

THE CRY OF MY

International Day of Prayer for Children

SUGGESTED CHILDREN'S RESOURCES

INTERACTIVE MESSAGE/SERVICE

THE CRY OF YOUR HEART...

For this message you will need a box, basket or large giftbag filled with some items that show certain things that are important to you, e.g. photos of your family, keepsakes, sporting team jumper or item, games or hobbies, etc.

For this message, rather than inviting the children down the front, it would be important for them to be able to have a conversation with family members or significant people in their lives, so take the time to tell everyone that this message is for all to participate in.

'I wonder what is important to you. I am sure there are many things you can think of but what if you had to choose only a few...

- If something was going to happen to your house and you only had time to grab five important things (apart from pets and people!) what would those things be? *(Give people a few moments to share this with the people around them.)*
- If you were stranded on a desert island, what five things would you want to have with you? *(This might include some of the same things but gives people another chance to share and maybe refine their list.)*
- If you could only take one box of items with you (the box being a one-metre cube) when you move what would you put in it? *(Again, give people a few minutes to think if they would change anything they might have already had on their list.)*

'Without limitations it can be easy to say what is important to us, but when we have only a list of five it can be more difficult.'

Share some of the items that you have placed in your box/basket/bag, why you have chosen them and how important they are to you.

'Think about the things that you would put into your box and the things on your list; they are obviously important to you. I want you to think now about how you would feel if I came around and took one of those things away.' *(Ask some people to share how they would feel about someone taking something that is of value to them.)*

'There are things that are important to us and if someone was to take them away we would feel pretty strongly about the loss. Imagine if you were just three and you had a special teddy that was really important to you; he helped you to sleep and kept you company and loved you and you loved him back so much. If you lost him or someone took him or did something horrible to him this would make you pretty sad or, perhaps, even mad and like there is something inside of you that is going to explode....I wonder if you have ever felt like that.

'When we talk today about the "cry of your heart", it's that sort of feeling we are talking about; that feeling of such strong passion or emotion that it's like something's going to explode in you. It may be joy or frustration or sadness or something else.

'I am sure there are some children you know that you want to pray for today. Some of you might want to pray out of a great joy because of how special these children are. Some of you might want to pray out of frustration for some of the unfair situations that you know children are in. Some of you may want to pray out of great sadness for those children who are having a difficult time or for those who are sick or those who just don't have much. I hope that you have a child that you would like to pray for today from deep within your heart.

'Spend a few moments praying for them now.' *(Finish this time off with a corporate prayer.)*

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 will have that week.

JIGSAW PEOPLE—GOD-SHAPED SPACE

For this activity you will need either some blank cardboard jigsaws, a cardboard person jigsaw cutout or just some cardboard people cutouts.

Blank cardboard jigsaws: With this resource, get the children to draw a person outline (trying to use as much of the jigsaw space as possible). Get the children to give you one piece of the jigsaw from the middle of the puzzle. Have the children write, draw and decorate the person with things that are important to them, e.g. family, books, television, friends, certain foods or toys etc.

Cardboard person jigsaw: With this resource, get the children to take one of the pieces from the middle of the puzzle and give it to you. Have the children write, draw and decorate the person with things that are important to them, e.g. family, books, television, friends, certain foods or toys etc.

Cardboard people cutouts: With this resource, ask the children to begin by cutting up the person into jigsaw shaped pieces and for them to give you one piece of the puzzle from the centre. Have the children write, draw and decorate the person with things that are important to them, e.g. family, books, television, friends, certain foods or toys etc.

When the children have finished adding all the things that are important to them, talk to them about the piece of the puzzle they have given to you.

Everyone has a special part of them that can't be filled by anything else no matter how important it might be to you. Even if you had everything in the world that you wanted—lots of money, food, clothes, toys, friends, etc.—there would still be a part of you that could not be filled by these things. This piece is a special 'God-shaped' piece that can only be filled by Him and by you having a relationship with Him. When we know God and choose to be His friend, this part of us gets filled and we realise that the other stuff—even though important to us—is not the MOST important thing for us to be happy.

Take some time to pray about God filling that certain 'God-shaped' part of us and pray that others will know that God can fill them too.

FACES IN THE CROWD...

For this activity, cover a table with some butchers paper and you will need some small circle shapes cut out of paper (approximately 6cm) and some glue sticks, textas, crayons or pencils.

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. Take some circle shapes and draw some faces of children you know, write their name on the back of the face, pray for them and then stick the face to the paper laid out on the table. How many faces can you add to the table?

Imagine if all the Kids Churches in The Salvation Army prayed for all the children they know, what an amazing crowd of children that would be. Even though there are so many faces on the paper and children that we have prayed for, God knows and loves each of us as if we were the only one stuck on the sheet. God sees our faces in the crowd.

TAKE HOME FAMILY ACTIVITIES

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 the 'cry of their heart' in relation to children they know, in their community or across the world.

MOULDING CHILDREN...

Hand to each family or household some small snaplock bags that include paper magiclay, plasticine or playdough for moulding. It would be good to stick an instruction label on the outside of the bag or place a card with the instructions on it inside the bag.

Mould one or two children from the material provided—they may be 'representative' children or could be specific children you know. Pray for them as you are moulding them that they will know God; that He will provide for them all they need, and also pray for any particular situation they may be currently experiencing. When you have finished praying for these children (or group of children) roll the moulding material back up and place it in the snaplock bag ready for next time. Encourage families/households to do this activity at least three times through this week.

'Paper Magiclay' can be purchased from Zartart: www.zartart.com.au

PRAYER BOX OR BOWL

Today, during the service, the focus will have been on the 'cry of your heart'. This week at home it would be good if you could continue this focus as a family as you pray for children that you know, children in your community or children from around the world.

Take a box or bowl that you would like to place in the middle of the table as your focus for this week. Get everyone in the house to choose some items to place in the box/bowl that will help to remind you to pray for children from many different areas of life. It might be photos of children that you know or pictures of children from newspapers, magazines or printed from the internet. It might be a Lego block that will remind you to pray for those children who do not have secure and safe housing. It might be small items of food that will remind you to say 'thank you' for the food you have as a family or for those who have small amounts of food that they have to survive on. It might be a band-aid helping remind you to pray for those who are unwell or hurt and need some care, praying that God will give them what they need at this time.

The list of items is endless: be creative as a family as you choose things that will remind you to pray from your heart for children you know, in your community and around the world.

PRAYER STATION SUGGESTIONS

This day of prayer for children is a great opportunity to engage both adults and children in praying together and for others. Below are some suggested prayer stations that you might like to have as part of your service; you could use them before the formal part of the service or after the message where everyone can take the opportunity to pray as a community.

HANDS AROUND THE WORLD...

Have a globe displayed at this station (if you do not have access to a globe you may like to just use a map of the world laid out on a small table).

Ask those who join this station to link hands in the circle around the globe/map asking them to pray together. Praying for those children who:

- Live around the world
- Live in poverty
- Are persecuted and mistreated
- Haven't heard the message of Jesus' love
- Have chosen to follow Jesus and share His love

OR

PUTTING THE WORLD TOGETHER...

Using the large map of the world, cut it into pieces (like a jigsaw puzzle). You will need a sheet of butchers paper on the wall for people to stick the world pieces onto. You will also need some Blu-Tack or sticky tape for the pieces to be placed onto the wall.

Encourage those that are participating in this prayer station to pray for children that live in the country that is on the jigsaw piece they are adding to the wall. You may also like to add some images of children from some countries on the map so that, when the entire map is put together, people can add the images of the children and continue to pray for children around the world.

HOLDING HEAVY THINGS... (ALSO USING ICE CUBES)

For this activity you will need a variety of items that you deem 'heavy'—a range would be good so that all ages and sizes can participate, e.g. hand weights (some heavier than others, 10kg, 5kg and 1kg), some large tins of food or bags of rice, a pile of large books or a heavy box etc.

Instead (or as well) you might like to have a bowl of ice cubes, some paper towel and a plastic drop cloth. As you participate in this prayer station choose to either hold something heavy or hold some ice cubes in your hands.

While holding something heavy, try to focus on those children who 'carry' heavy things each day, those who are weighed down with worries or hardships or horrible situations. Try to keep your focus on a certain child or a group of children rather than on the fact that the item you are holding is heavy.

While you are holding the ice cubes, try to focus on those children who have difficulties every day or a child that you know is experiencing difficulty at the moment. Try to keep your focus and prayers on a certain child or group of children rather than on your discomfort from the ice-cubes.

It is important to think and pray for others even when things might be difficult or distracting for us.

THE CRY OF MY HEART...

For this activity you will need a large sheet of butchers paper either with a large red heart drawn on it or have the paper cut into a large heart shape. You will also need small pieces of red paper, some black pens, textas and crayons and some Blu-Tack or sticky tape to add red pieces of paper to the large heart.

What is the cry of your heart in relation to children? They might be children that you know, at your church, in your family, friends or neighbours or just the cry of your heart for children in general, perhaps in your local community or from other places around the world.

Write or draw this prayer, the 'cry of your heart' on one of the small slips of red paper and place it in the heart shape. All of us sharing our heart for children with God today.

CHILDREN FROM CLAY...

At this station you will need to have some paper magiclay, plasticine or playdough for moulding. You will also need a bright sheet of cardboard (A2) placed in the middle of the table and a plastic table cloth or placemats that are placed around the edge of the table. Make a sign for this station that outlines the instructions for how to participate in this prayer station.

Mould one or two children from the material provided. Pray for them as you are moulding them:

- What is the cry of your heart for this child?
- Pray that they will know God
- Pray that He will provide for them all that they need
- Pray for any particular situations that these children may be in
- Pray for difficulties they may be experiencing
- Celebrate all the good things that God gives to His children

When you have finished praying for these children or group of children add your models to the bright sheet of cardboard in the centre of the table.

'Paper Magiclay' can be purchased from Zartart: www.zartart.com.au

RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.... WHAT A GREAT PLACE TO START...

<http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchilldfriendlylanguage.pdf>

This prayer station is all about praying for children and some of the basic rights that all children should be able to experience. For this activity it would be good to cover a table with some butchers paper so that people as they pray can write and draw and add to this station. You might like to print off a copy of the 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child In Child Friendly Language' that you will find at the above address. You might like to circle some that you would like people to pray about and draw a line to a blank space on the table where prayers can be written. Provide a tub of textas and crayons for people to write or draw their prayers about these topics in relation to the rights of children.

POOL OF TEARS...

For this activity you will need a large bowl or tub of water (please make sure that someone is always with the water to protect little children), a container of small pebbles (you can purchase bags of these from a number of cheap variety stores) and a couple of plastic drop sheets. Cover the table with a drop sheet, place the bowl in the centre of the table and lay the pebbles out around the bowl.

Chose a pebble that will represent a child or a group of children that you would like to pray for. The tears or the cry of your heart that is represented by the water may be tears of celebration and love or they may be tears of sorrow for difficult times. As you drop your pebble into the bowl of water, pray for a child or group of children.