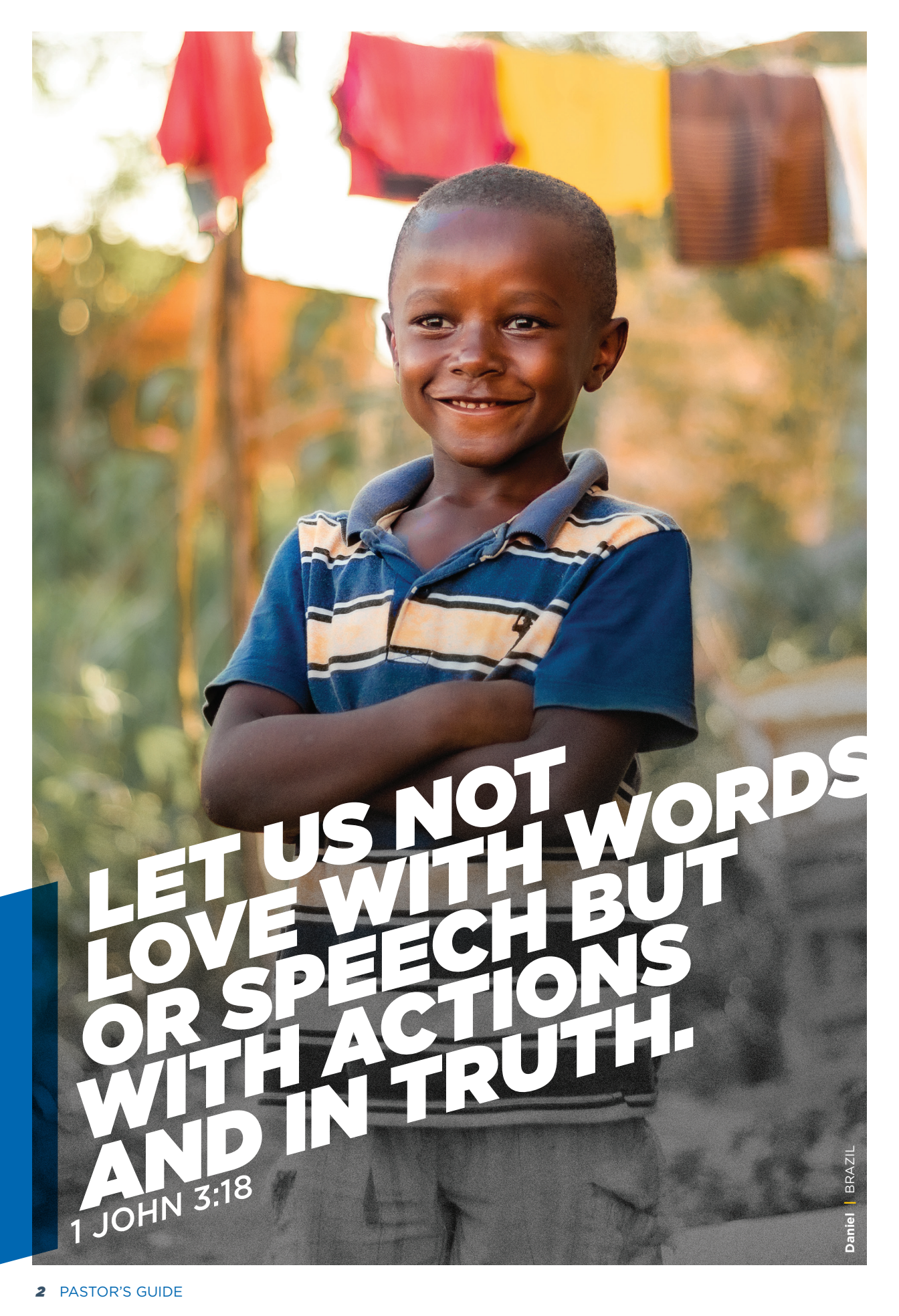


**2023**  
PASTOR'S  
GUIDE

COMPASSION *sunday*<sup>®</sup>

**LOVE WITH  
ACTIONS &  
IN TRUTH**



**LET US NOT  
LOVE WITH WORDS  
OR SPEECH BUT  
WITH ACTIONS  
AND IN TRUTH.**  
1 JOHN 3:18

## **DEAR PASTOR,**

I can't emphasize enough how much I admire the work you do. You are navigating immensely challenging times. Thank you for faithfully running the race that God has called you to.

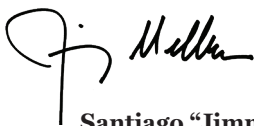
During my time as an Olympic decathlete, I learned a lot about running. One lesson I'll never forget is that when we run, it is critical to keep our eyes fixed straight ahead to avoid drifting off course. Drifting is a natural human tendency — we tend to physically gravitate toward the thing we concentrate on. But when we concentrate on the right thing, we more naturally stay on track and are free to direct all our energy toward crossing the finish line.

Compassion is not here to compete for your concentration. Compassion is here to support the race you are already running — the work God is doing through you and your ministry. My hope is, as you flip through the pages of this book, your goals would come into greater focus. May you envision a practical next step for your church toward Great Commission work, allowing your people to interact with the world in a personal way through a powerful event called Compassion Sunday.

On Compassion Sunday, your church will be challenged to love well — not just in words but with actions and in truth. Your church body will be given an opportunity to partner with the global Church in helping end the cycle of poverty in children's lives around the world. And as they experience transformation in the life of their sponsored child, they will experience remarkable change in their own lives too. Sponsors will be energized to love more freely, give more generously and run their race with greater purpose and clarity.

A beautiful similarity between your ministry and Compassion's cause is that both are intensely pursuing Jesus and those he loves. It's an incredible journey that is worthy of our attention and dedication. I would be honored to run alongside you.

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 dedicated to partnering with churches across the globe to support 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 — through the local church.*** The Bible clearly calls Christians to care for the poor, and that's why we are ...



## CHRIST-CENTERED

When we work 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. 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 local churches around the world. A local church is best suited to address the needs of the children in their 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 avenue for doing so is through our Child Sponsorship Program. While children are enrolled in Compassion's program, they receive the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual care they need to escape the cycle of poverty.



## A MINISTRY YOU CAN TRUST

Financial stewardship is a responsibility we take seriously. As a Christ-centered charitable organization, we strive to be good stewards of the resources you entrust to us. Our financial accountability, reporting processes and results around the globe are consistently commended. We are 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](https://compassion.com/financial).

To read more about Compassion International, go to [compassion.com/about](https://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 very first time when she was enrolled in the Compassion program at a local church in her community. She was just 4 years old, but the love of Jesus captured her heart, and she began to pray for the rest of her family to come to know him too. The staff at Meredith's Compassion program shared about God's love with her family, but her mother was most impacted by how they lived it out. When the family faced a need, the staff was there to help with food, health 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, her mother finally agreed to attend church with her persistent daughter, and she experienced the love of God for herself. Meredith watched with joy as her mother was baptized just a short time later. Soon, her brother followed in her footsteps and gave his life to Christ too.

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



**REAL  
LIFE  
IMPACT**

Meredith  
with her brother and mother | COLOMBIA

# WHY COMPASSION SUNDAY?

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

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 you are wanting to foster a multicultural mindset with your congregation 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. Partner with us in a specific part of the world where you're already on mission or introduce your church to countries around globe. Then, choose **how** Compassion Sunday looks and **when** you host. Align Compassion Sunday with your ministry calendar and take total creative control over how it fits into your service. We want to empower you to give your people the experience of year-round multicultural ministry while enhancing the work God is already doing through your church! You will even have a specific person from Compassion assigned to assist your church along the way.

## **FACILITATE SUSTAINABLE, LONG-TERM TRANSFORMATION.**

When you host a Compassion Sunday event, we can guarantee that you are facilitating sustainable, long-term transformation. How can we make that kind of claim? Because research shows that child sponsorship works. Data collected by Dr. Bruce Wydick<sup>1</sup>, 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 community. Those are powerful outcomes.

When you host a Compassion Sunday event, you also facilitate transformation in the lives of the people across all of your ministries. Child sponsorship engages men, women and children at all life stages over a long period of time. It encourages them to grow in compassion and care for God's work in the world.

Pastors have also reported that people who sponsor a child grow in the areas of 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 witnesses the impact that they have with giving a little, they learn to trust God with much more.

<sup>1</sup>. [www.compassion.com/multimedia/wydick-research-summary.pdf](http://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

Nina & Martin | ECUADOR

# WHAT IS COMPASSION SUNDAY?

Compassion Sunday is an annual event that connects Christ followers with Great Commission work around the world in a practical way. It provides a unique opportunity for your people to put their faith into action by sponsoring children in poverty. As a result, children around the world will hear the gospel from local churches in their communities, receive ongoing Biblical education, and have physical and emotional needs met in a way that allows them to not only survive but thrive. And people who choose to sponsor will have an ongoing opportunity to impact their sponsored child's life through letter writing.

Most Compassion Sunday events are led by a current Compassion sponsor. It's likely that the very reason you're reading this guide is that a member of your church who's passionate about child sponsorship gave it to you. Or maybe that person is you. Either way,



Children at the Compassion Center | KENYA

**Compassion Sunday events allow a sponsor to share how they have connected with God's work in the world through child sponsorship.** Your church will hear how his or her life has changed by loving others the way we've been commanded — with actions and in truth.

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

Your Compassion Sunday event can even be customized in a way that aligns best with your ministry. For example, you can request child packets from a country your church is already passionate about.

**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 3 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 best 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 empower your people to connect with God's work in the world in a rich and meaningful way. For questions, connect with your church's Compassion Sunday host and ask him or her to email [churches@compassion.com](mailto: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 have been approached by a member of your church about hosting a Compassion Sunday event, work with him or her to make the decision. He or she 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](https://compassion.com/ForPastors) to get started.

## **BE A SUPPORTER AND ENCOURAGER.**

As a pastor, you are 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 his or her 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 desire to be more involved by presenting child sponsorship in their sermon. However, we see repeatedly that the most effective Compassion Sunday events are the ones where the pastor is leading 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](mailto:churches@compassion.com).





