

# Olivia's Story

## Older Version

**Warning:** Olivia's story is hard to hear. We have intentionally created this fictional story to be appropriate for families; however, you should preview all materials to make certain that you are comfortable with all the content before sharing them with your audience.

**Suggestion:** If using the Missions kit for a 5 day VBS or camp, use one story video per day taking time to review the previous day. Use discussion questions and scripture truth to reassure children following each video.

### Part 1

#### Script:

On September 15th at 2 am the Sheriff's Department was called by a concerned citizen, who witnessed a couple arguing in front of 2 terrified children. The family appeared to be living in their minivan.

When the first deputy arrived on the scene, he found two intoxicated adults, drugs, alcohol, and 2 terrified children who were dirty, tired, and hungry. The oldest was 9, a sweet girl, who was holding her 18 month-old half-sister. As another officer pulled in, the preteen hid by a dumpster with her sister and she witnessed her parents being separated and then arrested. She felt the desperation rise in her chest as she peaked around the metal container to see her parents being placed in the back of the police car.

The nine-year-old took a deep breath as she looked around and tears filled her eyes. Silently she began to cry and allow the tears to roll off her cheek. She wiped them with the back of her dirty hand. Determined not to give into fear, she stood up.

She saw a black trash bag out of the corner of her eye, and her favorite doll, and a blanket her grandma gave her, and a single book her teacher gave her last year. She picked up the dirty trash bag off the ground and began to gather her most prized possessions.

Her eyes continued to drift around at items in the van: empty alcohol bottles, food wrappers, empty chip bags, dirty sleeping bags, rolled up sweatshirts they used as pillows, baby bottles with spoiled milk, dirty diapers, cigarette butts, and a baseball bat that the mom had used to protect herself.

The preteen froze so unsure of what was going to happen next. Her heart raced. She looked around. She started thinking... Could she run? Should she run away? Was she better off on her own? What about her sister?

"Hi Olivia. I am Officer Elizabeth and I am going to take you someplace a little more safe tonight. Who's this?" the officer asked. Olivia responded with barely a whisper, "Sissy"

The officer picked up her baby sister. Olivia, grabbing the trash bag, hesitantly followed the officer and got into the car. A few moments later, the police car pulled into a parking lot at a plain-looking building. As they parked she could see words on the side of the building that read "Spartanburg County Department of Social Services."

## Questions to Ask:

Who helps Olivia and her sister? The police

Police have the legal authority to remove children from unsafe situations. The children were not in trouble. They did not do anything wrong. The police protected them and took them to a safe place.

Why do you think Olivia was crying? (various answers) Sad, scared, lonely...

Discuss empathy. It's so important that we are able to look at another person's situation and think about how hard all those emotions can be.

Why do you think Olivia packed a doll, blanket, and a book? (various answers) Items to bring her comfort.

Olivia probably did not trust the adults around her to meet her needs. She likely felt responsible to fiercely protect "her" favorite things.

## Reassuring Truth:

Jesus loves all children and always protects.

"The Lord is faithful; He will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one." 2 Thessalonians 3:3

## Part 2

### Script:

With a baby on one hip and a black trash bag with few earthly possessions in the other, Olivia followed the officer to the building. When they stepped onto the sidewalk, another woman opened the door. After the women exchanged pleasantries, the lady said, "Hi Olivia, my name is Erin and I'm gonna help you tonight. Are you hungry? Let's get you something to eat."

Without a word, Olivia squeezed her sister tighter, swallowed hard, and took a step into the building. She followed this new lady through a maze of hallways that ended in a large room of cubicles.

As she walked she pondered, What is in this place? Is this like jail for kids? Are we going to be locked in this building? Do my parents know where I am? Can they find me? When will they be here to get us?

Erin asked her to wait just a minute as she sorted through some paperwork on her desk and made a phone call and stepped away. The lady returned with juice boxes and packs of animal crackers, setting them on the desk.

She also carried a pack of baby wipes, a clean diaper, and a clean t-shirt for the toddler.

She pointed to a spot where they could sit on the floor for their snack.

As they started their snacks, the lady worked quietly nearby. Phone call after phone call. They all seemed to run together. Both girls were asleep in moments.

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"Wake up Sweetie... you have to wake up. It's time to go!" the lady exclaimed.

Erin helped get them loaded into a small Suv and turned on the radio as they drove through the dark city.

They pulled into the driveway of a brick 2-story house with a porch light on. A man and woman open the door and walk toward the car. They are in pajamas and look really sleepy, but they smile and try to hide their yawns. As Olivia makes her way toward the house looking around confused, the lady gets back in her suv and starts to leave.

"Wait! Where is my mom?" Olivia shrieked.

## Questions to Ask:

Who was Erin? A helper.

Explain further that children in foster care have a caseworker who works very hard to find children a foster home and does a lot of paperwork but also works with the moms and dads to help them too.

What questions did Olivia think about? (various answers)

Remind children about the many emotions children have when they experience a really hard situation, that's called trauma. Her mind was racing; she could only focus on the many fears she had.

Who do you think the man and woman are? (various answers)

Caseworkers take children to a safe home to live in called a foster home. The foster parents are trained to care for children who have experienced trauma.

## Reassuring Truth:

Jesus is with us in hard times.

"God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble." Psalm 46:1

## Part 3

### Script:

The couple looks at each other and then squat down, right there on the front stoop.

"Olivia? I'm Nancy and this is John. We are your new foster parents. You are going to stay with us for a little while. Come on in, I'll show you your room." the woman explained.

Too exhausted to even think of more questions, much less use her voice to ask them, she followed John, Nancy, and Sissy into the house and down the hall to a bedroom. It was pretty. A twin bed with a colorful quilt-style blanket. The pink and purple hearts stand out the most. There is a small bookshelf with dozens of books and a soft lamp. On the other side of the room, a crib is ready for Sissy. Olivia lets out a breath she hadn't even realized that she had been holding in. They can sleep. They are together. Everything will be okay.

The woman leaves the room, leaving the door slightly open so Olivia can see a crack of light coming from the bathroom in the hallway. As her eyes adjust, she looks around. Her mind is wide awake now. She slips quietly out of bed to check on Sissy. What is this place, she thought? Yawning, she remembered that she should probably get back in bed, in case the lady came back. A book caught Olivia's eye. In Our Home...

She picked it up and sat on the edge of the bed. In Our Home... You are safe. You are loved. You are wanted.

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"Good Morning Olivia. It's time to wake up!" Nancy encouraged.

After a shower, a quick breakfast, and meeting the other 3 children, the lady loaded up the minivan with all 5 children and headed out to run errands.

As they drove across town, Olivia surprised herself by talking a little bit. She couldn't really open up or share her thoughts, her fears, or her questions, but she could ask what the dogs' names were and if they had a tv at the house, and tell them about her favorite doll.

The family pulled up to a small strip of buildings that looked like offices or something.

This isn't like any store she had ever seen before. She felt her shyness overtake her again as she got out of the car and made her way to the door.

## Questions to Ask:

Who are Nancy and John? Olivia's new foster parents

When a child is placed into a new home, foster parents have many things to take care of for the child.

Making sure they have food, clothing and a safe place to stay are immediate but then the hard work begins... helping them heal from trauma and restore their dignity and hope.

What book caught Olivia's eye? In Our Home... you are safe. You are loved. You are wanted.

Remind children about the many emotions and trauma children have endured. These simple statements must be taught and reminded over and over throughout a child's time in foster care to help them heal and begin to trust the adult around them.

Where do you think the family is going? (various answers of what children think "errands" means)

The foster mom made sure that Olivia had a shower and breakfast before they left to run errands. When you move to a new home with only 3 items there are lots of other things you need... clothes, shoes, books, toys, school supplies... that's a lot of stuff!

## Reassuring Truth:

Jesus gives us rest and peace.

"I will both lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, Lord, make me live in safety." Psalm 4:8

## Part 4

### Script:

A sweet, tall, blonde lady opened the door to welcome them inside. "Welcome to PS I Love You. We are so glad you came to see us today! We are going to make sure you have everything you need, okay?" she said with a warm smile.

Olivia put her head down. I don't have any money to pay for this and these strangers aren't going to buy me anything, she thought. But she followed them into the boutique, where a few other ladies gathered with big smiles and kind faces. "How much does this cost?," Olivia wondered aloud.

"Sweetheart, you don't have to pay anything. All of this has already been paid for you. We have lots of friends who provide all these things for you for free. We want you to know that you are loved and valued," one of the ladies explained.

Olivia asked with big eyes, "Can I get a shirt with a unicorn?"

"You can pick out whatever you like! We are gonna pick out 8 outfits and 2 dresses, and then shoes and toys!" another helper said. The PS I Love You staff went to work quickly picking out clothes for each of the girls' sizes. They talked about her favorite color and what style of clothes she liked.

Olivia went to the dressing room to try a few things on.

Then her gaze turned to the wall of care bags. She lifted a purple book bag with hearts and unicorns all over it off the shelf. The lady noticed her and immediately said, "Do you like this one? It is full of items for you... toiletries, a blanket, some small toys, hair supplies, and a Bible!"

She overheard that the tall lady's name was "Kay" before the helper scooted away to get a bag for Sissy too.

Olivia, fueled by curiosity, asked, "Excuse me, Ms. Kay? Why are you doing all this?"

She responded, "Sweet girl, God has supplied all of the things here at PSILY and we are able to share the hope of Jesus with many children in foster care.

Olivia we want you to always remember this, God will **never** leave you nor forsake you. He is always watching over you and He has BIG plans for you sweet girl. *Jeremiah 29:11 says "For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."*

## Questions to Ask:

Where did they go? PS I Love You

PS I Love You is set up as a "boutique" that means like a fancy store. We want all children to have a shopping experience where they feel like a prince or princess with personal shoppers helping them find all the items they need.

What was in the Care Bag? toiletries, a blanket, some small toys, hair supplies, and a Bible

When PS I Love You began 12 years ago, we did not have a store or clothes to give away. The ministry started in Mrs. Kay's garage on a shelf. People from church brought her toothbrushes, toothpaste, hairbrushes, diapers, wipes, Bibles, blankets, and toys. She packed them into bookbags and delivered them to foster homes to welcome children.

Why are the items at PS I Love You free? God supplied all the items to share the hope of Jesus.

PS I Love You exists to support children in foster care and the families who serve them. Meeting physical needs is the first step to providing for vulnerable children. Additionally the ministry seeks to meet needs of the foster family so they have the village of support they need to care for children who have experienced trauma.

## Reassuring Truth:

Jesus provides for all our needs.

"And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19