

“The Family of God”

World Orphan Sabbath Message

November 21, 2026

Suggested Hymns:

#190 — Jesus Loves Me

#652 — Love at Home

#655 — Happy the Home

Suggested Scripture Readings:

Psalm 68:5,6

James 1:27

Introduction —

Introduce World Orphan Sabbath.

Share personal involvement or thoughts on this topic.

1. Testimony of Francine —

(See downloadable testimony)

Share or read the details about the catastrophe that caused Francine to be orphaned.

Read Francine’s testimony.

Note: ICC protects the privacy and identity of minor children. A photo of Francine is available from ICC. It may be used to share with the congregation as long as it is not shown as part of any live-streaming of the message. Call Wendy Clark for more details: (800) 422-7729.

2. Introduction to International Children’s Care —

Do you notice how lovingly Francine spoke about her biological family? When tragedy happened to her family, what was she thankful for?

This is what Francine said; *“Today, I thank God for giving us another family where we can receive love, care, education, food, clothing, and hope for the future.”*

Yes, all these things — love, care, education, food, clothing, and hope for the future, can be found elsewhere. But by design, God created the family as the best place for children to thrive.

The Patmos Children’s Village in the D.R. Congo is part of the International Children’s Care network of care centers around the world. ICC is a supporting ministry of the

Seventh-day Adventist church and has other projects in India, Mexico, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic.

ICC was founded by an Adventist pastor couple in 1978. Since then, thousands of children have become a part of the ICC family. They are supported through the generosity of child sponsors and donors, many of whom give sacrificially to answer God's call to care for orphans.

Family is the key word in referring to methods of care. Children are placed within a home environment where Adventist House parents provide nurturing care. There may be 10–12 orphan children placed within a home. And there may be 10–12 homes on a campus which also includes a church, a school, a farm and industries. The children don't age out when they turn 18. They are encouraged to pursue a trade or university studies until they can care for themselves.

For Francine, she has a new family now. And it wasn't just her. In total 48 children were brought to the Patmos children's village because of the tragedy. Some children were assimilated into existing families, while homes 14 and 15 were constructed. Those homes are completed.

The families are doing well.

And children's lives are being transformed.

That is a little bit about the ministry of ICC. And later, I want to share a couple more stories that demonstrate the transforming power of what is happening at ICC children's village.

But first. What does God think of family?

3. God is a Family God

Read Text: Genesis 1:26 *"Let Us make man in Our image..."*

Before there were human families...

There was already a relationship among the three persons of the Godhead.

We see this relationship in Matthew 3:16,17

Verse 16; *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:"*

Verse 17; *"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

- The Son is baptized.
- The Spirit descends.
- The Father speaks

God is not alone.

God lives in relationship.

Key point #1 to emphasize: “We were created from relationship... and we were created for relationship.”

— PAUSE —

4. Two Families

Originally, God created one family — the human family.

A. The Human Family Acts 17:24–27

Verse 24; *“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;”*

Verse 25; *“Neither is worshiped with men’s hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;*

Verse 26; *“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;”*

Verse 27; *“That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:*

Jesus made all nations “From one blood...”

“Every person in this world belongs to the human family.”

Every person has...

- Dignity
- Value
- Worth

If we were to go outside right now and walk down the street, every person we meet is part of our human family.

- Same blood
- Same basic form
- Needing love
- Needing food
- Needing Jesus as their Savior, even though they may not be aware of it.

As verse 27 says; *“That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.”*

After sin entered the human family, God initiated a family for those who would seek the Lord. Those who do become part of the Family of God.

B. The Family of God

The Family of God is one we choose to join.

John 1:12—“*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*”

Emphasize—“To those who received Him... He gave the right to become children of God.”

Romans 8:15—“*For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*”

“You received the Spirit of adoption...”

“We are not automatically part of God’s family in a relational sense ... but we are invited into it.”

Key point #2 to emphasize—

“We are born into the human family... but we are invited to join the family of God.”

Ask How many of you here today have accepted that invitation?

5. The Importance of Family

How important is family to our Heavenly Father?

Text: Psalm 68:5–6 “*A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing...*” (NIV)

Though Francine’s father had left, her mother had kept the family together. But when her mother died in the catastrophe, Francine needed care. She needed the love of a family. And through the faithful support of the ICC family of donors and supporters, God was able to set Francine into a new family.

Francine is thriving.

Francine is grateful.

Emphasize the text again.

“*A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing...*” (NIV)

6. The Family Influence

Daniel’s story - (See downloadable story)

Share or read Daniel’s story as provided (see below for story outline)

Note: Photos of Daniel are also available

Call Wendy Clark for more details: (800) 422–7729

Story Summery:

- Ferry boat accident
- Daniel is only one in family to survive
- Wanders the village—lost, hungry, lonely

- Judith notices — she herself was an orphan
- Cares for him.
- Knows he needs more
- Takes him to Patmos village
- Where will he fit in?
- Georime's home

— PAUSE —

Key point #3 to emphasize

For an orphan, having a family is not sentimental. It is transformational.

It transformed the lives of Judith and Georime. And now, they are helping to transform lives. These two young women, who themselves were orphaned, have become a part of the family of God. And, they have taken on the mission of the family.

And what is the mission of the family of God?

— PAUSE —

7. The Family Mission

Read Text: Matthew 25: 31–40

Verse 31; *“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:”*

Verse 32; *“And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:”*

Verse 33; *“And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.”*

Verse 34; *“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:”*

Verse 35; *“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:”*

Verse 36; *“Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*

Verse 37; *Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?*

Verse 38; *When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?*

Verse 39; *Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?*

Verse 40; *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

With whom does Jesus Identify Himself?

- Hungry
- Thirsty
- A Stranger
- Naked
- Sick
- In Prison

Jesus is describing quite well the orphan and vulnerable child. And Jesus says, “*in the family mission, you served them. And by serving them, you served Me.*”

Key point #4 to emphasize

This family mission is not charity.

This is family taking care of family.

Note: If time allows, tell the story of Timothy here

8. (Optional if there is time) Full Circle Ministry

Timothy's story — (See downloadable story)

Share or read Timothy's story as provided (see below for story outline)

Note: Timothy is of age and has signed a consent to share his story.

Pictures of Timothy are available. Call Wendy Clark for more details: (800) 422-7729

Story Summary:

- Timothy lived on a train platform
- Pastor Raj saw him and offered him a new life.
- Timothy's story came out.
- He didn't know his name, his parents' names, etc.
- He was taken to live at the Sweet Home Children's Village
- Succeeded in school: senior class president, master's degree in theology from Spicer
- Came back to work where he went to school.
- Ordained & baptized ICC kids.

9. Invitation

God invites us into His family... and then,

God invites us into the family mission — to help others find their place to belong — to find their place within the family of God.

And before I close, I want to invite you to the ICC family mission.

I invite you to help some of the least of these who are:

- Orphaned
- Vulnerable
- Lonely
- Sick
- Scared
- Hopeless

You can make a difference in their lives.

And here's how,

- Pray — pray for orphan children you know and one in the ICC family
- Care — Be an ambassador to tell others about the ICC family mission
- Participate by giving a donation to help care for the children
- Support through regular giving or becoming a child sponsor

This is World Orphan Sabbath.

What a wonderful way to recognize this day by choosing to help one of the “Least of These.”

Tell where more information is available.

Ideas: I'll be in the back with brochures. There's a table in the back with brochures.

Key point #5 to emphasize

You don't have to do everything. But you can be part of something special. As you join the family mission of helping children in need.

10. Closing Prayer

Example:

Heavenly Father — Father of the Fatherless,
Thank You for being so loving to us,
Thank you for inviting us into the great Family of God,
And thank you for inviting us to be a part of your Family Mission,
We want to live as your children,
And we want to help others who are hurting and lonely,
To also find their place in your love and care,
Help us Father to follow Jesus' example in all things,
And it is in His name that we pray, Amen.