, provide kid-friendly toiletry items, or give a birthday party to help a child in foster care know they are loved. Serve DFCS and social workers who work tirelessly to protect children. Surround fostering families with resources, respite, and encouragement.

PRAY AND RESPOND.

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." After taking them in his arms, he laid his hands on them and blessed them.

Mark 10:13-16 CSB

Begin with prayer:

- Pray for more families in Georgia to open their homes to children in foster care, both for respite and long-term care.
- Pray for the 400 children who are housed in hotels each night in Georgia due to the lack of foster care homes.
- Pray that every child in foster care has supportive relationships until their family relationship can be restored.
- Ask the Lord to strengthen case workers who serve the children.
- Ask the Lord to send more people into this unique mission field of work.



ONE THING YOU CAN DO

Partner with a local foster care ministry or agency to bring a OneDay FunDay event to foster families in your community. It's a day of fun activities just for foster families where you can serve them in a "block party" environment.

EVERY MOM NEEDS CARE.

Of 159 Georgia counties, 82 counties—more than half—have no pre-natal medical care.

Even with many avenues of support for women during and after pregnancy, Georgia's maternal mortality rate is almost twice the national rate.

First Baptist Jonesboro is giving church members unique opportunities to serve hurting individuals in their community. Members like Richie and Melissa Howard are serving out of God's redemptive work in their own lives.

Melissa's story is one of pain. Four visits to abortion clinics. Five aborted babies...the last ones twins. Richie's past was filled with drug addiction.

But God, in His love, delivered Richie from his addictions and opened a door to minister to others who had dealt with similar challenges. Pastor Mel Blackaby noticed how God was using Richie and asked him to serve on the staff in a role of community ministry and missions. This ministry included serving and caring for women with similar stories to Melissa.

Pastor Mel said, "We realized there were a lot of ladies who had made some mistakes in the past, and it's just eating them up inside. And it seemed like Richie and Melissa already had a compassion for that kind of ministry. And God, in his perfect way, matches the individuals to meet the need."

The church is helping women who are facing challenging circumstances, teaching them that God's grace is sufficient and providing help when they feel like they have nowhere else to turn. They are even helping women who made the choice of abortion years ago and have been carrying the guilt of past decisions.

Your church can develop ministries like First Baptist Jonesboro or by partnering with pregnancy resources centers to provide the financial support they need to help as many mothers as possible. Collect furniture and baby-related items these mothers and babies will need. And provide support to expectant mothers on their pregnancy journeys.

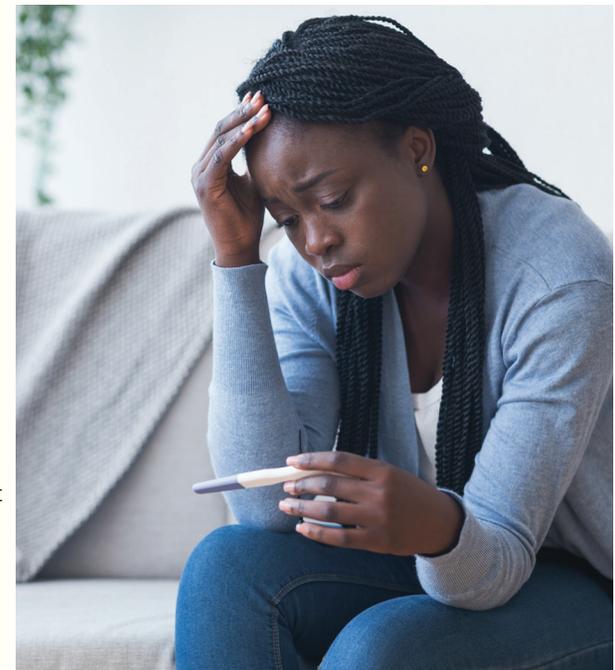
PRAY AND RESPOND.

He protects his flock like a shepherd; he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in the fold of his garment. He gently leads those that are nursing.

Isaiah 40:11 CSB

Begin with prayer:

- Pray for every county in Georgia to have supportive services available for women during and after pregnancy.
- Pray for expectant mothers to know the love of Christ personally.
- Pray for pregnancy support ministries and churches to be strengthened to reach more expectant mothers in your community.
- Pray for opportunities to serve expectant mothers.



ONE THING YOU CAN DO

Bring gift bags to your local hospital, pregnancy care center, or OB-GYN with gifts for new moms and notes of encouragement with contact information for your church (website or someone on staff).

JUST LOOK AROUND YOU.

About 1 million people living in the state of Georgia were born in other countries.

Refugees, immigrants, asylees, and migrants all suffer from the effects of moving into an unfamiliar country.

“Melissa” (name changed) is a wife and busy mom of four in northwest Georgia. After teaching in a school for many years, Melissa sensed God leading her to leave the classroom and open her time up to whatever ways she could serve her community. Just a short time later, she met other believers who were preparing to receive multiple refugee families, some who are persecuted believers. As she learned about the many needs they would have upon arrival, she knew this was where God was leading to give her time. Her church got on board, welcoming the refugee families and offering practical help. Though their lives were drastically impacted, Melissa says her life has been changed by the love she has experienced from these families.

Maksim Lisovsky understands the hardships refugees face when they come to the United States. He was one himself. He also understands the hope Christ gives to families who have literally been on the run due to persecution and war. Now, the pastor of Lighthouse Bible Fellowship in Lawrenceville, his church is serving in ways that may surprise some as they care for Ukrainian refugees who have been arriving over the last two years. What makes this unique is Lighthouse is a Russian-speaking church. Though the country of his birth is at war with Ukraine, the pastor is welcoming those who have fled. Church members are helping with housing, food, learning English, and most of all sharing the love of Christ through friendship. Each Sunday, worshipers from two different countries come together with one heart for one Redeemer.

Internationals are in every city and county of Georgia. Partner with resettlement agencies who introduce you to those looking for assistance. Collect furniture and household items these families need. Help through language training (ESL), culture transition assistance, and job training. Introduce them to the healthcare, educational, government, and other systems necessary to acclimate to the U.S.

PRAY AND RESPOND.

When an alien resides with you in your land, you must not oppress him. You will regard the alien who resides with you as the native-born among you. You are to love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 19:33-34 CSB

Begin with prayer:

- Praise God for the response of many churches for refugees who have come into Georgia.
- Give thanks for their willingness to serve and encourage them.
- Ask the Lord to exalt Himself above all gods in the eyes of internationals.
- Pray for the various foreign nationals who are coming into the state and need housing.
- Pray that more churches will join the efforts to help them establish new lives in America.



ONE THING YOU CAN DO

Adopt an international community near your city. Look for ways to serve and befriend refugees and internationals at schools, businesses, and community events. Invite them into your homes, share meals, help them acclimate to the culture, and build relationships.

TRAFFICKING IS NOT HUMAN.

Four of every 100,000 people in Georgia are human trafficking victims ranking 7th highest in the U.S.

Human trafficking takes on many forms including sex and labor trafficking. The ministry to victims might feel unreachable, but there are roles you can play in loving them.

For over 40 years, Teresa Royall has helped Baptist Collegiate Ministry students at Georgia State University find ways to be on mission on campus and around the world. Surrounded by many needs, the issue of human trafficking stood out to her students. Jirielle, the Women's Ministry leader for the BCM, put together a training event and gave students the opportunity to gather personal care items for a local human trafficking organization. The students took time to deliver those items and meet with the staff to learn more. They are making plans to partner with campus police and administration to bring awareness to the 28,000 students at GSU.

Bluffton Baptist sits in a small community just off Highway 27 in southwest Georgia. Though it is surrounded by Georgia's beauty, the church has stepped into the difficult issue of human trafficking. Led by Pastor Michael Williams, the church has served through intentional prayer times, collecting requested items, and offering support to a local ministry serving exploited women. The awareness has brought a sense of mission to church members who would not otherwise have the opportunity to serve. Their supportive involvement has strengthened the fight against human trafficking and brought the Good News to individuals who have been affected by it.

Human trafficking takes place in some way in every county of Georgia. Churches can stand against it and serve victims through prayer and by partnering with local organizations and ministries who can provide specific guidance to make a difference. Become more aware about how children and adults are affected by social media and online predatory activities in your homes, and be trained on how to recognize trafficking victims as you go about your daily life.

PRAY AND RESPOND.

You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people.

Genesis 50:20 CSB

Begin with prayer:

- Pray for God's nearness and love to be made known to individuals who are being trafficked.
- Pray for children and teens to be wise and recognize exploitation online.
- Pray for ministries in Georgia who are equipping churches to prevent exploitation and serve victims.
- Pray for individuals in law enforcement and government agencies as they direct many efforts to combat human trafficking in Georgia.



ONE THING YOU CAN DO

Call your local law enforcement and ask to speak with someone about the issue of human trafficking in your area. Ask them for information on local agencies and organizations who serve this need.

THIRD GRADE MATTERS MOST.

Almost half of children in Georgia's public schools do not read at grade level.

You don't have to be a professional educator to make a difference in a child's ability to read.

Cindy Schaeffner is a member of Central Baptist Church in Americus and has been a missions advocate for many years. Along with others in her church, she realized that there was an unserved mission field in their own community—kids struggling to read. In 2022, 78% of elementary children in her county were not reading at grade level. Along with a team of volunteers at her church, Cindy began a Read Georgia program to serve this need. Once a week they went to a local school and helped kids with sight words and sentences. The excitement the kids experienced as they became better readers fueled the joy of each volunteer.

Diane Fountain at 1025 Church in Monroe helped start a reading program through her church. Visiting a local school each week, she met with different students who struggled with reading. One teacher asked her to help a young boy who was never invited to a party that celebrated good readers at the school. His discouragement turned to excitement after Diane worked with him for several weeks and he passed the reading test. He was finally able to go to the reading party with his friends!

Every school in Georgia has students who are struggling to read well, and when students don't read well, studies show they don't live well. Your church can change that by sending volunteers into schools just one hour a week to read with kids. You can also collect new books to give away at outreach events or offer reading clubs in underserved communities. You can also care for teachers and administrators by showing them your appreciation for the hard work they spend every day serving children and families. By working with your local school board and schools, you can make a significant difference in your community, one word and one reader at a time.

PRAY AND RESPOND.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.

Luke 2:52 CSB

Begin with prayer:

- Pray for children in your county to have more opportunities to read Bible stories.
- Pray for your school system as it works to overcome the challenges the pandemic worsened in reading opportunities for students.
- Pray for churches in your area to become stronger partners with local schools.
- Pray for ways to personally connect with and serve school staff in your community.
- Pray for more reading mentors in your area.



ONE THING YOU CAN DO

Go to Read Georgia online (missiongeorgia.org/readgeorgia) and download the guide. Find out more about what it looks like to serve children with literacy needs through a local school partnership.

THERE'S POWER IN A BACKPACK.

There might not be a more versatile tool to meet the needs of someone in your community than a backpack. They simply serve as a carrier of your love and compassion by filling them with their most urgent and pressing needs.

You can lead your church or local association to connect with local needs, collect items, and deliver the backpacks. We provide how-to guides that suggest the best items to collect and help with ideas of how to get the backpacks into the hands of those who need them.

Connect with us to get started at
www.MISSIONGEORGIA.org/backpacks.

 **MISSION GEORGIA**





**MISSION
GEORGIA**

Partnership with MISSION GEORGIA makes it possible to unite local churches and communities to gospel-centered care for neighbors who need it most.

MISSIONGEORGIA.ORG



Georgia
Baptist