



## URBAN HOPE NYC

*Hope for Children. Healing for Families. Building a City of Joy.*

# SCHOOL ADOPTION TOOLKIT

---

A Step-by-Step Guide for Churches and Volunteers  
Who Want to Transform Their Local Schools

*"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few."*

**Matthew 9:37**

You do not need a seminary degree. You do not need a big budget.  
**You just need a willing heart and this guide. Let's go.**

## YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE

Every great movement begins with one person who shows up. This toolkit walks you through a proven, practical process for adopting a school in your neighborhood. No experience required — just kindness, consistency, and a genuine desire to serve. Follow each step and by the end, you'll have a real relationship with your local school and a seat at the table to serve the children who need you most.

### STEP 1: ADOPT YOUR SCHOOL IN PRAYER

Before you ever make a phone call or walk through a school door, start on your knees. Prayer is not the pre-game. **Prayer POWERS the game.** Everything else flows from this.

- a) Identify every public school in your ZIP code. (Search: schooldigger.com or insideschools.org)
- b) Assign each school to a prayer team, small group, or individual in your church or network.
- c) Pray weekly for the principal by name, the teachers, the students, and the families they serve.
- d) Pray specifically for an open door — favor, wisdom, and the right timing to make contact.

**PRO TIP:** Don't skip this step. Some of the most resistant principals have become our strongest partners — and it always started with prayer.

### STEP 2: DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Great volunteers don't show up uninformed. Invest 15 minutes learning about your school before calling. Principals can tell when you've done your homework, and it earns instant respect.

- a) Look up the school's state report card (test scores, demographics, student population).
- b) Check if they have an active PTA, after-school programs, or community partners online.
- c) Find the principal's name and title — addressing them correctly shows professionalism.
- d) Note grade levels and published needs (literacy, behavior support, family engagement).

**PRO TIP:** Knowing the school's reading proficiency rate helps your approach: Don't tell them you discovered their school was struggling, that could make them defensive. Take a posture of care. "If any of your children would benefit from literacy tutoring — we would be glad to help."

### STEP 3: MAKE THE CALL

This is where most people freeze. Don't overthink it. You're not selling anything — you're offering to serve. Call the main office and ask for the Principal, Assistant Principal, or School Social Worker.



#### YOUR PHONE SCRIPT:

*"Hi, my name is [YOUR NAME]. I'm part of a network of churches in the neighborhood that would love to serve our local schools better. I'd love to set up a brief 15-minute meeting with [PRINCIPAL'S NAME] to introduce ourselves and hear how we can support your school community. Would [he/she] have any availability this week or next?"*

#### WHAT IF THEY SAY NO (OR DON'T RETURN YOUR CALL)?

That's normal. Principals are among the busiest people on the planet. Wait one week, call again, and try a different contact. Persistence with grace wins every time.

## THE MEETING & BEYOND

### STEP 4: THE PRINCIPAL MEETING

You got the meeting — make it count. Bring TWO people (ideally pastors, leaders, or retired educators). Dress professionally. Arrive early. Bring a folder with the Care Portal brochure, Read 2 Succeed flyer, and Ambassadors of Peace booklet. Let the conversation guide when you share them.

#### THE FOUR-PART CONVERSATION:

##### PART 1 — LEAD WITH HONOR

*“Thank you for meeting with us. We appreciate everything you do for our children and community. We represent a network of churches in [YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD] and would love to be better community partners.”*

##### PART 2 — ASK, DON’T TELL

*“If you have practical ways we could support you, we’d love to hear them. We’ll mobilize our team around your needs.”* PAUSE. Listen. Take notes. Do not interrupt.

##### PART 3 — OFFER RESOURCES

*“For families in crisis, we have a Care Portal that alerts our network to tangible needs — beds, clothing, refrigerators. We also have a literacy program and a mentoring program for behavioral challenges. None are preachy — we understand and respect your position.”*

##### PART 4 — LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN

*Hand the folder over. Leave both business cards. “We’re here whenever you need us. We’ll follow up in two weeks.”*

**PRO TIP:** “We understand and respect your position” disarms every concern about churches in schools. Memorize it.

### STEP 5: FOLLOW UP & FOLLOW THROUGH

The meeting was the beginning, not the finish line. What happens next determines whether this becomes a partnership or a forgotten handshake.

- a) Send a thank-you email within 24 hours. Short, warm, professional.
- b) Deliver on ONE need within two weeks — even something small. Trust is built by doing.
- c) Follow up at the two-week mark: “How can we help this month?”
- d) Report back to your church. Celebrate wins. Recruit more volunteers.
- e) Continue praying. Some breakthroughs take months. Stay faithful.

### QUICK FAQs

**Small church?** Start with prayer adoption only. One faithful prayer warrior beats a hundred with no follow-through.

**Background check?** Yes — most districts require it. The school will guide you. Budget 2–4 weeks.

**Share my faith?** Inside school, no. But your presence IS the sermon. Kids will eventually ask why you care. That’s the open door.

**Skeptical principal?** Out-serve their skepticism. Cookies + a handwritten note.

**How many schools?** Start with one. Do it well. Then grow. Deep beats wide.

### YOU ARE THE ANSWER TO SOMEONE’S PRAYER.

A child is waiting. A teacher is praying. A principal is hoping someone will finally follow through.

**That someone is you. Go get that meeting.**

URBAN HOPE NYC | [www.urbanhopenyc.org](http://www.urbanhopenyc.org) | [chad.mcvann@urbanhopenyc.org](mailto:chad.mcvann@urbanhopenyc.org)