

ORPHAN SUNDAY: OLD AND NEW

Small Group & Family Discussion Guide

James 1:26–27; Revelation 21:1–7; John 1:12–13 (ESV) | November 1, 2026

Big Idea: Because God has welcomed us into His family and is making all things new, His people are called to care for the vulnerable and join His work of renewal.

Open in prayer, then read James 1:26–27 aloud together.

Observation

What does the text say?

1. According to James 1:26–27, what does pure and undefiled religion look like?
2. Who does James specifically tell believers to care for? What does he say we must keep ourselves from?
3. In Revelation 21:1–7, what new things does John see and hear? What does God promise to do?
4. According to Revelation 21:7 and John 1:12–13, what does God give to those who belong to Christ?

Understanding

What does the text mean?

1. James names widows and orphans as examples of people who need care. Why might these groups have been especially vulnerable to injustice in the ancient world?
2. The sermon connected the care of orphans and widows with two pictures in Revelation 21: the bride of Christ and the children of God. What do these pictures teach us about how important family is in God's purposes?
3. Read John 1:12–13. What does it mean that believers are given the right to become children of God? Is this something we earn, or something God gives?
4. Revelation 21 describes the day when God will make all things new. How does that future hope shape the way Christians should live and treat others now?

Personal Reflection

What does the text reveal about me?

1. What are some ways you have experienced the blessings of belonging to God's family?
2. Is it easier for you to receive the care and welcome of God than to extend care and welcome to people who are vulnerable? Why?
3. When you hear about children without stable families, what is your first response—indifference, sadness, uncertainty, compassion, or something else? What might that response reveal?
4. Where might you be enjoying the blessings of being God's child while neglecting the responsibilities that come with belonging to His family?

Application

How should I respond?

1. James says to visit or care for orphans and widows in their affliction. Who in your community might need practical care, advocacy, friendship, or support?
2. What is one concrete way you or your group can participate in caring for vulnerable children and families this month?
3. Not everyone is called to adopt or foster, but everyone can take part in caring for vulnerable children. What role could prayer, encouragement, giving, serving, or supporting foster and adoptive families play in your life?
4. As you wait for God to make all things new, what is one small way you can join His work of renewal this week?

Family Application

For parents and children to talk through together.

1. What does it mean to be part of a family? How do you think a child might feel if they did not have a safe family to care for them?
2. The Bible says that when we trust Jesus, God welcomes us as His children. What are some good things about being part of God's family?
3. James says we should care for orphans and widows. What are some ways our family could show care to children and families who need help?
4. God promises that one day He will make everything new. What are some things in our world that you hope God will make right? Pray together for children who need safe, loving families, and ask God to show your family how you can help.

Pray together, thanking God for welcoming us into His family and asking Him to help us care for those who need protection, love, and support.