



**#MBKFAITH**

A MY BROTHER'S KEEPER PLAYBOOK  
FOR COMMUNITIES OF FAITH  
FOR FATHER'S DAY & BEYOND

# PARTNERS



*National African American Clergy Committee*



Friends,

On behalf of all organizations and faith groups working on the My Brother's Keeper Initiative, thank you so very much for continuing this powerful movement to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color across this county!

The My Brother's Keeper Initiative was born out of President Obama's story - one in which he grew up without a dad but by God's grace, was kept on track through a variety of support networks. It's a story that has been true for young men and boys of color in this country for a long time, and so many in the faith community have devoted their lives so that these young men might have a brighter future.

So before you even read this Playbook, we wanted to say thank you. We know what it takes to make the difference in the life of just one person. Every day you commit to helping young men walk in the way and the truth and the life. You remind them of their hope and point them towards freedom.

In this Playbook, you will receive resources and information for steps you can take in the coming weeks and months to partner with the My Brother's Keeper Initiative. This Playbook is not a comprehensive list by any means- unfortunately we don't have time to do justice to such a guide - but it is a great first step. In the coming months, we look forward to partnering with you to develop a long-term plan for communities of faith that want to engage further in the important mission of the My Brother's Keeper Initiative.

We are so honored to be a part of this movement with you.

Happy Father's Day,

Joshua DuBois, Values Partnerships  
Rev. Gabriel Salguero, National Latino Evangelical Coalition  
Rev. Fred Davie, Union Theological Seminary  
Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, National African American Clergy Committee  
Dr. John Sowers, The Mentoring Project  
Mr. Shawn Dove, Campaign for Black Male Achievement  
Pastor Delman Coates, Black Church Center for Justice and Equality  
Bishop T.D. Jakes, The Potter's Church

# BACKGROUND

President Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper Initiative as a call to action for the country to come together to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and to ensure all young people have opportunities to reach their full potential.

Through this Initiative, the Obama Administration is joining with cities and towns, faith groups and businesses, and non-profits and foundations to connect young people to mentors, support networks, and other resources they need to graduate high school, go to college or start a career, and work their way into the middle class.

Data shows that boys and young men of color, regardless of socio-economic background, are disproportionately at risk throughout the journey from their youngest years to college and career. For instance, large disparities remain in reading proficiency, with 86 percent of black boys and 82 percent of Hispanic boys reading below proficiency levels by the fourth grade - compared to 58 percent of white boys reading below proficiency levels. Additionally, the disproportionate number of black and Hispanic young men who are unemployed or involved in the criminal justice system alone is a perilous drag on state budgets, and undermines family and community stability. These young men are more than six times as likely to be victims of murder than their white peers and account for almost half of the country's murder victims each year.

In response to this data, My Brother's Keeper is a call to action on behalf of boys and young men of color around this nation. And it has grown into a movement. Concerned citizens, politicians, pastors, parents, educators, business and non-profit leaders, and many others are united around one common cause: to give boys and young men of color a better hope and future.



# SIX AREAS OF FOCUS

The My Brother's Keeper Initiative, as cited in the [White House Task Force report](#), focuses on six areas:

## **1. Getting a Healthy Start and Entering School Ready to Learn**

All children should have a healthy start and enter school ready – cognitively, physically, socially, and emotionally.

## **2. Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade**

All children should be reading at grade level by age 8 – the age at which reading to learn becomes essential.

## **3. Graduating from High School Ready for College and Career**

All youth should receive a quality high school education and graduate with the skills and tools needed to advance to postsecondary education or training.

## **4. Completing Postsecondary Education or Training**

Every American should have the option to attend postsecondary education and receive the education and training needed for the quality jobs of today and tomorrow.

## **5. Successfully Entering the Workforce**

Anyone who wants a job should be able to get a job that allows them to support themselves and their families.

## **6. Keeping Kids on Track and Giving Them Second Chances**

All youth and young adults should be safe from violent crime; and individuals who are confined should receive the education, training, and treatment they need for a second chance.

# PURPOSE FOR THE PLAYBOOK

This guide is an informational resource to help you support existing programs and ministries that serve young men and boys of color in your community. It seeks to introduce you to the stories of those who are working to improve outcomes for men and boys of color and to offer practical ways you and your congregation can get involved in this movement in the coming weeks and months.

The #MBKFaith 2015 Playbook helps you take 5 action steps:

- 1. Host a Watch Party for RISE, The MBK Documentary airing on the Discovery Channel and the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN) Sunday, June 21 at 7pm ET/PT.**
- 2. Host an MBK Sabbath to Celebrate Men & Boys in your Congregation and Organizations in Your Community.**
- 3. Connect to Your Mayor & Leaders Participating in your Local MBK Community Challenge.**
- 4. Conduct a Congregational & Community Assessment of the ways your community serves Young Men and Boys of Color.**
- 5. Join the National MBK Faith Celebration Call on Tuesday, July 7th at 7:30pm ET to Share Success Stories and Next Steps.**

These materials are not meant as requirements and are not intended to be exhaustive or definitive. Ideas and resources may not apply equally in every community, as there is no one-size-fits-all solution to these complex issues. Our hope is that you will build on the suggestions in this Playbook and adapt them to create tailored solutions for your own community.

# ONE

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Host a Watch Party for  
*RISE, The Promise of My Brother's Keeper*

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*RISE: THE PROMISE OF MY BROTHER'S KEEPER* takes viewers on an inspiring journey into four of the thousands of programs around the country that are living the principles of the My Brother's Keeper Challenge — President Obama's call to action to cities across the U.S. to become "MBK Communities." These communities are implementing a cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for all young people, in particular boys and young men of color, to ensure they can reach their full potential, regardless of where they come from or the circumstances into which they were born. The film simulcasts on Discovery Channel and OWN on Sunday, June 21 at 7PM ET/PT.

President Barack Obama is featured in the film along with The Potter's House Bishop T.D. Jakes; Superintendent of Baltimore County Public Schools Dr. S. Dallas Dance; Youth Guidance's B.A.M. supervisor Anthony Bharataji Joplin; 2013 Urban Prep graduate David Peake; Halstead Academy principal Jennifer Mullenax; YouthBuild alumnus Johnny Herber; National Evangelical Coalition President Rev. Gabriel Salguero; Principal of Tarkington School of Excellence Vincent Iturralde; and parent mentor Joe Blanding, Jr., among others.

A great way to begin the conversation in your congregation about My Brother's Keeper is to watch the documentary together and discuss the issues raised in the film. Here's how:

- X [Register](#) to host a watch party.
- X Invite family and friends together to watch the film on Discovery or the Oprah Winfrey Network on Sunday, June 21st at 7pm ET.
- X Let people know on social media that you are watching the film. Tweet, post, and share your thoughts, reactions and questions as you watch the film together. Use the hashtag #MyBrothersKeeper
- X Visit [this website](#) for more links and information about the organizations represented in the film



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*Rise: The Promise of My Brother's Keeper*  
Community of Faith Discussion Guide

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After watching the film, take 30 minutes to discuss some of the key themes discussed in the film, using the questions provided below. A great way to begin the conversation in your congregation about the issue facing men and boys of color is to host watch parties for the documentary.

Use these questions to help guide your discussion:

1. What are some of the structural injustices highlighted by My Brother's Keeper?
2. What are the unique challenges facing boys and young men of color highlighted in the film?
3. What is your perception of young men and boys of color in American today?
4. What role does law enforcement play in your community?
5. What role does mentoring play in your community? Do young men and boys in your community have good mentors?
6. What does it mean for you to be a part of My Brother's Keeper? What does it mean for your congregation or community?
7. What is your congregation already doing to address these challenges? What more can be done?
8. What should we ask policymakers to do? What partnerships can you and your congregation explore?



photo credit: Discovery Communications



# TWO

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## Host an MBK Sabbath to Celebrate Men & Boys in your Congregation and Organizations in Your Community

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In the coming weeks and months (including this Father's Day), consider devoting time during or after your worship service to celebrate outstanding fathers in your congregation and to recognize organizations that love and serve young men and boys of color in your community. Give these men and organizational leaders an opportunity to share their experiences, discuss how they overcame challenges, and identify additional steps that need to be taken to help men and boys of color.

Here are some tips for hosting an MBK Sabbath:

- ✘ Have a special prayer during your worship service, for fathers and men and boys of color.
- ✘ Have a time of dedication where boys and young men of color come to the front of the sanctuary to be prayed over by the pastor.
- ✘ Host a panel discussion, featuring non-profit practitioners and leaders serving men and boys of color in your area. Ask them about their work and ways your congregation can get involved.
- ✘ Host an award ceremony for boys and young men of color as well as fathers and mentors in your congregation.
- ✘ Dedicate aspects of your service to words of Scripture that illustrate the responsibilities and blessings men have as fathers and sons.
  - Some examples include:**
    - a. The Sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22: 1-18)
    - b. The parable of the two sons (Matthew 21:28-32)
    - c. Training in godliness (1 Timothy 4: 6-16)
    - d. Wisdom for Parenting (Proverbs 22:6)
- ✘ Have a time of testimony or sharing for young men from the congregation who have experienced transformation, a recent success, or emerged from a time of hardship or trial..
- ✘ Celebrate young men and boys of color in your community at an after-service reception.

# THREE

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## Connect with Your Mayor & Your Local MBK Community Challenge Leadership

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The My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge seeks to inspire community leaders, and encourage their commitment to ensuring all young people can succeed.

In order to begin to accomplish these goals, President Obama issued a challenge to cities, towns, counties, and Tribal Nations to commit to building "My Brother's Keeper Communities" and implementing a coherent cradle-to-college and career strategy, consistent with the goals and recommendations of the [May 28, 2014 report of the President's My Brother's Keeper Task Force](#).

**If you want to find out if your mayor or local elected official has signed up for the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge, [check here](#).** If your mayor or community is not participating in the Community Challenge and want to know how best to engage your local elected officials, reach out to the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs at [localgovernment@who.eop.gov](mailto:localgovernment@who.eop.gov).

**If your mayor has signed on to the MBK Community Challenge,** here are some great first steps to connect with your mayor around the My Brother's Keeper Initiative: [My Brother's Keeper Initiative](#):

- ✘ Invite your mayor to speak at a worship service.
- ✘ Reach out to the mayor to schedule a meeting, asking ways you might be able to serve the mayor and the community's efforts on these issues.
- ✘ Offer to host a "Local Action Summit" using the [MBK Community Challenge Playbook for Action](#).
- ✘ Form or join a leadership committee by engage local non-profit organizations and partners serving young men and boys of color. Invite the mayor to chair the committee.

# FOUR

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## Conduct a Congregational & Community Assessment Before Determining Other Next Steps

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The issues facing boys and young men of color affect each community uniquely and before moving forward with any new plans, it is important to understand what issues are affecting young men and boys of color specifically in your community and the ways your community and congregation has already developed programs and ministries to address them.

The [MBK Community Challenge Supplemental Resource Guide](#) contains a great list of questions for you and your congregation to discuss together.

Consider printing out copies of the assessment sheet on the next page and hosting a time for discussion as a congregation.

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## Congregational Assessment Worksheet

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1. In your opinion, what is the top issue facing young men and boys in your community?
  - Are young people in your community and/or congregation entering school ready to learn?
  - Are they reading at grade level by the third grade?
  - Are they graduating from high school and ready to take the next steps to college or career?
  - Are they completing education or training after high school?
  - Are they successfully entering the workforce, and if not, what are their main barriers?
  - What are common interactions with the law for young men of color in your community?
  
2. What existing programs and ministries do you have that serve boys and young men of color?
  
3. What do those programs and ministries accomplish?
  
4. What are the main challenges these programs and ministries face?
  
5. What other congregations, businesses, non-profit organizations, and individuals could partner with you and your congregation? What would you do together?"

6. If you have already formed a partnership, how can it be expanded or improved? What is needed (i.e. volunteers, funding, space, etc.)? What can be provided?
  
7. What untapped resources in your community are available to help boys and young men of color?
  
8. If you could create a new organization, program, or ministry to help boys and young men of color, what challenge would it address? How would it work?



photo credit: The White House

# FIVE

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Join the MBK Faith Night of Celebration and Sharing  
to Discuss Where We Go From Here.

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## JOIN THE CALL

Join us on Tuesday, July 7 at 7:30PM ET for a conference call to celebrate the work that faith communities are already doing and will discuss next steps for ways to engage on the MBK program. Special guests will join us, and we'll have opportunities for folks to share their successes and experiences together.

RSVP for the call at [partner@valuespartnerships.com](mailto:partner@valuespartnerships.com), and we'll follow up with more details

Looking forward to being together,

#MBKFaith Team