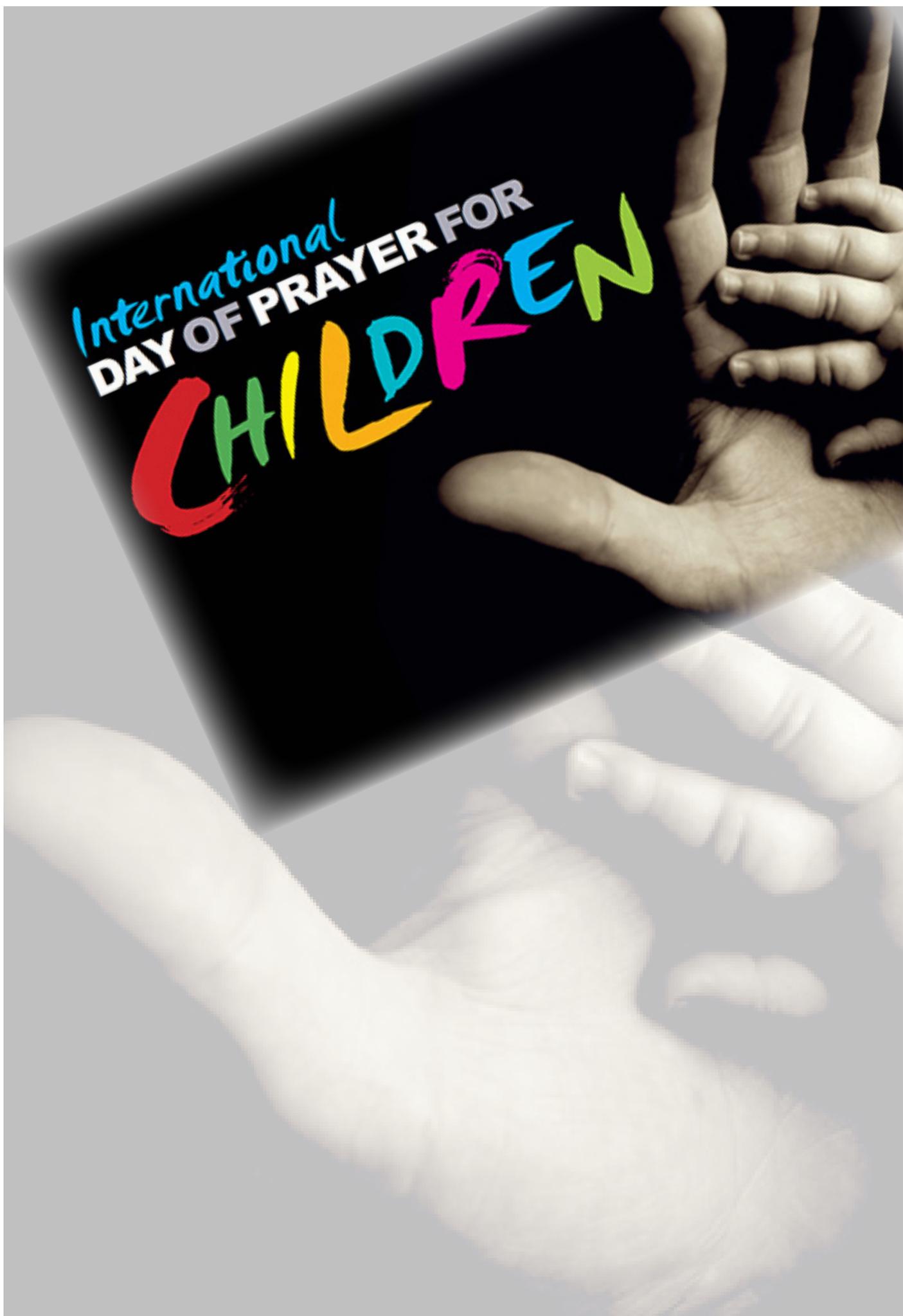


International
DAY OF PRAYER FOR

CHILDREN





Planting Seeds of Hope

- Hope is Rising

*This is why we work hard and continue to struggle,
for our hope is in the living God, who is the Saviour of all people and
particularly of all believers.*
- 1 Timothy 4:10 (NLT)

CONSIDER AND PREPARE

Choose the options from this resource that will best suit your context and timing. This prayer segment could take place instead of a traditional sermon / message.

Prepare for Explore Activity

Prepare EXPLORE Option 1

- ✧ Print or draw a large 'gingerbread man'.
- ✧ Provide a couple of markers.

Prepare EXPLORE Option 2

- ✧ Print an A5 size 'gingerbread man' for each person in your church community.
- ✧ Provide a pen or marker for each person.

Prepare EXPLORE Option 3

- ✧ Prepare a digital copy of the 'gingerbread man' shape and add responses straight onto the projected figure.

Prepare A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE Option 1

One of the key elements of this resource is to contemplate how we can better hear the voice of children. Consider inviting a child to speak. If you do not have any children in your church community you could invite a student from a local school. Provide the child with the guideline questions as soon as possible to give them plenty of time to think through their responses.

- ✧ What three things do you spend most time doing in your week? *(Take a minute to add up the hours – you might be surprised about where your time is spent.)*
- ✧ Who in your life are you most likely to listen to?
- ✧ What would you say is the hardest thing you face in a week?
- ✧ What is something you are very thankful for?
- ✧ Tell us about a time when you felt like an adult really listened to you.
- ✧ Do you have some suggestions about how we can listen to you more effectively?
- ✧ If adults in the church could help you in any way, what would it be?
- ✧ What is something we could pray for that is important to you?

Prepare RESPONSE Option 1

- ✧ Purchase a planter box that is large enough to accommodate seeds from your entire church community *(you might need more than one).*
- ✧ Purchase enough seeds *(or bulbs)* for each person in your church community *(fast growing flowers are a good option).*
- ✧ Fill the planter box with soil.

- ✧ You might like to paint / draw the words "Hope is Rising" on the planter box.
- ✧ Fill a vase with enough flowers for each person to take one away as they plant a seed.
- ✧ Consider making the care of your seeds the responsibility of a particular section or group of your church community.

Prepare RESPONSE Option 2

- ✧ Print and cut out enough cardboard flowers and seeds (*templates are provided*) for each person in your church community.
- ✧ Provide markers or pens.
- ✧ Place an empty flower pot or vase on a table to collect the 'seeds'.
- ✧ Prepare HOME AND BEYOND cards.
- ✧ Print enough Home and Beyond cards for each family to take one home.

CONNECTING IN – EXPLORE ACTIVITY

Think about what it is like to be a child today in your community.

- ✧ What are their needs? For example, food, water, shelter, love, connection.
- ✧ What opportunities do they have? For example, education, health care.
- ✧ What challenges do they face? For example, drugs, alcohol, media, community isolation.
- ✧ What activities do they do? For example, school, sport, movies, entertainment, technology.
- ✧ What support do they need? For example, Positive relationships, good role models.

Explore Option 1

Discuss the above questions as a large group and write responses onto the large 'gingerbread man' shape.

Explore Option 2

Ask individuals to consider their answers to the above questions and write their responses onto A5 size 'gingerbread man' shapes.

Explore Option 3

Discuss the above questions as a large group and type responses onto the projected 'gingerbread man' shape.

THE MAIN THING – A CHILD'S VOICE

- ✧ How can we listen to the voice of children in our community?
- ✧ When do you engage with children?
- ✧ Who are the children in your life? Eg grandchildren, nieces, nephews, children of friends or neighbours, children in your faith community

A Child's Perspective – Option 1

- ✧ What three things do you spend most time doing in your week? (Take a minute to add up the hours – you might be surprised about where your time is spent)
- ✧ Who in your life are you most likely to listen to?
- ✧ What would you say is the hardest thing you face in a week?
- ✧ What is something you are very thankful for?
- ✧ Tell us about a time when you felt like an adult really listened to you.
- ✧ Do you have some suggestions about how we can listen to you more effectively?



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- ✧ If adults in the church could help you in any way, what would it be?
 - ✧ What is something we could pray for that is important to you?

A Child's Perspective – Option 2

For the children in your life, could you answer these questions, do you have an awareness of the voice of children?

- ✧ What three things do they spend most time doing in their week?
- ✧ Who in your life are they most likely to listen to?
- ✧ What would you say is the hardest thing they face in a week?
- ✧ What is something they are very thankful for?
- ✧ Do you have some suggestions about how you could listen to them more effectively?
- ✧ If adults in the church could help them in any way, what would it be?
- ✧ What is something we could pray for that is important to them?

Following Option 1 or Option 2

Now consider the children outside of our own communities...

- ✧ How do we hear the voice of the child soldier?
- ✧ How do we hear the voice of the child foraging for food in a rubbish heap?
- ✧ How do we hear the voice of the child thirsty for clean water?
- ✧ How do we hear the voice of the child being persecuted for their faith?
- ✧ How can we get a better understanding of the situation of children within our community and beyond?
- ✧ How can we impact positive change for children within our communities and beyond as a community of faith?
- ✧ How can I impact positive change as an individual?

PRAYER RESPONSE

PRAYER ACTIVITY

Response Option 1 – Plant seed



HOPE IS RISING

Place seeds (or bulbs) alongside the planter box on a table.

Many children within our communities and beyond are experiencing hardships but there is hope. "This is why we work hard and continue to struggle, for our hope is in the living God, who is the Saviour of all people and particularly of all believers." – 1 Timothy 4:10 (NLT)

As you consider how you can have a positive impact on the lives of children you might like to come and plant a seed. Over time, with the correct care, these seeds will take root and grow into something beautiful.

Take a flower from the vase as a reminder of what you plan to do this week in response to the needs of children.

Response Option 2 – Cardboard seeds and flowers

Many children within our communities and beyond are experiencing hardships but there is hope. *"This is why we work hard and continue to struggle, for our hope is in the living God, who is the Saviour of all people and particularly of all believers." – 1 Timothy 4:10 (NLT)*

As you consider how you can have a positive impact on the lives of children you might like to come and take a cardboard flower and a seed.

- ✧ On the seed write what you plan to do this week in response to the needs of children.
- ✧ On the flower write the names of the children or the group of children that will be positively affected.

(For example Take Kids Zone to neighbours children – write 'KidsZone' on seed write names of children on flower.)

- ✧ Volunteer at local school – write 'school volunteer' on seed and name of school on flower.
- ✧ Place the seeds into the flower pot (vase) on the table and take the flower home with you as a reminder of what you plan to do this week in response to the needs of children.

Prayer

Lord, we ask you to help us hear the cry of our children and become advocates for youth and children in our society. Help us to create room for children in the church, promote their place in our life and worship so they can 'be themselves' and develop as you would have them develop. Help us to humbly listen to them and learn from them.

HOME AND BEYOND

Discuss these questions with your family or friends:

- ✧ If you plant a seed, will they grow in a week?
- ✧ What do we need to do to make sure our seeds grow?
- ✧ How does this remind us about what we can do to help children that we know and that we don't know?



