

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR CHILDREN!

Intro:

International Day of Prayer for Children is scheduled on the territorial calendar for Sunday 28 July, 2013. It is a day where The Salvation Army is encouraged to place the world's children before God in focused prayer, acknowledging that they are precious in the sight of God. This is a great opportunity not only to pray for our children but to pray with them.

Context:

The theme for our International Day of Prayer for Children is: 'Through the eyes of a child...'. The theme explores looking at God's kingdom from a child's perspective. This will involve listening to children speak about their faith, looking at pictures that children have taken that represent the things they have seen God do for them, looking at the struggles that children face around the world, as well as us thinking about what the world might look like through a child's eyes.

Deuteronomy 4:9

'You must be very careful not to forget the things you have seen God do for you. Keep reminding yourselves, and tell your children and grandchildren as well.'

Options to create your service:

Within these resources, we have provided you with: a children's story/interactive message to introduce the theme; some prayer station suggestions; a sermon outline; possible Kids Church activities, along with some song suggestions. We have placed the suggestions in the order of where you might place them in your meeting but this is only a guide. You will note that the prayer station ideas have been included as a time of reflection before the sermon. This is a great opportunity to allow families to experience this prayer time together—children may then move off into planned Kids Church activities or stay with the rest of the congregation for the main message.

If you feel that you would like to move the prayer station segment to the end of the service, please be aware that families may not be as engaged as during the service, and may choose to not participate at all. If you choose this option, it would be good to include a prayer segment before the sermon which would include the DVD provided.

After the prayer segment, an option is available (if needed) for kids to go out to Kids Church while the sermon is on. Suggested activities have been provided that link to the theme of the service.

Song Suggestions:

- 'People just like us' (*People Just Like Us*, Hillsong Australia, 1997)
- 'I'm your child' (*The Heavens Shall Declare*, Geoff Bullock, 1995)
- 'Let the children come' (*Super Strong God*, Hillsong Kids, 2006)
- 'I'll fight' (*I'll Fight*, Nathan Rowe, 2004)

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Interactive Message 1 / Children's Story:

To prepare for this interactive message you will need some chairs (the same number of chairs to correspond with the number of children you choose to have on your panel) placed at the front of the hall for children to sit on. It would be good to have a microphone that can be shared between the children so that their responses can be heard clearly.

You will need to choose some children (ideally from a mix of age groups and a maximum of six children) to sit on a panel. This is a great opportunity for children to share with your congregation, however, be careful in your choices of panel member so that children are not embarrassed, made fun of, or are making fun of the topic.

During this section, the children will be asked some questions to help us see what life is like through the 'eyes of a child'. It would be good to speak with the children that you have chosen prior to the segment so that they can think about their responses. It is important that the person leading this segment is able to work with the children to help work through the responses that are given. This does not mean that they will give answers on behalf of the children, but instead can ask additional clarifying questions to help gain a better understanding of the response that has been given.

Explain:

'Today we have a great opportunity to hear from a vital and bubbly area of our church: the kids! Some of the children from our church are up the front to be interviewed so that we can see something through their eyes and find out their opinions and ideas on topics such as God and prayer. I would ask that you listen closely to what they have to say as they have a lot to share, and God can speak to us and show us things through our children.'

The questions that are asked should be open-ended, allowing children to give a full response rather than just 'yes', 'no' or another one word response. Below are some examples of questions. You may like to make up your own, use the ones provided or have a mixture of both.

- *How do you know that God is real?*
- *I wonder if you can describe God for us; what's He like?*
- *I wonder if there is anything about the world that makes you happy.*
- *I wonder if there is anything about the world that makes you sad, angry or frustrated.*
- *If you could ask God anything, what do you think you would ask?*
- *I wonder if you would share with us some of the things you pray about.*
- *What would you like us to pray for, for you?*

Link:

'I am sure that you have enjoyed listening to the children today as they share something of how they see God and how they see God working in the world. It is so important for each of us to have the opportunity to share our story and experiences of God. However, children don't always have this opportunity to share their thoughts, opinions and experiences. I wonder if you have ever asked a child some of the questions that we have asked today. What better way to connect to our theme today of 'through the eyes of a child' than to hear from some children. Let's thank God for those that have shared today and the glimpse that they have shown us of God through their eyes.' (Pray)

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Bible Reading

Today's Bible reading is Deuteronomy 4:5-14 (emphasising verse 9).

It states: *'You must be very careful not to forget the things you have seen God do for you. Keep reminding ourselves, and tell your children and grandchildren as well' (Deuteronomy 4:9 CEV).*

Moses spoke these words, asking us to remember what God has done for us, but not just to leave it at that. He was also reinforcing that it is so important to share all the good things we see and know about God with the next generation, so that they, too, will come to know how great God is.

DVD

'Through a child's eyes'

Prayer Station Suggestions:

The following prayer stations have been included as suggestions for your church to use to engage in the theme of 'Through the eyes of a child'. The prayer stations cater for all, young and old, and enable families to take time to pray together as well as providing personal reflective space.

You may like to have the stations spread throughout the hall, allowing for a more reflective prayer time. It is important that each station has clear instructions visible so that people know how they can engage in that space.

Question Mark...

For this station you will need some large question mark shapes cut out of paper or card, and some textas and pens to write with.

Encourage everyone to write or draw a question that they might have for God inside the question mark shapes. This could be done individually or as a pair, or together as a family. Once they have written/drawn their question spend some time praying about this with God.

You could also choose to do this in a more private way by having small question mark cut outs available for people to write or draw their questions on and then place them in a tub, bowl or a container with a money box slot as they pray with God about their question.

(It might be good as a leader in the church to make a note of some of the questions and address them, if appropriate, in the coming weeks.)

How I see God...

For this prayer station you will need a variety of craft materials that people can use to create with. Items that would be good to collect for this activity would be paper magiclay, magazines and newspapers (collage), colouring pencils, textas or crayons, matchsticks, straws, off cuts of fabric, wool or patterned paper etc.

- I wonder how you see God...
- I wonder where you see God at work...

Using some of the items available, encourage people to create something that shows how they 'see God' or where they see God at work. They should be encouraged to be creative and, if they like, families could work together on this prayer activity. Once they have completed their art work, either hang it on a wall with Blu-Tack or leave them

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presented on the table for everyone to share how God is viewed through another person's eyes.

Take some time to pray—thank God for who He is to you and for the things that you have seen Him do; the way that He is present and working in the world.

Take some time to pray and thank God for the way you see Him working in the lives of the young people you know.

All Around the World...

For this activity you will need a large map of the world that can be hung up on a wall or displayed on a table. You might like to have some butchers paper underneath the map so that people can write prayers for particular areas or you might like to have some sticky notes that they can use to write prayers on and add them to the map.

People will use the butchers paper or sticky notes to write down prayers for children around the world. For example you may provide a list of issues occurring in different countries, they could use The Salvation Army prayer diary to help prompt areas to pray for or they may like to pray for a sponsor child. If they are using sticky notes, they can attach their prayer to the area of the world they have prayed for.

Family Prayers...

For this activity you will need to provide a large cut-out of a tree or an outline of a tree on a large sheet of butchers paper. It would be good to have this cut-out/outline displayed on a wall ready for the prayers. You will also need some cardboard people templates (these can be brought from a craft shop) or provide people with some bright pieces of cardboard that they can draw a person outline and cut them out. You will also need some glue sticks, scissors, textas and pens for this activity.

For this activity it is important to think about all the children that are in your 'church family'. Children come in families and for this activity we would love for you to write the name of the children, decorate them, and then pray for that child and their family. Pray for them and then place them onto the large family tree cut-out.

Reflective Prayer...

To prepare for this station you will need to have a box or tray filled with sand (long pot plant boxes would be a good resource for this activity), some long skinny candles and a larger fat candle that is already lit that people can use to light their candle as they pray. It would also be nice at this station to play some reflective/quiet music to help create a sensitive prayer time for some.

NOTE: Because this station has candles that are lit, it is important to have a leader responsible for this activity so that children will not be near the candles without an adult.

At this station, adults and children (or as a family) can light a candle for a child. They might like to reflect and pray for children in the following ways:

- a child in the church
- share a prayer for celebration of a new life
- a child that no longer comes to the church and their family
- children that are connected to the church that are not present
- a sponsor child
- a child that might be hurting
- a child that might be unwell
- a child that is having difficulty at school
- a child that is coming to know God in a new way

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- that a child they know may see God in the people around them
- that a child they know may see God in the places around them

Claiming Freedom...

This prayer station is really a station for adults praying for children—you might like to think about how you can include this important station for those over a certain age to engage with on this day. It might be having it in a certain area and signed well so that families know that this is not for the children.

To set this station up you will need to write social justice issues on different coloured child paper shapes. Some suggestions to include are trafficking, slave labour, child soldiers, child prostitutes and abused children. Once this is completed place the cut outs into a bird cage or something similar that represents being caged.

As people come around to pray, they will take a figure out of the cage and, as they pray for the issue on that child, they can place it at the foot of the cross. This can help to symbolise claiming freedom for children struggling with these issues all around the world.

Through the eyes of a child...

For this activity you will need a range of fun glasses—you can get some fun and cool glasses from a range of cheap shops including oversized glasses, ones made from love hearts, ones with lines/slats etc. You will also need to cover the table with some butchers paper and provide some crayons or pastels for drawing.

- Come and look through the eyes of a child...
- Place the glasses on; I wonder what you might see...
- I wonder what a world with God would look like to a child...
- There might be wonderful things...
- There might be scary things...
- There might be amazing things too...

While you are looking through the glasses at the world as seen by a child, use the crayons/pastels to add to the picture on the table. As you are drawing, pray for the children that you know and the children in your community that they would know what it is like to live in a world with God and His love.

Message:

(See separate notes.)

Post message idea:

Have an opportunity to allow every child to be personally prayed for.

Kids Church Activities:

Below you will find some suggested activities that you might find helpful to promote the International Day of Prayer for Children theme in your Kids Church setting or other suitable activities or groups that you hold during that week (e.g. kids club, SAGALA, Junior Soldiers, Playgroup etc.). The suggested activities are based on some of the prayer stations that will be used as part of the whole church service.

Play-Doh/ Paper magiclay prayers:

For this activity you will need some modelling material—you might like to use some play-doh, paper magiclay or something similar. If using paper magiclay, the children will be able to take their finished product home safely and

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can continue to use it to help them in their pray time.

Explain to the children that we are looking at praying for children all around the world and all the different things we can pray for. Ask them for some suggestions of things they might pray for—take some time to discuss these with the children.

Ask them to choose one of the things you have been discussing and to use the play-doh or paper magically to make something to represent that topic/item (e.g. family members, food, house, friends, love etc.). When they have finished making their item, encourage the children to explain it to the person next to them and then spend some time in prayer together.

Around the world prayers:

For this activity you will need a large map of the world that is stuck to a table or on the floor where all the kids can gather around and see it. You will also need some paper and glue or sticky notes and textas, pencils or crayons for children to write with.

'Today is the 'International Day of Prayer for Children' which means that we are going to pray for as many children as we can think of, and some that we may not even know! There are lots and lots of children that we know that live near us and might be our friends, but did you know that there are lots and lots of children that live in all different places around the world?' (Show map.)

'These kids really need our prayers because some of them live in very different places from us and have very different lives to us.' (Here you can explain some of the reasons that these children need prayer, depending on the age and maturity of the group you are working with. For example for older children you may want to talk about the children having to work, whereas with younger children you may just show some pictures of the houses that children live in and compare them to our own.)

Encourage the children to write/draw some prayers on sticky notes that they can add to certain places around the map. They might like to pray for children they know who live in other parts of the world or they might like to choose a country and think about what life might be like there and pray for the children who live there. See how many prayers you can add to the map—I wonder if it will be covered!

We need to remember that it is important to keep praying for these children. We are going to hang our map and prayers up in our room/foyer so that we can remember that we need to be praying for other children around the world.

Family prayers:

For this activity you will need to provide a large cut-out of a tree or an outline of a tree on a large sheet of butchers paper. It would be good to have this cut-out/outline displayed on a wall ready for the prayers. You will also need some cardboard people cut outs, glue sticks and pencils, textas and/or crayons.

Explain to the children that today we are going to be praying for our families. Discuss with them about why it is good to pray for our families and ask for suggestions about what they might like to pray for (for example, health, happiness, love, relationships with each other, things that you are thankful for etc.).

Encourage the children to think about the people in their family and to use the cardboard people cut-outs to prayer for them in some of the following ways:

- Write the names of all the people in your family and decorate one of the cut-outs.

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- Decorate the cardboard cut-out to look like a member of your family and pray for them.
- Write or draw a prayer for your family on one of the cut-outs.
- Add your cut-outs to the family tree.

Once they have finished with their family prayers, get the children to come back together and look at the family tree they have made. Explain that we are all on the same family tree because we are all God's children, and even though there are SO many prayers and people on our tree, He loves every one of them and has heard every one of our prayers. Finish by praying for God's family as a whole.

Home and Beyond:

It is important to help equip families to continue the conversation at home after they leave the service on Sunday. Below are a couple of activities that you could encourage your families (with and without children) to participate in throughout the week as they continue to share 'through the eyes of a child' thoughts in relation to the children they know, in their community or across the world.

Prayer calendar

Hand the monthly prayer calendar provided to each family or household. You may also like to send or give this activity out to families not able to attend church on this day, or families who attend other programs throughout the week.

The focus of our service for International Day of Prayer for Children is 'Through the eyes of a child.' It would be good if you could continue this focus as you pray together as a family—for the children that you know, children in the community, and children from around the world. To help with this, you have been given a calendar with some suggestions of who you could pray for over the coming weeks.

As a family it would be good to think about other children that you could add that you may like to pray for during the following month. Also on the calendar are some creative suggestions of different ways to pray as a family—you might even like to come up with some of your own and share them with other families in your church.

Prayer glasses

For this Home & Beyond activity, it would be good to provide each family with a fun pair of glasses (these can be ones that you purchase from a range of cheap shops or you could make some out of cardboard adding coloured cellophane.)

The focus of our service for International Day of Prayer for Children is 'Through the eyes of a child.' It would be good if you could continue this focus as you pray together as a family—for the children that you know, children in the community, and children from around the world. To help with this, you have been given a set of fun glasses. As a family, you could take it in turns to pass the glasses around to look 'through the eyes of a child' and make some suggestions as to what you could all pray for.

Talk within your family about things that you could pray for and what children you would like to pray for. This might be children from the church, from the community, or children overseas that you have learnt about at church. You may even like to decorate the glasses to remind you of the Bible reading from the service: 'You must be very careful not to forget the things you have seen God do for you. Keep reminding yourselves, and tell your children and grandchildren as well' (Deuteronomy 4:9 CEV).

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AUGUST

2013

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR CHILDREN

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY



4 Let's pray for our parents and grandparents!!

YOU MUST BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO FORGET THE THINGS YOU HAVE SEEN GOD DO FOR YOU. KEEP REMINDING YOURSELVES, AND TELL YOUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN AS WELL. DEUTERONOMY 4:9

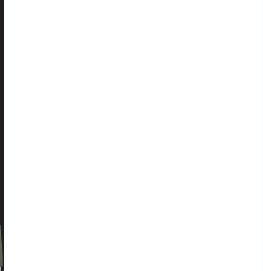


11

12 what can you thank God for today?



18 Make a family tree together going as far back as possible! Who can you pray for on the tree?



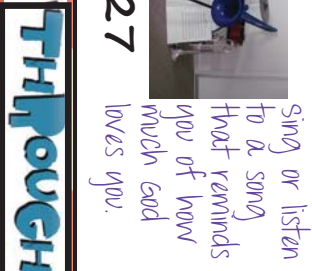
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7 Thank you, God, for all our animal friends!

13

20 Make a fort together using sheets and towels. Thank God for the shelter you have.



21 sing or listen to a song that reminds you of how much God loves you. Take a moment to think about children who don't have anything to eat.

1 Take a moment to think about children overseas who are doing it tough. Think about ways your family might be able to help them.



15 Today, tell someone why they are your friend.



2

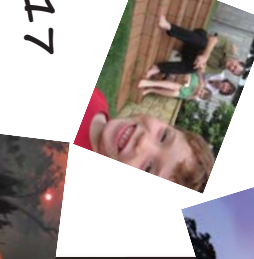
9 Family prayer time: Use play dough to create something you are worried about, then pray as 16 a family.

23 OUR KIDS' MINISTRY LEADERS DO LOTS OF WORK TO HELP US LEARN. TODAY, LET'S HELP THEM BY PRAYING FOR THEM!

30



10 Thank God today for the promises he has given us



17 Talk about the tough times God has helped you through.

24 Thank you, God, for all the children in the world.



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