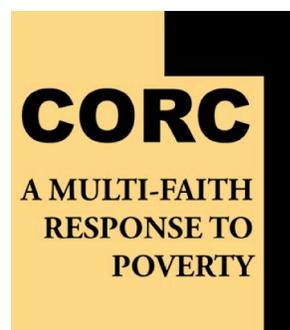


Ending Child Homelessness Sabbath Worship Materials Packet



Sample prayers and ideas for including and engaging children



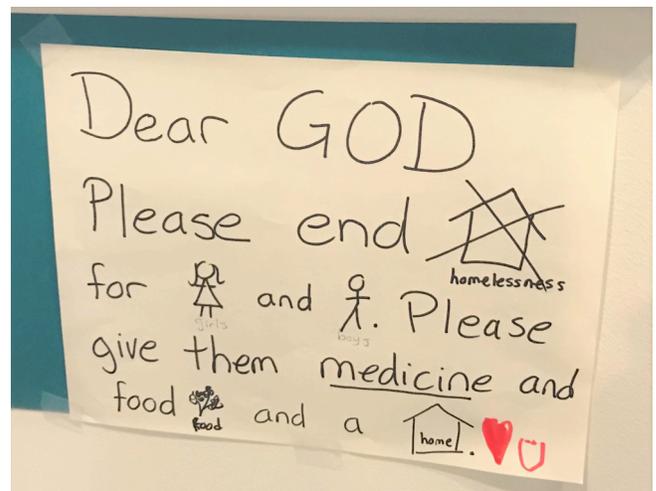
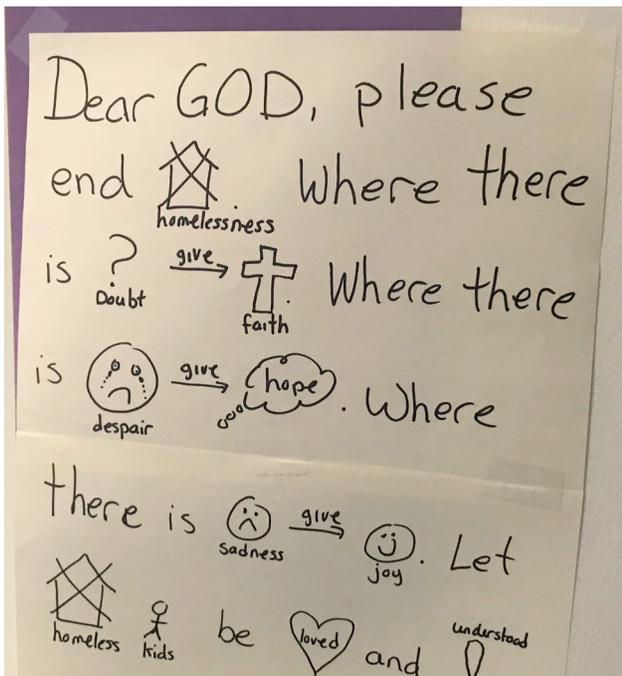
Produced by the Coalition of Religious Communities, a project of Crossroads Urban Center, www.crossroadsurbancenter.org

What is Child Homelessness Sabbath?

During the month of October several faith communities in Utah will be including prayers for homeless children in a worship service and/or collecting diapers for an agency that serves children who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Ending Child Homelessness Sabbath provides these congregations a way to talk about ethical and moral principles in the context of a local problem and to be part of a larger, multi-faith, conversation.

Ways to include and engage children

- Greet worshippers as they enter
- Read the prayers or scripture for the day
- Process in with a banner
- Draw picture on theme of child homelessness
- Involve children in diaper collection and delivery
- Read *Still a Family* by Brenda Reeves Sturgis, *A Place to Stay: A Shelter Story* by Erin Gunty or another book about children who become homeless during story time or in another time that is appropriate.



Prayers and other worship materials

Litany for homeless children

In this time of praise and thanksgiving we ask for help in remembering those who feel alone and abandoned.

Soften our hearts so we can feel your love for those we have ignored.

Help us to notice the people who live near us who do not have a safe or stable place to stay.

Open our eyes so we can see them as you would have us see them.

We know there are children without beds or a place to call home who live near this place where we are gathered to worship.

Open our minds so that we can see they are all Your children.

We know there are mothers and children who have been forced out of their homes by violence and abuse.

Open our ears so we can hear them crying.

We know we can do more to help those you would have us help but have been held back by fear and complacency.

Fill our hearts with the love that overcomes fear and banishes complacency.

We have felt the joy that comes from serving others in big ways and small.

May we feel that joy now.

Most merciful God, be with us and strengthen us as we renew our commitment to be the light of the world and a source of comfort to the least of these.

Bless us and strengthen us.

We especially ask for help remembering homeless children and their families and guidance in how we can best serve them as individuals and as a community knit together by faith, hope and love.

Guide us and be with us. Amen.

Ideas for Prayers of the People

Today we join our hearts with yours as we consider the lives of the thousands of children who will be served by a homeless shelter in Utah this year.

For every child who sleeps at a shelter there are at least four who have a temporary place to stay today but are unsure where they will sleep tomorrow. Help us to remember these children.

Over forty percent of children sleeping in an emergency shelter in Utah tonight are actively fleeing violence and abuse in their former home. Help us to be mindful of the trauma children face.

Hymn Suggestions

- "The Day is Near" *Gather Hymnal* (Catholic) 136
- "Hope of the World" *United Methodist Hymnal* 178
Lutheran Worship 377
Presbyterian Hymnal 360
The Hymnal (1982) 472
Chalice Hymnal (Disciples of Christ) 538
New Century Hymnal (United Church of Christ) 46
the World
- "Lord, Who Left the Highest Heaven" *Moravian Book of Worship* 692
- "Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service" *Chalice Hymnal* 461
Moravian Book of Worship 688
The Hymnal (1982) 610
Presbyterian Hymnal 427
United Methodist Hymnal 581
Gather Hymnal 681

Dear God,
Watch over your children,
Especially those with no homes to return to at
the end of long and weary days.
Protect them from all harm and keep them from
despair.
Open the hearts and eyes of those of us with
blessings to share.
Unite our voices in a call for justice:
So that no man need ever lay down for the night
on a wooden park bench because he has no
home;
So that no woman need ever tuck her children
into the backseat of her car because she has no
home;
So that no child need ever wonder, "Where will I
feel safe?" because he has no home;
So that all those who wander and all who are in
need, find the shelter and the peace they seek.
Remind us, O God, that we cannot rest fully
secure in our homes each night until all your
children are, at last, home.
Amen.

~ Rabbi Andrea Goldstein, Congregation
Shaare Emeth

The above prayer is one of nine prayers for the homeless
found on this website:

<http://www.roomstl.org/prayers-for-the-homeless-2011>

Episcopal Prayer for the Poor and the Neglected

Almighty and most merciful God,
we remember before you all poor and
neglected persons whom it would be
easy for us to forget:
the homeless and the destitute,
the old and the sick, and all who have
none to care for them.
Help us to heal those who are broken
in body or spirit, and to turn
their sorrow into joy.
Grant this, Father, for the love of your
Son, who for our sake became
poor, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

(Source: 1979 Book of Common
Prayer)

We give thanks that you meet our daily needs
of food, shelter, companionship. We pray for
those who go hungry and without a home. We
will not abandon our neighbours who struggle.
We will not revile them. We will not blame
people for their poverty. We stand alongside
them. We know that you are with us, as we
give, as we act and as we pray for justice.
Amen.

The above prayer is in a document of good resources
used in England for a Poverty & Homelessness Action
week. See this link:

<http://www.lovesouthampton.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Prayers-for-Homelessness-Sunday.pdf>