

Stations of prayer for children

As you feel called to do so, visit each prayer station. Read the statistics about children and the issues that shape their lives. Use the photograph to put a face on the statistics. Pray the suggested prayer, or pray one of your own. If you brought a photo of a “child of your wallet”, a child you hold dear, attach it to the poster calling us to pray for the children of our hearts. Or print his or her name.

#1. Pray for Children in Poverty

(A child's prayer)

Jesus,

The people who love me work hard to take care of me. But sometimes we don't have enough to eat. Sometimes we are cold. Sometimes we have nowhere to go. Bless the people who love me. Help them to take care of me. I love you, **Jesus. Amen.**

#2. Pray for Children with No Access to Clean Water

Gracious God,

It is from water that life came forth.

It is with water that your Spirit signifies your claim upon us in baptism.

It is water that quenches our thirst, and without it, no life is possible.

For those children for whom water is a luxury, we pray.

For those who rely on dried up wells; who sit parched and find no relief.

For those whose water is contaminated by industry or ignorance--who sit by the water but cannot drink.

For those whose water is tapped by others for profit. What once was a gift to drench the fields and to supply the table and the bath is now a commodity sold at a price.

For those whose water is a dwindling resource-- where streams that once watered cattle and fields are now a source of violence and conflict--for who owns this gift will survive.

Gracious God,

Drench us with your Spirit.

Saturate us with your grace.

Enable us to see the world as you see it; to see all of your children as our own.

In your Spirit make us wise, that we may show well what you have given us so that all may be sated.

#3. Pray for Children without Health Coverage

Gracious God,

For all of the uninsured children who need medical care, we pray.
For fevers that need tending. For treatments that go undone. For healing that will not happen because there is not enough money to pay for it.
For all of the parents who worry at night, frantic that their children will grow sicker when treatment is available but unaffordable, we pray. Who run doctor to doctor hoping someone will help, but find little solace. Who mount up bills in desperation, and who are quickly overwhelmed with debt.
For a nation who tolerates such neglect, dear God, have mercy upon us.

#4. Pray for the Health of Children Worldwide

God of the abundant life,
Our hearts ache for the children who die for the want of something as simple as a mosquito net or a clean cup of water.
We ponder the lost potential of the babies who die before they have even reached their fifth birthday,
Young children who never have a chance at learning or loving or making a difference in this world.
We who do have access to the abundant life-- we are the ones who could change the course of their destiny.
Forgive us our indifference, convict our unwillingness to engage the systems that hold the health of children hostage, and grant us the vision to discern your will for the health and wholeness of these little ones. Amen.

5. Pray for Children Who Labor

Righteous God,
We pray for all of the invisible children.

The boy in Congo who mined the diamond in my engagement ring at gunpoint.
The girl doing back-breaking labor in a California field, filling buckets with tomatoes for my kitchen table.
The girl in the sweat shop in a dimly lit back room who sews the t-shirts in my dresser drawer.
The boy in Bolivia in the deep mine in the mountain, without steel-toed shoes, or a helmet, or help sorting through tons of rubble, so that the conductors in my computer are lined with copper.

Righteous God, open my eyes.

Help me to see what you cannot ignore.
Help me to understand what my choices mean in this great, big globalized world.

Righteous God, open my lips.

Help me to speak so that others, too, may see.
Help me to understand how connected my life is to the lives of millions of unseen children who will never be kids.

Righteous God, open my heart.

Help me to live differently so that what I know is made visible.
Help me to act in faith, believing that your Spirit may move in ways I cannot yet understand, but will bring your kingdom of righteousness to life on earth.
Amen.

#6. Pray for Children Who Are Neglected and Abused

Dear Lord,
Behind closed doors, children suffer silently. Their bodies are small and their keepers are strong. When they tell their stories, their voices are seldom heard. In denial, we hide our faces from the despair of their daily lives.

Savior, grant us clarity and compassion. Allow us to listen without judgment. Make us fearless and willing to speak up. Provide us with the resources to make a difference. Shine your light into dark, hidden corners and heal the hearts of the broken. We pray this in your Son's name. Amen.

#7. Pray for Children and Public Education

Teacher God,
Today we remember children who long to learn and have a teacher. Provide for their need through a parent, a caregiver, a mentor, or friend. Open our hearts to a sense of call to be such a person for children in our midst.

Help us remember children who get the wrong kind of education. Education that takes away their innocence and wounds their spirit. Education from circumstances that harm them. Protect children with street smarts, guardians around them, and any means at hand. Help us rise up to insure education that gives life and helps children thrive in adulthood.

We pray today for governments and systems that bring education to the masses and/or withhold education for some. Remind us that sometimes these powers are the same. Help us to discern how to best educate children, providing tools and resources to equalize education for boys and girls, inner city and suburbs, for all God's children. Help us to honor unique gifts and the many ways children learn and grow in knowledge and wisdom.

Teach us, O Lord. Teach us through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

#8. Pray for Those Children Worldwide Denied an Education

Almighty and Everlasting God, hear our prayers today for children around the world, all of whom possess the potential to make significant contributions to their nations and to the world, yet they lack opportunities for education. Many of them willingly walk for miles to attend the nearest schools only to find that they cannot afford the cost of uniforms and books.

Send us, Lord. Send our money. Send our books. Send our teachers. Send our commitment to ensure that every child would have the chance to achieve their purpose and their dreams.

Let us work toward a world where education is not only a privilege but also a right. Hear us, dear God, as we work to build more schools and libraries in Peru, in Ghana, in Indonesia and for the orphaned children in India. Give us minds and hearts to willingly share the abundant opportunities and resources that we so often take for granted. Amen.

#9. Pray for Children and Early Childhood Education

Eyes that sparkle, hands that reach out to learn through touch, ears eager to recognize new words and new sounds. Oh, that every child's thirst for knowledge could begin to be quenched at the beginning of their lives.

Lord, we thank you for child care centers and early education programs. We give thanks for the teachers and the volunteers who work tirelessly preparing exercises and activities to stimulate the imaginations and thoughts of our little ones. We give thanks for government programs that provide grants and scholarships for the children whose parents cannot afford the costs of early childhood education.

Still, there are some children's families who lack the information and access needed in order to benefit from these services. We pray that churches, civic groups, and grass roots organizations would all help to fill in the gaps. We pray

that every parent would respond to the fact that education begins even while the child is in the womb and then continues in the home before the child is sent off to school. We pray that every child, no matter where they live, no matter what the economic status of their families or guardians, would develop a love for learning and this, early. Amen.

#10. Pray for Malnourished Children

God of Abundance, our days are often filled with breakfast on the run, fast food for lunch, and vending machine snacks. Our tables groan under the weight of food from across the globe, provided at too great an expense.

The food waste we generate is an embarrassment. And just out of view of our tables, the children of the world are hungry. Their stomachs are extended, not with excess poundage as are ours, but with gnawing hunger.

Their faces grow lean, not from dieting, but from too little food for too long.

Forgive us when we are offended by the pornography of poverty, by images of starvation that convict us. Forgive us when we miss the silent epidemic of slow malnutrition, a scourge that leaves the young vulnerable to disease and to stunted potential.

Forgive us when we say there is not enough when there is more than enough.

Turn us away from the waste of food and of human potential. Amen.

#11. Pray for Children Who are Trafficked for the Sex Trade

Creator God, by Your Spirit you created us male and female.

Our sexual identity is your good gift.

But some would distort that good gift for profit, exploiting even the most vulnerable among us, our children.

To make of your gift a commodity to be bought and sold is a profound distortion of what it means to be human. To transform the body of a child into an object of gratification is a sinful betrayal of those little ones who depend upon adults for safety and security.

So many, many children bear wounds that may never be healed.

Forgive us when our voices are silenced; when we turn our backs and shut our eyes to block out the ugliness.

Open our eyes and our hearts and turn us toward an evil that must be faced.

Give us the strength to touch the wounds of the world's children.

In your Son's name we can do no less. Amen.

#12. Pray for the Children of Our Hearts

God our Father and our Mother,

We pray for the children of our hearts- those whose images we carry in our wallets and whose very being is as close to us as breathing.

Their faces are etched on our souls:

We know their going in and their coming out; their feelings and their foibles; What makes them laugh and what engenders tears.

There is nothing we would not do to make them safe and happy.

Make room in our hearts, we pray, for all those children of the world whose images are etched on the very heart of God.

You know, O God, what they need. There is nothing you would not do to make them safe and happy.

Grant us your heart for all these children, all these whom you love.

Stir us to action so that there is nothing we would not do in your name to make them safe and happy. Amen.

When your prayer walk is completed, visit the baptismal font and reflect on the vows you take to nurture all children, made each time we baptize a child. Remove a clear pebble from the font to remind you of your commitment.