

Liturgical Aids for Children's Sabbath

Call to Worship

Note: we suggest that you ask a child to lead in the litany.

ONE: Blessed are the Children...who are taught to see beauty in all things around them;

MANY: for their world will be a place of wonder.

ONE: Blessed are the Children...who are led with patience and understanding;

MANY: for they will learn the strength of endurance and the gift of tolerance.

ONE: Blessed are the Children...who are provided a home where family members live in harmony;

MANY: for they shall become the peacemakers of the world.

ONE: Blessed are the Children...who are taught the value and power of truth;

MANY: for they shall search for knowledge and use it with wisdom and discernment.

ONE: Blessed are the Children...who are loved and know that they are loved;

MANY: for they shall sow seeds of love in the world and reap joy for themselves and others.

—from the Ecumenical Child Care Network

Readings from Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah 54:11-17

Hymn

“Change for the Children”

(see page 21)



Information

Each day in the US the following things happen:

- 1 mother dies in childbirth.
- 4 children are killed by abuse or neglect.
- 5 children or teens commit suicide.
- 8 children or teens are killed by firearms.
- 76 babies die before their first birthdays.
- 182 children are arrested for violent crimes.
- 366 children are arrested for drug abuse.
- 390 babies are born to mothers who received late or no prenatal care.
- 860 babies are born at low birthweight.
- 1,186 babies are born to teen mothers.
- 1,707 babies are born without health insurance.
- 1,887 public school students are corporally punished.
- 2,171 babies are born into poverty.
- 2,539 high school students drop out.
- 2,341 babies are born to mothers who are not high school graduates.
- 2,455 children are confirmed as abused or neglected.
- 3,742 babies are born to unmarried mothers.
- 4,440 children are arrested.
- 17,072 public school students are suspended.

—figures are from the Children's Defense Fund, August 2004

Readings from the Gospel

Luke 18:16-17

Mark 9:36-37

Meditation on Children

We believe in children: little ones, big ones, and chubby ones. There is faith in their eyes, love in their touch, hope in their attitude. We thrill with them at life's joys, bow with them in worship, and hold them close in tragedy. We believe in children: the fragile dreams of yesterday, life's radiant reality today, and vibrant substance of tomorrow. We believe in children, for wherever we go we find yesterday's children who were nurtured in love, truth, and beauty, at work trying to make this world a better place for everyone.

—an anonymous quote, cited by Pat Corrick Hinton in Images of Peace

Note: Seeds of Hope intern Stephanie Tinker helped with this compilation.

Change for the Children

a hymn for Children's Sabbath

words by John S. Ballenger
tune: China 7.7.7.7 with Refrain
by William B. Bradbury

1. Children are of God's good grace;
in their joy, we see God's face.
In their laughter hear God smile.
We can see God in each child.
Thank God for children;
thank God for children;
thank God for children,
that's how we ought to live.

2. No child should be raised in fear;
that's our charge both far and near.
'Til each child grows up to play
their part in what God does say:
"Take care of children;
take care of children;
take care of children,
and change the way you live."

3. Children are the ones who'll pay
for poor choices made each day,
We their future must ensure—
lest our blunders they endure.
Think of the children;
think of the children;
think of the children,
and change the way they'll live.

4. Children all do need our care.
they need peace; they need clean air.
They need us for them to pray;
they need us to live God's way.
Love all our children;
love all our children;
love all our children,
thus change the way we live.

—John Ballenger is a pastor in Baltimore, Maryland. He has written many dramatic resources for Sacred Seasons and other Seeds of Hope publications.

Third from the Sun

a poem

by David Sparenberg

Most of the people on this planet
are poor.
Many of the people on this planet
are malnourished.
Many of the people are ill sheltered.
Many are insufficiently clothed.

Many of the children on this planet
grow old with fear,
pain and privation.
Some remain dreamers,
in spite of the facts.
Some remain lovers,
in spite of disappointments.

Some of the people have gone
or are going mad.
Some are afflicted
with sorrowful diseases.
Some are entrapped
in debilitating crime.
There is abundant anxiety,
guilt and despair.

Only a few of the people on this planet
are consistently secure,
sufficiently empowered, in control
of their lives.

Over the years,
I have searched for justice,
justice and the luminous
dispensation of mercy.
I have found much hardship,
folly, deception.

I have found indifference.
Thicker than the wall of prisons.
Darker than stark night. Uglier
than torture.

Many of the people on this planet
are thirsty
(even where there is water).
Many of the people are hungry
(even where there is grain).
A great many of the people on this planet
are hungering.
A great many of the people are thirsting
and wasting away.

There are so many people on this planet Earth.
Third from the sun. One
from her moon.
And so much negative silence,
So much isolation in the busiest,
noisiest places.

—David Sparenberg—a playwright, poet, storyteller, stage director, Shakespearean actor and
novelist—lives and writes in Seattle.

Art on this page is courtesy of the United Nations Food Programme.

Benediction



*The Time is surely coming, says the Lord,
when the one who plows shall overtake
the one who reaps,
and the treader of the grapes
the one who sows the seed;
the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
and all the hills shall flow with it.
I will restore the fortunes of my people...
They shall rebuild the ruined cities
and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards
and drink their wine,
and they shall make gardens
and eat their fruit.
I will plant them upon their land,
and they shall never again be plucked up
out of the land...
from Amos 9:13-15*