



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER AND ACTION FOR CHILDREN

ABCs FOR ACTION AND ADVOCACY – GENERAL RESOURCE

Initiated in 2008 by Arigatou International, the **World Day of Prayer and Action for Children**, celebrated on Universal Children’s Day and the anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child – 20 November – connects religious communities and secular organizations in a common endeavor to protect children’s dignity. Through interfaith and advocacy actions inspired by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the opportunity to express hope and determination through prayer, the World Day serves as an interfaith and intercultural platform committed to a world fit for children. Since its launch in 2008, members of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) and other partners have celebrated the World Day in over 97 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania.

The World Day in 2018 provides the opportunity to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of this advocacy initiative by calling attention to and recognizing the value that different faith and secular communities have in realizing children’s rights. The goal is to call on religious communities, leaders of diverse faiths, and civil society organizations to work together to stop all forms of violence against children. World Day activities take many forms, including mobilization and media campaigns, workshops, cultural events, and is often accompanied by religious services and vigils. This year, partners around the world are encouraged to address one or more of these goals to help stop violence against children:

- Ending child sexual exploitation and abuse, including online harassment and exploitation
- Nurturing spirituality and ending violence in child upbringing
- Reaching migrant children, children on the move, and displaced children
- Providing violence-free schools, homes and communities for children
- Protecting children from violent extremism, gang violence and organized crime
- Ending child marriage

The [Panama Declaration](#) comprises ten commitments made at the 2017 GNRC 5th Forum on *Ending Violence Against Children: Faith Communities in Action* and outlines concrete actions for religious communities to promote the eradication of all forms of physical, psychological, and sexual violence against children. We encourage you to use one or more of the commitments as inspiration for your World Day activities.

Meaningful and ethical participation of children and youth is paramount in our actions. Therefore, remember to create a child-friendly environment for children to speak and share their views and ideas about issues that are important to them. Encourage children to participate in the planning and implementation of your World Day actions, as well as in crafting policies, campaigns and workshops related to their well-being. Be sure to follow your organization’s child protection policy and standards, and make sure children’s parents/guardian give their [informed consent](#) for the child’s participation.

HOW TO PLAN YOUR WORLD DAY ACTIVITIES? HERE ARE SOME IDEAS/RESOURCES:

Through PREPARATION

Learn about the key issues: Prepare yourself and your community on some of the key issues currently impacting children around the world, including online child sexual exploitation and abuse, children on the move, corporal punishment, child marriage, and the benefits of positive parenting. For an overall primer, read [A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents](#) by UNICEF, and [Violating Children’s Rights](#) by the International NGO Council on Violence Against Children.

- Learn about the rise of **Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**. See UNICEF’s [study](#) on the risks children encounter while using the internet, ECPAT’s [guide](#) for religious leaders, and the SRSG’s [study](#) on minimizing the harms of technology. See the [summary](#) of the Panel on Online Sexual Exploitation of Children held in May 2017 in Panama, featuring remarks from diverse faith leaders.
[Read the statement](#) of Pope Francis and the [Declaration](#) from the 2017 World Congress: Child Dignity in the Digital World.
- For information on **cyberbullying**, read the [SRSG’s report](#) on tackling this problem, UNICEF’s report on [The State of the World’s Children 2017: Children in a Digital World](#), and UNICEF’s most [recent publication](#) on violence in schools, its consequences, and alternatives to end it.
- Learn about the situation of **children on the move** and the role of faith communities and faith-based organizations through the [UN Global Compact on Refugees](#); the interagency policy note [Implementing the Global Compact on Refugees from a Faith Perspective](#); and the Joint Learning Initiative learning briefs on [The Role of Faith in Building Peaceful Societies and Combating Xenophobia](#); [Spiritual Support to Children on the Move and their Caregivers as a Source of Healing and Resilience](#); and the [Role of Faith in Strengthening the Continuum of Protection for Children on the Move](#).
- Discuss the importance of **Positive Parenting**. Check out Arigatou’s [guide](#), these tips from the [CDC](#), and this [pamphlet](#) based on Hinduism.
- Check out the [guide](#) by Save the Children and partners to learn how to end the widespread and harmful practice of **Corporal Punishment** for working with and within religious communities, and [Ending Corporal Punishment of Children – a handbook for multi-religious gatherings](#).
- Learn about the worldwide problem of **Child Marriage** through ECPAT’s [comprehensive overview](#), UNICEF’s helpful [data sheet](#) and Arigatou’s guide for [religious communities](#).

Through PRAYER

Dedicate a Prayer to Children: Observe the World Day in your religious community by devoting a prayer, sermon, blessing, petition, reflection, or meditation, to the goal of ending violence against children. Prayers can encourage concrete action and send a powerful message of human solidarity for the world’s children. Take this time to recommit your community to working for children’s well-being. Learn [How Prayer Can Help Build a Better World for Children](#) in the most recent publication of Arigatou International Prayer and Action for Children and find examples of prayers [here](#).

Through ACTION

- 1. Organize a forum or awareness-raising event on preventing violence against children:**
Events may include campaigns, roundtables, workshops, debates, discussions, rallies, concerts, exhibitions, recitals, games, film screenings, or crafts.
- 2. Commit to creating a child-friendly religious spaces and child friendly schools:**
Many religious communities around the world have committed to the movement of “Child-Friendly Churches,” which calls on all places of faith and worship to do more to support, protect, and benefit children. Convene a meeting among religious leaders and members of the community to discuss how your religious community could participate in your action. See the World Council of Churches [introduction](#) to get started. Also, learn about Child-Friendly Schools, a campaign for creating more non-discriminatory, democratic and child-centric schools. [Read](#) and spread the word!
- 3. Advocate:** Encourage interfaith collaboration and action by engaging with other faith communities, religious leaders, faith-based and civil society organizations that are child-focused and prepare a statement on main issues of violence affecting children in your context. Whenever possible, try to meet and involve key decision makers in your actions.
- 4. Spread the word on social media:** Use the hashtags [#PrayerandAction](#) [#Dayofthechild](#) [#CommunitiesforEVAC](#) and connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and our Prayer and Action [website](#).
- 5. Join the #Communitychallenge:** The celebration of World Day 2018 addresses violence against children through **community action**. The World Day of Prayer and Action for Children serves as an interfaith and intercultural platform that brings the communities together to end violence against children. Join the #Communitychallenge by posting/sharing **one picture** of your community that reflects your commitment towards ending violence against children. The pictures will be shared through our online platforms and collected for future exhibition and publication. Be creative and spread the word! Make sure children’s parents/guardian give their informed media and [participation consent](#) for the child’s participation.
- 6. Invite others to join you:** Approach your community – local businesses, NGOs, civil society, religious leaders, faith-based organizations, schools, local media – and encourage their involvement and partnership.

For more ideas and support, you are welcome to contact us:

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🌐 prayerandactionforchildren.org

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