

PRAYER FOCUS FOR NOVEMBER

Children of the World

For the month of November we are invited to focus our prayer on the children of the world and their basic human rights.



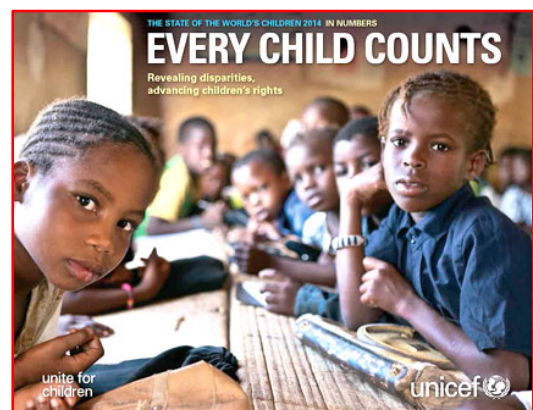
As far back as 20 November 1959 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the **Declaration of the Rights of the Child**. It marked the first major International consensus on the fundamental principles of children's rights. Then, in 1989, world leaders decided that children needed a special convention because people under 18 years of age often need special care and protection, different from the needs of adults. Further, the leaders wanted to ensure that the world recognised that children have human rights too. The **Convention on the Rights of the Child** became the first legally binding International Instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights.

REFLECTION ONE

The basic human rights encompassing all children of the world are: **the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.**

The four core principles of the Convention are **(1) non-discrimination, (2) devotion to the best interest of the child, (3) the right to life, survival and development, and (4) respect for the views of the child.**

(Reference: Social Justice Diary 2014. Australian Catholic Social Justice Council)



Sadly, daily news reports demonstrate that these rights and principles are far from successful implementation across the globe.

Prayer

For those readers who choose, the following is *one* way to offer prayer on behalf of children of the world:

- *Sit in a comfortable position where you can cup your hands in your lap.*
- *Into your cupped hands, slowly allow the faces of children from around the world to appear in your hands – cradle them in safety for a while.*
- *Allow yourself to look into the eyes of these children and see there the story of how their lives have unfolded to this point.*
- *When you are ready, bring your cupped hands up toward your mouth and breathe a blessing on the children in your cupped hands – you might select one of the “Rights” from those in bold type previously to be the blessing.*
- *Having breathed a blessing on these children, just as you would a butterfly, release them from your cupped hands before allowing others to come to mind and to rest in the safety of your cupped hands.*
- *Repeat the process as many times as you choose.*

This way of praying is also most effective when we feel overwhelmed by news reports where we feel helpless in the face of such need and compassion.

REFLECTION TWO



Universal Children’s Day occurs on 20 November, 2014.

Remember:

The Little Children and Jesus

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them. [Mark 10:13-16]

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Reflect:

In the words of the song made popular by Whitney Houston, **Greatest Love of All**, we hear:

“I believe that children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way. Show them all the beauty they possess inside. Give them a sense of pride to make it easier. Let the children’s laughter remind us how we used to be.” (Written by Michael Masser and Linda Creed)

Consider:

On 20 November this year, how can I best engage my prayer to teach children, to show them the beauty inside them, to help them uncover a sense of pride in themselves, and to encourage their laughter?



Perhaps by cradling children of all nationalities, races and creeds in cupped hands while breathing blessings of *life lessons, beauty, pride in self, laughter...*and any other breath-gift would be a valuable contribution to the children of the world and the future of humanity.

Acknowledgements:

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