

Resources for Worship

Respecting Children

**Dedicated to eliminating violence against
children including all corporal punishment**

**The Churches' Network for Non-violence
Supporting the aims of the Children Are Unbeatable! Alliance**

Respecting Children - Resources for Worship

Resources for Worship has been compiled by the Churches' Network for Non-violence (CNNV). It is dedicated to ending all violence against children including corporal punishment. and is a contribution to the work of the campaign for equal protection. We extend our grateful thanks to all those who willingly and enthusiastically gave their time, creativity and thoughts towards producing some wonderful resources.

These contributions promote respect for children as people in their own right. Children are entitled to enjoy their childhood free from the fear of being hurt physically and emotionally by those who should care for them. Helping children to develop as loving, respectful and compassionate people is best done by adult example and not through physical punishment which causes pain and humiliation and undermines a child's physical, emotional and spiritual integrity.

CNNV supports the aims of the Children Are Unbeatable! Alliance which campaigns for the UK to satisfy human rights obligations by modernising the law on assault to give children the same protection that adults take for granted. More than 400 organisations and many individuals are now part of the Alliance including the NSPCC, Save the Children, churches, faith groups and religious leaders.

Churches' Network for Non-violence (CNNV)

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Contribute a prayer

Please send your contribution to us at: info@churchesfornon-violence.org

Or post to CNNV, 6 Sylvia Avenue, Hatch End, Pinner HA5 4QE

Obtaining further copies of the booklet

'Resources for Worship' can be downloaded from:

www.churchesfornon-violence.org

Or send a stamped addressed envelope to:

CNNV 6 Sylvia Avenue, Hatch End, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 4QE

Support the Children Are Unbeatable! Alliance

Sign up as an individual or group: info@endcorporalpunishment.org

www.childrenareunbeatable.org.uk

Further Resources:

Respecting Children – A handbook on growing up without violence

Respect Children – End corporal punishment

info@churchesfornon-violence.org

www.churchesfornon-violence.org

Charter for Children and Non-violence

The Gift of Childhood

We thank you God for the gift of childhood;
for its own particular wisdom,
and for its glimpses
into the wonder of our world
and the promise of eternity.
We pray for a society that so often steals childhood;
that takes away its hopes and dreams,
and does violence to the innocent.
As in the manger-child, we gaze upon the face of God;
so in each and every child, may we recognise the face of Christ,
cherishing the miracle.

Nigel McCulloch, Bishop of Manchester

The Privilege of Bringing Up Children

Gracious God

We come to you in gratitude for the privilege and responsibility of bringing up children, with all their capacity for wonder and delight.

We come to you also in sorrow that often our children receive so much less from us than they deserve, even to the point of abuse.

We pray that you will move in the hearts and minds of parents, teachers, law-makers and all people everywhere with an urgent desire for respect for our children and peace for our families.

Give us humility to learn better ways than the ways of violence, and more creative paths than those of power.

For what we have received in our children make us truly thankful
and for what we have got wrong with our children make us truly penitent
through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford

Speak out for Children

Loving Jesus

You welcomed the children and blessed them,
for each child is a gift from God.

Forgive us for the times when children are not seen as a blessing.

Forgive us for the times when disrespect of children leads to abuse.

As you cared for children, so we pray for all those who have responsibility for children.

May parents and teachers, relatives and friends, social workers and health workers love and care for and value each child entrusted to them.

Open our eyes to see abuse where it is happening; open our lips to speak out for children; open our minds to wrestle with issues of nurturing the younger generation; open our hearts to live in ways of peace.

This we pray in the name of our loving Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

Rev. Elizabeth Welch, Moderator, United Reformed Church, West Midlands Synod

Make me a parent of Peace

Make me a parent of peace

When I am angry with my children, may I be patient

When I hurt my children by my words and actions, may I apologise

When I doubt my decisions, may I find peace of mind,

When I despair over my children, may I find hope,

When I am tired, may I find strength to go on

When I am confused and uncertain, may I have the grace to ask for help

Grant that I may console my children in their sorrow and woes

That I may listen to my children, and truly hear what they say

That I will always treat them with dignity and respect

And be ready to play

That my love for them will always fill my heart

That I am open to receive their love for me

That they will pardon my failings and mistakes

May I always know my children are citizens of your kingdom

Here on earth, and for evermore

Rachel Matthews (inspired by the Prayer of St Francis)

The Gift of Youth

Childlike

Childcare

Child carers

Children in care

Unwanted child

Child abuse

Wasted childhood

Child of our time, our streets, our neighbourhood,

Peer pressure

Underage drinking

Juvenile crime

Teenage pregnancy

Classroom bullying

Peer mentoring

Young people today

Child of this place, this land, this city,

Child poverty

Infant mortality

Child hunger

Street child

Child labour

Child soldiers

The Rights of the child

Child of Basra

Child of Belfast

Child of Beijing

Child of Burma

Child of Bethlehem

Christ child

Children of God.

Helen Garton, The United Reformed Church

Love, Justice and Respect – A Prayer for Parents

Father and Mother of all that is,

When I raise my hand to my children,
May it never be in anger;
But to comfort, care and caress

When I raise my voice to my children,
May it never be in rage;
But to praise, encourage and appreciate

When I raise my eyes at my children
May it never be in mockery or scorn;
But with laughter, enjoyment and fun

When I raise my heart in prayer to you
May I come as a parent
Who treats my children as you treat yours
With love, justice and respect

Through the love of your son,
Jesus, Prince of Peace,

Amen

Rachel Matthews

Unconditional Love

Loving God

We thank you for the gift of children created in your own image.
Help us to nurture each child's potential and protect them from any form of harm so they may develop into the person you mean them to be;
to discover in you a love that will never leave them.

Receive our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord
who gave us the perfect example of unconditional love
and who respected and loved all children.

Elizabeth Penlington

Growing up free from fear and threat

Transcendant God

you have called us to work for true justice in our communities

and to be messengers of freedom

for those who are not treated as your children.

We ask that you will guide us in our endeavours

to end the cruelty that overshadows many children's lives.

Through your grace

may we work in solidarity with others

to end all corporal punishment

so that children can flourish and grow,

free from fear and threat.

And may we spread peace, love and liberation

for children everywhere

Amen

Churches' Network for Non-violence

A Reflection - You were a child too Lord

You were a child too, Lord.

And we know so little of your upbringing.

A child - and our Lord and our God.

Born a child and yet a King -

It seems easy at Christmas.

But we fail to recognise you in the growing boy.

Help us to treat the children we know and care for with the reverence we owe to you - for you are incarnate in the children we serve.

"I began to think about how easily we sing of 'God incarnate in the Virgin's womb' and worship the baby of Bethlehem, and how rarely we reflect on the divinity of the growing boy, and its implications for our treatment of children."

John Packer, Bishop of Ripon and Leeds

For Children who are Suffering

Heavenly Father, whose son Jesus Christ took little children in his arms and blessed them.

Hear our prayer for those children who are suffering through the cruelty of others.

Take from them the strain and misery of fear and give them the trustfulness and joy which should be theirs

Enable those who look after them to give them tenderness and understanding, and your unfailing love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord
Amen.

Tony Robinson, Bishop of Pontefract

Help us to Find New Ways

Lord God you made all things new.

In Jesus we saw creative and loving responses to old questions.

When we seek to change our children's behaviour,
When we seek to attract their attention,
When we seek to show them our disapproval:

Help us to find new ways.

Help us to be loving and creative.

Help us to find Jesus' way of non-violence.

Amen

Revd Bill Young, Minister, The United Reformed Church, Coventry

“Cherish the child within you”

A thought from Jack Nicholls, Bishop of Sheffield

Let your light shine in darkness

Loving God you chose to enter this world
quietly, humbly and as an outcast.

Hear our prayers for all those of your children who are suffering
through the unseen cruelty of others.

Look with kindness and compassion on all
those who are mistreated.

When they feel abandoned, give them hope.

When they feel unloved and betrayed give them
courage, comfort and peace.

Bless all those who care for them and
who work to bring rescue and relief.

Give us the courage to speak out against
all that harms the bodies and minds of
your children, so that love will triumph
over fear and light shine in darkness.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ
who took children in his arms and blessed them.

Amen

Martin Wharton, Bishop of Newcastle

Justice for Children

God of love and compassion

We seek justice for children.

Help us

protect children

support parents

sustain our lawmakers

to end legalised violence against children

for the risen Christ

Amen

Churches' Network for Non-violence

Hymn for Children

1. Can the parents' tender care
Cease towards the child they bear?
Yes, and we stand by and see
Sadnesses and cruelty.

2. When the bells of Christmas ring,
We recall a savage king,
Who killed children in his spite;
We today still share that night:

3. Children trafficked, parents killed,
Childhood's promise unfulfilled,
Children naked, poor and cold,
Children who will not grow old.

4. Child abuse is wounding Christ;
Children's armies pierce his side;
Children's worries fill God's heart;
Where can God's forgiveness start?

5. Children can bring into life
Wonder, magic and delight;
Yet they need security
For their creativity.

6. God of parents, carers, friends,
Teach us how to make amends;
Bless our aims, forgive our wrongs,
Help our children sing Your songs.

June Boyce-Tillman

Tune: Loving Shepherd of thy Sheep.

Prayer of Intercession- restore, forgive and heal

Creator God whose Spirit hovered over the chaos and brought forth order and peace, grant your restoring presence to every home and family where relationships are shaped by fear, frustration and hurt. May the chains of the past be broken by your loving presence.

Come Living God, restore, forgive and heal

Draw near to all parents as they seek to raise their children amidst the many pressures placed upon them. We pray for mothers or fathers who because of circumstances have to raise their children on their own with little support, relief or encouragement. Too easily can frustrations and angst take over where time and space is in short supply. Grant your calm to all parents that they may feel able to reflect carefully and act lovingly in each and every situation

Come Living God, restore, forgive and heal

Although we like to feel that we are independent people all too often we are prisoners to the past, its way of doing things and our memories and experiences of it. Lord teach us to live and act not chained to the past but liberated to the present; so that in each moment we might find the opportunity to respond creatively and lovingly to the needs of our children

Come living God, restore, forgive and heal

Loving God we cannot bring peace to our world by bombing it to pieces and we can never deal with the issues of violence and rebellion by being violent and rebellious in return. Teach us the way of Jesus so that what we are able to profess with our lips may be lived out in our lives. May our lives be driven by love and willingness to share rather than by our frustrations and anger

Come living God, restore, forgive and heal

Lord make each one of us a channel of your peace, a testimony to your love and agents of your healing presence

In Christ's name

Amen

Revd Dr Stuart B. Jennings, Methodist Minister and University Chaplain

Short liturgy and prayer dedicated to the work of The Children are Unbeatable! Alliance

Opening:

In the name of God, Creator and Lover of all the world

We gather together.

Peace be with you

All: And also with you

We say sorry

Loving God,

We come before you in sorrow for our own wrongdoings,

And with sadness for the pain in our world.

We ask your forgiveness ...

For hurting and not protecting those who depend on us

Lord, in your mercy

All: Forgive us and heal us

For shouting at and not listening to those who surround us

Lord in your mercy

All: Forgive us and heal us

For holding fast and not letting go of those entrusted to our care

Lord, in your mercy

All: forgive us and heal us

May the God of love and power

Forgive us and free us from all we have done wrong,

Heal and strengthen us by his Spirit

And raise us to new life in Christ.

Amen

Prayers

Lord Jesus

You taught us to welcome children and to learn from them.
Help us in our families to embrace them with love,
And in our communities to surround them with care,
To let every touch be a touch of grace,
Every word be a word of praise,
And every day be a day of joy
So all our children might flourish and grow
In the knowledge of your gentle compassion,
Inspired by your Spirit who teaches all things
And leads us day by day into fullness of life.
In Jesus name we pray,

Amen

Lord God,
Give courage to those who speak out
Against harm done to the little ones in your world,
Especially to those in the Children are Unbeatable! alliance.
Inspire their words and direct their actions
That they might bring an end
To all that is wrong in the care of children
And see a beginning of the discipline
That comes from following your path of love.
In Jesus name.

Amen

Commitment

**All: In the name of God our nurturing Father and protecting mother,
We commit ourselves to our children,
To helping them to learn well,
To discover boundaries and to explore safely,
Without fear of being hit or hurt by those they trust,
So we might reflect God's gentle love
For them, for us and for all his world.**

Blessing

May the God of love surround us,
May the God of peace protect us,
May the God of hope inspire us,
And the blessing of God,
The Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Be with you,
This day and always.
Amen.

Aiden Platten and colleagues, The Diocese of Gloucester

Liturgy – Non-violence

Creator God, who loves young and old,

We pray that all people would value and cherish children.

We thank you for the inherent dignity of the young. We remember with sorrow those children who are not respected and who suffer from violence.

Creator God, who loves young and old,

We pray that all people would value and cherish children.

We thank you for those who protect the young. We remember with regret those children who are not protected and who are humiliated through abuse.

Creator God, who loves young and old,

We pray that all people would value and cherish children.

We thank you for those who listen to the young. We remember with sadness those children who have no voice, or who are not heard.

Creator God, who loves young and old,

We pray that all people would value and cherish children.

We thank you for those who take children seriously. We remember with concern those children who have never felt safe to speak out.

Creator God, who loves young and old,

We pray that all people would value and cherish children.

We thank you for those who have positive non-violent relationships with the young. We remember with regret those children who have been given a poor example.

Creator God, who loves young and old,

We pray that all people would value and cherish children.

We thank you for those who work for non-violence and involve the young.

We remember with concern those children who are not included and whose contribution is ignored.

Creator God, who loves young and old,

We pray that all people would value and cherish children.

We thank you for those who help the young understand their value. We remember with sadness those children who are kept ignorant of their rights.

Creator God, who loves young and old,

We pray that all people would value and cherish children.

We thank you for those who are called to work with the young. We remember with regret those children who have not received good quality care and support. Creator God, who loves young and old,

We pray that all people would value and cherish children.

We thank you for those who help young people who have suffered. We remember with sadness those children who have not been helped adequately or appropriately.

Creator God, who loves young and old,

We pray that all people would value and cherish children.

We thank you for those who model non-violent ways to resolve conflict. We remember with sorrow those children who have never known justice, fairness and compassion.

Creator God, who loves young and old,

We pray that all people would value and cherish children.

Nick Harding, Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham

Light a candle for Children – Prayers for a Vigil

We light these candles as a symbol of the sacred respect we hold for the human dignity of every child

All: May the wisdom of God enlighten us

We light this candle to celebrate the gift of children and young people

All: May this light shine as a mark of respect for children everywhere

We light this candle to remember all children who are suffering from violent and humiliating treatment

All: May this light shine as a symbol of our commitment to ending violence against children

Loving God we acknowledge that through omission and silence we have not always addressed the reality of violence against children and we have not always addressed the suffering that this violence causes. We believe that religious communities must join with others in finding solutions to end all forms of violence against children, including all corporal punishment and we ask that your light will be a lantern to guide us as we dedicate ourselves to this task.

All: Loving God hear our prayer.

Eternal God our Creator, we pray for all children and young people who endure violence in their homes. As the sun rises and sets, may we work together to support the families in our communities so that all children may grow up in an atmosphere of compassion, loving kindness, encouragement and non-violence; for peace begins at home.

All: Eternal God hear our prayer

Merciful God, we remember all children in the world affected by the violence of poverty and armed conflict. We pray for peace for the children of Darfur, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel and Palestine and all regions of conflict. As the trees grow, fill us with love for all human beings so that we recognise and respect the dignity and rights of one another. Give us grace to resolve our differences without the use of force.

All: Merciful God hear our prayer.

God of compassion, we pray that we may promote a culture of respect for all children. As the stars shine, help us to teach children by our own example so that we may develop mutual respect. For respect is a key to non-violence.

All: God of compassion hear our prayer

God of justice, we pray for strength of purpose to work in solidarity towards eliminating corporal punishment of children. As night becomes day give us insights to read and interpret our religious texts to promote non-violence, justice and peace for all children.

All: God of justice hear our prayer

God of peace, we pray that adults will create safe places where children are partners with adults in speaking out, resolving conflict and creating peace.

All: God of peace hear our prayer

Churches' Network for Non-violence

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you call us into the glorious liberty of the Children of God
and reveal your secrets not to the wise and prudent but to babes.
Save us from being

too sensible to have fun,
too wise to be foolish for Christ,
too pious to receive and give your forgiveness,
too Churchy to enjoy your world.

We thank you for the gift of your Spirit
that we may know ourselves as your children
and you as Abba, Father.

Help us to know and receive your delight in us
that we may delight in you and others be drawn to you, the Beautiful
Shepherd.

Amen.

John Stroyan Bishop of Warwick

Respecting Children

Jesus not only taught how to make an adult world more compassionate and more just for children; he taught about a social world in part defined by children.

In his words and actions Jesus turned the first-century view of children as the property of adults, upside down.

By blessing and laying his hands on children Jesus received children as people in their own right; he gave them dignity, status and respect.

Prayer

God our Creator
As Mary nurtured her son Jesus
at each new stage of life
with wisdom and respect,
may we too meet each new challenge of parenting
with full humanity
and respond to our children with kindness and understanding.

Help us to promote the true meaning of discipline
as discipleship, teaching and guidance;
not smacking, punishment and humiliation.

Help us to speak out boldly and challenge all those
who use religion to justify corporal punishment of children.

Create in us a sense of universal responsibility towards all your children
so that in our work and daily life
we may follow the example of Jesus
who listened to children and gave them status and respect.
So may we see your likeness and image in every child.

Amen

Churches' Network for Non-violence