



## TELEVISED MASS LED BY THE ARCHBISHOP

PANAMA CITY, NOVEMBER 20. “What you did unto one of the least, you did unto me,” the Archbishop told the packed church. “When you are violent to a child, you are violent to me,” he repeated pointing to his crucifix, effortlessly weaving Jesus’ famous teaching with the theme of the nationally televised mass, the importance of a violence-free early childhood.

Touching on every day examples, Archbishop Ulloa urged all who attended the mass to act with respect and care for children, including to monitor children’s use of the television, internet, and social media, embrace positive discipline rather than corporal punishment, help children with their studies, protect them from child labour and meet our economic, emotional and spiritual responsibilities toward them.

He ended the touching and powerful sermon calling for courage to address the taboo of violence against small children: “We should be afraid of being violent and not for seeking help for violence...Ask for help so as not to hurt the most innocent among us, children. Don’t be afraid to ask for help.” Children then were invited to the pulpit to receive a blessing and to share their prayers about ending childhood violence. Once they finished, they lined up to meet the Panama’s First Lady and UNICEF Panama Representative, Una McCauley, who were present to celebrate the World Day of Prayer in Panama.

## ANTI VIOLENCE MESSAGE REPEATED IN TEMPLES AND CHURCHES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The anti-violence message was repeated in the temples and churches of various religious communities throughout the country. UNICEF Panama, with the generous assistance of the Global Network of Religions for Children, invited all member communities in Panama to devote their service to the theme of a violence-free early childhood during the week of November 20: Muslims, Baha’is, Hindus, Buddhists, Anglicans, Evangelicals and Jews all welcomed the opportunity to unite for children.



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## CHILDREN'S EVENT AT PARQUE OMAR

In addition, more than 300 children attended an event co-hosted by UNICEF Panama and the Office of the First Lady in a park in central Panama City on November 20. They were invited to offer a silent prayer or reflection to mark the World Day of Prayer and Action and also drew and wrote messages on colourful paper petals that they later affixed to large flowers at the front of the venue.

The notes were simple but powerful. Many simply wrote “love” in crayon as their prayer. Others drew pictures of their families. One petal featured three stick people with separate captions: “No to violence,” “I love you,” and “I love me.” Another child noted that families, the State and the education system all had a role to play in creating a violence-free childhood. The day’s activities also included face painting, child-led dance troops, music, a magic show, clowns, and, of course, popcorn, hotdogs and apples all of which were met with smiles of delight.



## KEEPING THE MOMENTUM GOING

World Day of Prayer Activities will continue next month when UNICEF Panama will participate in an inter-faith ceremony involving 4,000 students at a school in the capital. With assistance from the Office of the First Lady, the agency will also be publishing selected prayers and/or drawings made by Panamanian children who participated in 2011 World Day of Prayer activities.



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