



Sisters of the Holy Family

To seek out and advocate for the poor and needy, especially families, for the Kingdom of God.

prayer

For Children

A Prayer for Immigrant Children

Loving God, in your infinite compassion, we seek your divine protection for refugee children who are often alone and afraid.

Provide solace to those who have been witnesses to violence and destruction, who have lost parents, family, friends, home, and all they cherish due to war or persecution.

Comfort them in their sorrow, and bring help in their time of need. Show mercy to unaccompanied migrant children, too, God.

Reunite them with their families and loved ones. Guide those children who are strangers in a foreign land to a place of peace and safety. Comfort them in their sorrow, and bring help in their time of need.

Show us how we might reach out to these precious and vulnerable children.

Loving God,

You have called us to work for true justice in our communities and to be messengers of freedom for all who are not treated as your children.

Give us grace to put our faith into action to end the violence and cruelty that overshadows many children's lives. Jesus taught us to welcome children and learn from them.

May we use our imagination to put ourselves in children's shoes

Open our hearts to migrant and refugee children in need, so that we might see in them your own migrant Son.

Give us courage to stand up in their defense against those who would do them harm. For this we pray through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen



and learn to teach and guide them with wisdom, gentleness and understanding.

Let us treat each child as we would treat the Christ child.

Amen

Artist: Ingrid Cruz was born in El Salvador, was raised in California, has lived in Mexico City and now lives in Mississippi. She is a visual artist, poet and occasional amateur journalist/community organizer.

Guns and Violence Prayers

Gracious Lord who loves us so perfectly, help us to better love you and each other. We weep for the gun violence that kills children and so many others, where guns replaced prayers and homes without you bred frustration. May hearts be changed through your Holy Spirit that justice, mercy, money and, yes, even guns might be used rightly under Heaven, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

Amen

Lord, chaos and fear cripple communities overrun by gang violence. Thank You so much for the gift of Your Son. Through Him, we truly become a new creation. We claim Jesus' blessing for peacemakers in Matthew 5:9. Help young people see themselves the way You see them, so they can help bring peace and hope



to other people's lives.

Amen

Prayer to Stop Child Exploitation

Dear God, there are times when it is right — and righteous — to be angry. It is right to be angry about people who exploit children. Let that righteous anger fuel action, Lord. Don't let it fade into complacency.

Your Word tells us that it is a sin to do nothing when it's in our power to help someone in need. Help us to speak out against crimes against children. Prod us to act whenever we suspect that a child is in danger. Don't stop prompting us until we do the right thing.

Amen

Prayer for Hungry Children

Dear God,

We pray for the many children in our world who do not have enough to eat, and who are too weak to run and play. Help us to share what we have so that they can have enough food to eat, and get strong again.

Amen

Prayer for a Sick a Child

Jesus, You're with us.
Though you are not seen,
We know that you stay by our side.

You love us, and this child,
More than we could know,
And you feel each tear that we cry.

We trust you,
To take hold of our hands,
Until we're recovered and well.

You promise to,
Comfort and care,
Until we are laughing and playing again.

Thank you, Jesus.

Amen

What the Bible Says About Children

Excerpted from "Child, Church, Mission" by Dan Brewster

A close examination of Scripture—one with the child in focus—reveals that children are very prominent in the Bible. Children play a significant role in the unfolding of the message of the Bible. God loves and protects children. The Bible demonstrates that children are extremely perceptive in understanding the things of God. God often used them as His messengers and models—especially, it seems, when adults may have been too corrupt and deaf to listen or respond.

We believe human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and look to the example of Jesus to live their lives. Jesus always treated the vulnerable with love and compassion.

All the recorded encounters between Jesus and children were kind, gentle and respectful, and his reported words about causing children to stumble (Matthew 18:6), and the consequences for doing so are amongst the strongest in the New Testament. Children were central to the new social order Jesus initiated. When he set a little child in the midst of the disciples and said "The kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14) he demonstrated enormous regard for children. Scripture should always be read in the light of Jesus' teachings and example.

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TAKE ACTION: Making a contribution to the **Sisters of the Holy Family Mission Fund** will guarantee your gift makes an impact on programs that benefit children's issues: www.bit.do/SHFDonate

Teach a Child to Pray



A Child's Prayer

Gentle Jesus, stay beside me through this day [night]. Take away my pain. Keep me safe. Help me in my fear. Make my body strong again and my heart glad. Thank you for your love which surrounds me always. Amen.



World Day of Prayer and Action for Children

For over 55 years, governments have celebrated Universal Children's Day on the 20th of November to promote the well-being of children.



What You Can Do

3 ways to help separated immigrant children

1. Donate to support immigrants and refugees.
2. Volunteer your time.
3. Make in-kind donations.

Call your local Catholic Charities to see what they might need.

3 Ways to stop child exploitation

1. Educate yourself on child trafficking, visit: traffickfree.org/educate/
2. Learn the signs and report suspicions: Call to 911, or call the 24-hour National Human Trafficking Resource Center line at 888-373-7888.
3. Raise awareness: tell others what you learn, and become an advocate.

3 ways to help hungry children

1. Tell your Lawmakers to protect the programs that feed hungry kids, like free lunches at schools and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
2. Consider making a weekly donation as a family to an organization that provides free meals or groceries to families in need.
3. Visit www.bread.org/information-for-activists

What the Bible Says About Children, continued from page 3

Children are a sign of God’s blessing. (Psalm 127:3) They are an essential part of the covenant community. In fact, children’s attitudes and teachableness illustrate the relationship God wants with adults. (Hosea 11:1, Matthew 18:2-3) Jesus uses children as examples of the humble dependence that the kingdom of God requires of adults. (Matthew 18:4)

God expects that adults will love, care for, protect, and train and nurture their children. Parents are to train and teach their children. Proverbs 22:6 talks about the responsibility of parents to create a desire for spiritual things in children

from a young age: “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it.” (Also, Deuteronomy 6:7)

Adults are to love, respect, and welcome children. “Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” (Matthew 19:13-14)

Parents are the primary caregivers for children. The fact that God Himself trusted His own Son to humankind as

a vulnerable child is indicative of the primary place of parents. God required that His Son be nurtured by a frail but able family and community. Ephesians 6:1-4. (Also, Colossians 3:20, Deuteronomy 21:18-21, 24:16, 2 Kings 14:5-6, Luke 20:9-19, Luke 15:20-24 and 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12)

The community is also important in the nurturing of children. In his letter to Timothy, Paul describes the living church as, “God’s household” where there is a caring community of believers who are role models in the way they manage their own family households. (Also, Malachi 4:6 and James 1:27)

Prayer sources: Catholic Charities, USA, Foodgrains Bank, WorldVision, Episcopal Diocese of Newark, www.churchesfornon-violence.org, Grace Cathedral, Universal Children’s Day.