

Resources for Universal Children's Day
World Day of Prayer and Action for Children

20 November 2014

*Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Adoption of the
Convention on the Rights of the Child*

**A Vigil dedicated to ending
legalised violence against children**

THE GREETING

Leader: We come together in the name of Christ; grace and peace be with you

And also with you

Leader: Welcome to this Prayer Vigil dedicated to ending legalised violence against children. Throughout the world children are suffering as a result of harsh punishment and other cruel and degrading treatment.

All: We come before God conscious of our responsibility to create a world fit for children. Let us commit ourselves to listening to children's views and learning from them. And let us pray for grace and determination to take action and to work with others towards ending violent punishment of children.

A MESSAGE FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children may prefer to deliver their message artistically or with music drama or dance

A Hymn or music

Leader: Let us give thanks to God for the contributions which children make to our society and for all those who nurture and protect children.

Let us confess with penitence the ways in which our society has neglected or abused children, remembering in particular, in a time of silence, all children who have suffered corporal punishment and other cruel and humiliating forms of violence.

SILENCE IS KEPT

A bell may be tolled

THE READING

The disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, "Let the little children come unto me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

Matthew 18: 1-5; 19: 13-15 NRSV

CANDLE LIGHTING

Leader: As we light these candles we remember children everywhere and we pray for an end to legalised violence and all other mistreatment of children. If we want a just and peaceful world we must treat all children and young people with gentleness, compassion and respect.

All: Loving God

you chose to enter this world quietly, humbly and as an outcast.

Hear our prayers for all your children

who are suffering through the unseen cruelty of others.

Look with kindness and compassion on all who are mistreated.

When they feel abandoned, give them hope.

When they feel unloved and betrayed

give them courage, comfort and peace.

Bless all those who care for them

and work to bring them rescue and relief.

Give us the courage to speak out

against all that harms the bodies and minds of children

so that love will triumph over fear and light shine in the darkness.

For the sake of your son Jesus Christ,

who took children in his arms and blessed them

Amen

From the prayer: "Let your light shine in the darkness" by Martin Wharton

These prayers may be said as candles are lit

Leader: Eternal God our Creator, we pray for all children and young people who endure violence in their homes. We pray that we may all work together to support the families in our communities so that all children may grow up in an atmosphere of compassion, loving-kindness, encouragement and non-violence.

Eternal God: hear our prayer.

Leader: Compassionate God, we remember all children in the world affected by the violence of poverty, hunger and armed conflict. Fill us with love for all human beings and let us respect the dignity and human rights of one another. Give us grace to resolve our differences without the use of force.

Compassionate God: hear our prayer.

Leader: God of justice, we pray for strength of purpose to work in solidarity with others towards eliminating all corporal punishment of children. Give us insights to read and interpret our scriptures and religious teachings to promote non-violence and peace.

God of justice: hear our prayer.

Leader: God of love, we pray that we may promote a culture of respect for the inherent dignity of all children and young people. Help adults to teach and guide children by their own example of gentleness and understanding so that we may develop mutual respect; for respect for one another is a key to living without violence.

God of love: hear our prayer.

Leader: God of peace we pray that adults will create environments where children and young people are partners with adults in speaking out, resolving conflict without force, and creating peace.

God of peace: hear our prayer.

A hymn or music may be played

Everyone takes a lighted candle

A BLESSING

May the God of peace be with us
May the God of justice enfold us
May the God of love surround us
May God's everlasting light show us the way
Amen