



Joy & Wonder

A TOOLKIT TO WORK TOGETHER FOR LASTING CHANGE



Early Childhood Development volunteer uses FAMA (Facts, Associations, Meaning, Action) cards in her work with a family in Ghana. The cards aid in the discussion of how to engage and play with babies and young children, skills that are necessary to the child's psycho-social development.

Thank you to our partners for the photos in this toolkit:

Angola: Anglican Church of Angola

Ghana: Anglican Diocesan Development and Relief Organization (ADDRO)

Guatemala: Episcopal Church of Guatemala

Jordan: Holy Land Institute for the Deaf

Kenya: Anglican Church of Kenya, ADS-Nyanza

Malawi: Anglican Council in Malawi (ACM)

Zambia: Zambia Anglican Council Outreach Programs (ZACOP)

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Introduction

A tribe in Africa called Masai offer the words “Cassarian Engeri” at their traditional greeting to one another. It means, “And how are the children?”

They do not ask each other, “How are you?” or “How’s your day?” Instead, they ask about the next generation. The Masai believe that monitoring the well-being of their children is the best way to determine the future health and prosperity of their whole society.

Every child deserves the chance to achieve their full potential.

Episcopal Relief & Development’s work in Early Childhood Development promotes nurturing care that fosters responsive caregiving, good health and nutrition and early learning and play. We also join with our partners to reduce unhealthy environmental factors like poverty, malnutrition and exposure to violence.

This toolkit, called *Joy & Wonder*, explores ways that Episcopal Relief & Development works to achieve these goals. It offers insight into our unique and effective methods, and invites you and your community to join in this important and life-giving work.

This toolkit will also help you become advocates for early childhood wellness in your own churches and communities, placing our youngest community members and those who care for them on your list of prayers and priorities.

This toolkit contains worship materials, study and outreach programs, and links to resources that will help you make a difference with children’s wellness everywhere.

You are an essential member of our global village, working together for lasting change.

This entire toolkit, as well as more information about how you can engage with our work, is available on our website at www.episcopalrelief.org.

Overview of the Toolkit

Visit [Episcopal Relief & Development](#) to view the complete toolkit of prayer, study and outreach, ideas to explore on your own and links to helpful resources from around the church.

How to Begin – Measuring Your Faith Community’s Interest Level and Setting Goals

Make a plan and get started.

Sustain them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen.

– *The Book of Common Prayer, p308*

In Worship: Gratitude and Prayers for Children and Those Who Care for Them

Prayers and plans for use year-round, on Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday, Children’s Sabbath and for special seasonal observances.

Formation: Study and Grow with *Joy & Wonder*

Faith Formation resources to help you learn about Episcopal Relief & Development’s flagship Early Childhood Development program partnership, *Moments That Matter*®, and fun activities to help your community learn how they can be involved in making a difference.

Won’t You Be My Neighbor? Outreach & Creative Community Engagement

This resource packed with ideas based on the *Moments That Matter*® partnership will help you create neighborhood events, build partnerships and expand resources for early childhood caregivers and families in your communities.

Fundraising: Join Us in Making Lasting Change

Learn ways to help your faith community host a successful fundraising campaign for the work of Episcopal Relief & Development. Also, have fun with our *Gifts for Life* program, matching your campaign with individuals, families and teams through fellowship events and creative connections.



How To Begin

"A child's upbringing belongs not to the parents but to the community."

"Whomsoever is not taught by the mother will be taught by the world."

"It takes a village to raise a child."

These African proverbs illustrate why Episcopal Relief & Development is inviting churches and other faith-based groups to join us in prioritizing early childhood development worldwide. We are all a part of the global village, and our entire village benefits from the wellness of every generation. The whole community has an essential role to play in the growth and development of young people.

This work centers on faith, hope and love. We have faith that this is work God calls us to do. We have hope that we can shape the world of today and tomorrow for the youngest children. And we rely on the never-ending supply of love from God who will support our individual and corporate initiatives to make lasting change in early childhood development near and far.

In this section, you will find:

- » *Early Childhood Ministry Parish Survey – Where is your passion & curiosity?*
- » *Early Childhood Development Ministry Individual and Team Pledge and Policy Statement Template*
- » *A Communities of Learning session for children*
- » *A Bible study based on the reflective prayer practice of Lectio Divina*

Other ideas and resources include:

- Meet with your worship team to schedule observances throughout the year, including:
 - * Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday
 - * Children's Sabbath

As you begin this exploration, be sure to identify your closest Episcopal Relief & Development Ministry Partner. They can guide you around the website and help you find the resources you need. If you need help finding your Ministry Partner, email us engagement@episcopalrelief.org

The leadership team should also reach out to other ministry team leaders, including Christian formation and youth leaders, the vestry and wardens, music directors, local campus ministry groups and any other ministry that might intersect with early childhood development. Work together step-by-step to share the joy of achieving your goals.

Thank you for doing what you can to join us in making lasting change.

Episcopal Relief & Development

Measuring Your Faith Community's Interest Level and Setting Goals

Setting goals around using these *Joy & Wonder* materials involves taking the pulse of your community to assess their commitment to making lasting change in the care of children and those who care for them, both locally and abroad. A first step is to discern who among your staff and parishioners are called to take leadership roles in the ministry of Early Childhood Development. A survey is a good place to start, and a sample is included in this section. Together, these leaders can begin to identify their purpose and goals, and the parish can commission them in this important work of leadership and care.

Parish & Community Sample Survey about Early Childhood Development

The first 1,000 days of every child's life are crucial for laying the foundation for future learning, behavior and health. We here at _____ (*community, school or organization name*) are considering a plan to incorporate Early Childhood Development into our _____ (*top priorities/mission statement/goals*) in the upcoming _____ (*budget/season/cycle/program year*).

Partnering with Episcopal Relief & Development, we hope to both support the successful work they are doing across the globe and to discern how we might become engaged in this work, making lasting changes in Early Childhood Development in our own communities.

Please take a moment to let us know which areas of engagement you are personally interested in supporting. This will help ensure that any work we pursue in this area will reflect our community's interest and passion. Thank you

WORSHIP:

I want _____ (*insert community, school or organization name*) to help us, as a community, focus on early childhood development.

I would support (*check those that interest you*):

Attending the annual Episcopal Relief & Development service, typically held on the first Sunday of Lent, highlighting through our prayers proven solutions and hope for Early Childhood Development.

Observing the Children's Sabbath on the third Sunday of October.

Being in conversations about making our prayer and worship gatherings more supportive and welcoming for children aged 0-3 and their caregivers.

Teaching about baptism in our neighborhoods and on social media and welcoming families who are not currently a part of it to celebrate this sacrament with us.

Adding collects, litanies and other prayers to our weekly worship service reminding us to be stewards of the very youngest children in the world and those who care for them.

HOSPITALITY AND FORMATION:

I want _____ (*community*) to teach me more about how we can be more directly involved in (check those that interest you):

Understanding the current status of children aged 0-3 in our community and where _____ (*our community*) can make a difference.

Being in conversations about making our nursery and early Christian formation more intentionally supportive and welcoming of children aged 0-3 and their caregivers.

Creating welcome baskets for newborns with prayers for the parents, information about baptism and practical supplies, gifts, books and other information for children aged 0-3.

Learning about the work Episcopal Relief & Development is doing to make lasting change through *Moments that Matter*[®], how it is improving the lives of children and those who care for them around the world and what we can learn from their research to help our neighbors.

Participating in a book group or Bible study exploring the issues of early childhood development so I can understand the situation more deeply and direct my prayers and other resources toward improving the lives of those most affected.

Creating and resourcing (hospitality, staff, communications, concurrent nursery care) a caregiver's support group for those with children aged 3 and under in their homes.

ENGAGEMENT:

I am interested in _____ (*community*) making other connections in early childhood development, including (check those that interest you):

Making sure that our local food and sundry ministries have sufficient nutrition and supplies, including mental wellness resources for distribution to families caring for children aged 0-3.

Providing and promoting a nursery for much-needed recovery groups for persons meeting in our space with infants.

Partnering with local early childhood development care providers and non-profits in areas like volunteering and supplying crisis nurseries, parent education, Head Start, programs about financial literacy for teen parents, immigration services and other agencies that serve infants and their caregivers.

Beginning/continuing a conversation about hosting an early childhood care center in our space and/or fortifying an existing center or one in our neighborhood.

___ Partnering with Episcopal Relief & Development, helping raise funds for their work, and utilizing their resources and connections to aid communities.

___ Partnering with the Episcopal Public Policy Network to learn more about how governmental interventions and legislation can bring about larger institutional changes for early childhood advocacy.

Please use the remaining space to let us know if you have any other ideas or insights about this new ministry. If you would like our team to reach out to you directly, please include your name and contact information. Thank you.

Setting Goals

Okay – I’ve checked my community for readiness – now what?

Whether you used the survey provided in the toolkit *Joy & Wonder* from Episcopal Relief & Development or simply had a series of conversations with stakeholders around early childhood development, you now have a sense of how interested your community is in pursuing this ministry and at what level.

What if the response was only lukewarm? What are my options?

Observe [Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday](#). It is simple, and the website offers a host of resources. You can incorporate prayers and petitions into a worship service and include the brochures available for free in each worship leaflet. Doing so illuminates the work of Episcopal Relief & Development, which may inspire others to be more responsive next time around.

You can also order and distribute our [Gifts for Life](#) catalogs. This is a fun and hope-filled way to engage your community in Episcopal Relief & Development’s program priorities, including Early Childhood Development.

What if the response was resounding, and people started requesting more staff, space and funding?

You’re gonna need a bigger boat. It’s time to start setting some goals and getting started!

First, your community will need to develop a plan to create or accelerate your Early Childhood Development ministry. Find a time to gather the people who showed interest, even in different areas, and explore with them the creation of a couple of short- and long-term goals. Prioritize the goals based on the interest shown both by the initial surveys and by those who actually attend the meetings. Once you’ve developed a few of these goals, explore questions around each goal, including:

1. SHOULD WE ADJUST OR INNOVATE?

- Do we have an existing intentionality around Early Childhood Development in our community?
- Is it effective, reaching those it needs to reach and relevant to what our community has expressed as its interests?
- Can this current program be improved?
- Do we have the resources and capacity to make the necessary adjustments? If not, are there other community programs that offer these services that we can direct our faith community to?

2. WHERE SHOULD WE START TAKING ACTION?

- Contact your closest Ministry Partner from Episcopal Relief & Development and invite them to a meeting. If you need help finding your Diocesan Ministry Partner, contact us at engagement@episcopalrelief.org
- Articulate your goals as a team.
- Prioritize your resources—time, space, prayers, people and money—accordingly.
- Outline action steps, making sure that your program reflects early childhood development best practices and standards.
- Assign roles.
- Set timelines.
- When your team has approved the plan, implement it, then refine and adjust it as needed.
- Consider setting regular benchmarks for additional evaluations and refinements as needed.



Learning to Communicate at the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf. Episcopal Relief & Development partners with the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, an institution of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

Individual and Team Pledge & Mission Statement

The quality of nurturing care that children receive during the first 1,000 days of life affects them in ways that last a lifetime. That's why investing in parents, caregivers and young children during the critical 0–3 age is so important. We are all a part of the global village, and our entire village benefits from the wellness of every generation. The whole community has an essential role to play in the growth and development of its young people.

You may already have a ministry team working with very young children and their caregivers. It might be those who guide your nursery, teach in your classrooms, lead intergenerational worship and fellowship, or possibly convene a parent's support group. You may also have an early childhood center affiliated with your church, school or organization who would benefit from your making early childhood development a priority.

Inviting these existing leaders and others into working teams to make an intentional pledge to prioritize early childhood development can help you set goals and begin your work. It might even inspire the entire community to join in for a season, partnering with other community organizations and Episcopal Relief & Development, to expand the impact they can make in the lives of children near and far.

Here are sample pledges you are invited to modify and take privately, and/or share with your ministry teams and faith community.

Pledge for an Individual:

As a committed advocate for early childhood development, I (*name*) pledge to pay attention to the needs of very young children and their caregivers in my family, neighborhood, and at (*faith community*). Seeking out volunteer and giving opportunities, I will actively support others in leadership, caregiving, and advocacy roles, providing a supportive environment for them and those they serve. I will propose and support initiatives like observing Children's Sabbath, Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday, and other local events and campaigns to expand awareness of this essential work.

(Name)

(Date)

Pledge for an Early Childhood Development Ministry Team and/or Faithful Community:

We (*ministry team and/or faithful community*) are committed to protecting the very youngest children, and their caregivers near and far. Guided by the wisdom and research of Episcopal Relief & Development, we will focus on their five key areas of making a difference for lasting change. In partnership with other local faith institutions and community leaders, we will set goals for our (*ministry team and/or faithful community*) team and community that serve as building blocks for a child's full and healthy development by:

- **Equipping and supporting parents and primary caregivers** to deliver the highest quality care, ensuring their children are reaching important physical, mental and emotional milestones. This includes supporting programs like Parents as Teachers and other training opportunities for caregivers, and being intentional about the environments and positive support the programs we offer our youngest community members.
- **Preventing disease and protecting the health of children** by practicing high safety and wellness standards with our youngest members, including a regular inventory of furnishings, nutrition, hygiene practices and adult supervision. Looking for ways to connect with other organizations who also provide healthy guidelines for the very young, including possibly hosting childcare classes, infant CPR training, and volunteering at local clinics and shelters for very young children.
- **Creating opportunities for families to increase their income** by learning more about Episcopal Relief & Development's [community-led savings](#) and loan groups so caregivers can better provide for themselves and their children.
- **Improving food security and nutrition for children and families** by making sure any food distributions (fellowship, outreach, community events) take into account the needs of children aged 0-3. Making our kitchen available for healthy cooking classes, identifying families with young children to participate in vegetable gardens, and encouraging healthy options as snacks (in addition to the fun stuff) when collecting special holiday and school food items.
- **Protecting children and families by equipping community leaders**, including faith leaders, to support families and caregivers while using their status in the community to reduce unhealthy factors like neglect and exposure to violence, and promoting positive behaviors. Join with local foster care agencies, children's shelters, and crisis nurseries to provide support for families in need.

We will also support and partner with agencies supporting this work, including [Episcopal Relief & Development](#), [Episcopal Church Creation Care](#), and the [Episcopal Public Policy Network](#).

Using the *Joy & Wonder* toolkit, and learning from those who collaborate with us on this goal, we will spend (*a year, a season, a triennial etc.*) making early childhood development a priority in our faithful community.

(*ministry team and/or team chair*)

(*Date*)

Communities of Learning

As your congregation is discerning its role in early childhood development and/or as your team is beginning its work, we recommend taking together the Communities of Learning session for Children. The session is part of Episcopal Relief & Development's [Communities of Learning curriculum](#). Intended for small group gatherings, online or in person, the objective is to help participants grow in awareness of, and desire to serve, the populations and priorities aligned with the mission of Episcopal Relief & Development. As a faith formation curriculum, it offers group support and asks participants to be open to where God may be leading in the work of advocating for the wellness of all children, near and far. As part of the session, you might invite your Diocesan Episcopal Relief & Development representative to make a presentation. You might also include a local leader from Head Start or a neighboring preschool.

The session for Children includes a PowerPoint or PDF with notes for the leader or presenter. You can decide which works best for your group. A [facilitator's guide](#) provides formation objectives, learning goals, community agreements, preparation tips and additional resources.

Presenter Notes

These presenter notes correlate to the Episcopal Relief & Development [PDF](#) or [PowerPoint](#) presentation.

SLIDE 1 - TITLE SLIDE

SLIDE 2 – INTRODUCTION

Leader: Read or paraphrase introduction.

SLIDE 3 – PRAYER

Leader: Invite participants to join in the prayer.

SLIDE 4 - GROUP RULE OF LIFE

Leader: Explain that there are three ways in which the learning community will commit to a Rule of Life during the sessions. In other words, the sacred context of each session is understood to include prayer and meditation, together and at home.

SLIDE 5 - PRIORITIES FOR CHILDREN

Leader: This session begins with a description of our topic. Read aloud or invite a reader.

SLIDE 6 - OPENING PRAYER - YOUTH SESSION

Leader: In this Ritual of Dedication, invite online participants to light a candle, take some deep breaths and pray the opening prayer aloud, together. Let us pray...

SLIDE 7 - OPENING PRAYER - ADULT SESSION

Leader: In this Ritual of Dedication, invite online participants to light a candle, take some deep breaths, and pray the opening prayer aloud, together. Let us pray...

SLIDE 8 – INTRODUCTIONS

Leader: Invite each participant to share their name and a word for what is on their heart today. (*Zoom group: If the group is 10+, you might invite participants to write this in the chat instead.*)

SLIDE 9 - SCRIPTURE READING

Leader: Read the Scripture aloud.

SLIDE 10 - GUIDED MEDITATION

Leader: I invite you, now, to check that you are in a comfortable position, loosening and softening your body as needed. (*Zoom group: invite group to turn off cameras, if they wish.*)

You may close your eyes or soften your gaze, whichever feels more comfortable for you...Begin to settle yourself by noticing and putting aside any concerns, unfinished plans or tensions from this day...as we take the turn inward, putting ourselves in the presence of God...

You may take a few long deep, cleansing breaths, tuning in to the movement of your breath collecting your attention...

Breathing in the breath of Spirit, breathing out compassion and care.

Breathing in the breath of the Spirit, breathing out welcome and generosity.

When you notice thoughts or emotions arising, simply take note and then return your attention, very gently, to your breathing...there is no need to push thoughts or feelings away. Instead, maintain a posture of welcome to your own interior movements.

Continue attending to the breath as you join, in the silence of your heart, in these prayers for the healing of the world:

May we be in loving service to all.
May we be tenacious in humility and deeper understanding.
May we promote the dignity of every human being.
May we understand ourselves to be part of the natural world.
May all children be encouraged to grow and flourish.
May all women be encouraged to grow and flourish.
May we reverence God in all of God's creation.
May all people find relief from struggle and pain.

May our compassion and hope radiate to all forms of life.
And may our faithful witness be for the healing of the world.

Continue breathing, imagining that with each exhale, you are widening your circle of concern, to include the whole world, from those closest to you to those furthest away.

When you are ready, set an intention for how you would participate in today's session...and slowly return your awareness to this community gathered.

SLIDE 11 - LEARNING TOGETHER

Leader: In this session, we are exploring how Episcopal Relief & Development helps communities nurture healthy children under age six and why the first 1,000 days of a child's life are so important to their overall development.

SLIDE 12 - THE LESSON

Leader: Read aloud.

SLIDES 13 -14 - PROTECTING HEALTH AND PREVENTING DISEASE

Leader: Read or invite someone to read the description.

SLIDE 15 - EMPOWERING PARENTS

Leader: Read or invite someone to read the description.

SLIDE 16 - PROTECTING PARENTS

Leader: Read or invite someone to read the description.

SLIDE 17 - INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO

Leader: Let's take a look at how these priorities play out in community. Video is less than three minutes.

SLIDE 18 - USING MUTUAL INVITATION FOR SHARING

To ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak, we will proceed in the following way:

- The leader or a designated person will share first. After that person has spoken, he or she then invites another to share. After the next person has spoken, that person is given the privilege to invite another to share.
- If you are not ready to share yet, say, "I pass for now," and we will invite you to share later on. If you don't want to say anything at all, simply say, "I pass" and proceed to invite another to share. We will do this until everyone has been invited.

The Mutual Invitation Process is used as a catalyst to encourage all who wish to share to do so. As group members become more accustomed to using this tool, they make connections with everyone in the session because they invite each speaker by name. When Mutual Invitation is used, it encourages deep and holy listening to one another because there is no conversation until everyone has spoken once.

SLIDE 19 - QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION - YOUTH

Leader: Offer your response first and then select the next participant to share (i.e., mutual invitation.)

SLIDE 20 - QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION - ADULT

Leader: Offer your response first and then select the next participant to share (i.e., mutual invitation.)

SLIDE 21 - GROUP REFLECTION/BRAINSTORM

Leader: Invite the group to brainstorm ideas for ongoing learning and action (popcorn style.)

SLIDE 22 - PRAY

Leader: Remind the group of their commitment to ongoing prayer (Rule of Life.)

SLIDE 23 - CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: Invite participants to pray together.

SLIDE 24 - AT HOME

Leader: Encourage participants to discover additional online resources in their favorite learning modalities.

Ted Talk: (<https://bit.ly/3Pgy5tC>)

Art: (<https://bit.ly/3yLiGMb>)

Poetry: (<https://bit.ly/3kx3w8k>)

SLIDE 25 – EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

Leader: Thank you for your participation and support of this important work.

Lectio Divina Bible Study for Leaders

As your group is forming, this Bible study in the style of Lectio Divina might be a useful tool. For individual or group use, it focuses on how light, peace and justice are central to the care of children.

Scripture: Matthew 5:14-16

Author & Presenter: Vijula Arulanantham from Sri Lanka

Sit for a few moments in quiet stillness. Focus on your breathing, taking slow, deep breaths. Try to turn your focus away from outside thoughts and simply focus on your breathing. Sit in quiet for as long as you would like.

When you are ready, read the following passage of scripture. As you read, allow the ear of your heart to listen for a word or phrase that resonates with you.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. —Matthew 5:14-16

After you have completed the reading, allow that word or phrase to resound within you. If you are in a group, take turns sharing only that word or phrase.

Repeat the word or phrase you have chosen in prayerful silence.

After a short period of reflection, read the scripture a second time. This time, reflect on any thoughts or feelings that come up for you while reading the scripture again. What might God be asking you through the reading of this scripture?

After reading for a second time, take a few moments in silence to continue this personal reflection.

When you are ready, watch [this video](#) featuring a personal reflection from one of Episcopal Relief & Development's partners.

Consider how you and those in the group are inspired to come together and partner with the work of Episcopal Relief & Development's Early Childhood Development initiatives locally and through our [website](#).



In Worship: Gratitude and Prayers for Children and Those Who Care for Them

How we pray shapes what we believe. This ancient concept is lived out when we offer to God our hopes and dreams for children and those who care for them.

Across the years of caring for children around the world, Episcopal Relief & Development has accumulated intercessions, litanies and prayers that help us surround the work of caring for children with prayer.

In this section, you will find:

Resources for Year-Round Worship

- » *The Daily Office: Morning, Midday, Intergenerational Cross-Cultural Evening, Compline*
- » *Intergenerational Eucharist*
- » *Children's Chapel*
- » *Prayer for Children & Caregivers*
- » *Children's Litany*
- » *Collect and Prayers of the People for Children's Chapel and Intergenerational Worship*
- » *Sample Sermon for Children's Chapel or Intergenerational Worship*

Resources for Special and Seasonal Observances

- » *Back-to-School Prayer*
- » *St. Nicholas Day*
- » [*Advent Wreath Prayers & Reflections*](#)
- » [*Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday*](#), celebrated on the first Sunday in Lent

Resources for Year-Round Worship

The Daily Office: Morning Prayer

Written and adapted by Jamie Martin-Currie, M.S.Ed.

Gracious and loving God, we are reminded through the lessons and words of your son, Jesus Christ, that we are called to share our love with others, knowing that they are your beloved children. **Amen.**

PSALM 95:1-7

O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it,
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.
O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

Glory to the Father and the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now: and shall be forever. Amen. *Please observe a moment of silence.*

PSALM 90:2

Before the mountains were born, and before you created the earth and the world, you are God. You have always been, and you will always be.

COMPASSION PRAYER

by J. Bradley Wigger, adapted

O God of Moses, let your favor rest upon us, and bless the world for a thousand years and a million more.
How long will evil thrive and hatred flourish?
How long does it take for compassion to rule humanity's heart?
Sweep sin away like a bad dream we pray, and let joy grow and never fade away.
May the morning of your constant love come quickly.
May the day soon break, filled with the glad faces of thriving babies and flourishing children.

A READING FROM MATTHEW 22:36-40

The Pharisee asked, "Teacher, which command in the law is the most important?" Jesus answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind.' This is the first and most important command. And the second command is like the first: 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' All the law and the writings of the prophets depend on these two commands."

CANTICLE 20

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only son of God, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of God; receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High,

Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God. Amen.

PRAYERS AND INTERCESSIONS

We thank you, Jesus, for the people who mother and father us.

We thank you for the gift of love.

We give thanks for all the people in our families who help take care of us.

We thank you for the gift of love.

We thank you, Jesus, for teaching us how to love our neighbors as ourselves.

We thank you for the gift of love.

We thank you, Jesus, for music that inspires us to sing and dance.

We thank you for the gift of love.

We thank you, Jesus, for the patience of our caregivers to listen.

We thank you for the gift of love.

We thank you, Jesus, for those who help us make sense of the world with words.

We thank you for the gift of love.

We thank you, Jesus, for those who pray with us.

We thank you for the gift of love.

We thank you, Jesus, for healthy food to help us grow strong.

We thank you for the gift of love.

We especially thank you, Jesus, for the gift of love we give to others. We ask you to bless all children on the earth with gifts that nurture them so that they can thrive as children of God. Amen.

THE CREED

We believe in God the Father.
We believe in Christ the Son.
We believe in the Holy Spirit.
We are the Church and we stand as one.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

CONCLUDING COLLECT

Holy and ever living God,
By your power we are created
and by your love we are redeemed;
guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,
that we may give ourselves to your service
and live this day in love to one another and to you;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**



Mom and her baby at Bible study, where participants studied the protection of children as outlined in Matthew 25. Faith leaders who carry the message of caring for children help reinforce the training brought by Early Childhood Development volunteers who work with parents and caregivers in their communities

The Daily Office: Midday Prayer

Written and adapted by Jamie Martin-Currie, M.S.Ed.

God is spirit. Those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth.
Great is the Lord and worthy of all praise.

Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom, and honor, power and might, be to
our God forever and ever!

Amen.

Love one another, for love is of God, and whoever loves is born of God
and knows God. Spirit of God, search our hearts.

PSALM 86:11

Lord, teach me what you want me to do.
And I will live by your truth.
Teach me to respect you completely.

PRAYER

Learning to Walk by J. Bradley Wigger, adapted

O God of steadfast love, trusting you, we devote our hearts to learning and our lives to walking.
Teach us the truth, that we may walk with courage.
Teach us mercy, that we may walk with humility.
Teach us forgiveness, that we may walk with compassion.
Teach us grace, that we may walk with strength.
Teach us wonder, that we may walk with praise.
Teach of goodness, that we may walk with those in need.
O God of steadfast love, learning from you, may we walk well.

A READING FROM ISAIAH 12:2-6

God is the one who saves me.
I trust him. I am not afraid.
The Lord, the Lord, gives me strength and makes me sing.
He has saved me.”
You will receive your salvation with joy.

You will take it as you would draw water from a well.
At that time you will say,
“Praise the Lord, and worship him. Tell everyone what he has done.
Tell them how great he is.
Sing praise to the Lord, because he has done great things.
Let all the world know what he has done.
Shout and sing for joy, you people of Jerusalem
The Holy One of Israel does great things before your eyes.”

Glory to the Father and the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now: and shall be forever. Amen.

A READING FROM ROMANS 5:5

And this hope will never disappoint us, because God has poured out his love to fill our hearts. God gave us his love through the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to us.

CANTICLE

Benedicite

Let the whole creation bless the Lord: Praise and exalt our God for ever.
Bless the Lord you heavens: Praise and exalt our God forever.
Bless the Lord you angels of the Lord: Bless the Lord all you heavenly hosts.

Glory to the Father and the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now: and shall be forever. Amen.

THE CREED

We believe in one God who made all things.
We believe in Jesus, the only son of God, who saves us.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us grow to be like Jesus.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYERS

Loving God, who promises to be faithful and righteous, help us to make your vision real for all young children so that they are valued for who they are, not who they will be, encouraged and supported, not forgotten or neglected, listened to and challenged, not ignored or stifled, free to play safely, not forced to grow up before their time.

Loving God, wise parent to us all, inspire us to be people who let the young play, encourage them to grow, and enable them to flourish, in communities of faithful people, sharing wisdom and joy. **Amen.**

Blessed God, at this hour you hung upon the cross, stretching out your loving arms; grant that all the children of the earth may be drawn to your uplifted love; for your kingdom's sake. **Amen.**



Moms with their infants gathered to hear a presentation on health, covering the prevention of diseases such as malaria, diarrhea, and pneumonia, from Ghanaian Health Services and ADDRO, an Episcopal Relief & Development partner in Ghana.

The Daily Office: Intergenerational Cross-Cultural Evening Prayer

Written and adapted by Maximillion Elliott-Quinerly

The poor you will have with you always.

We will feed, clothe, and shelter the poor.

More importantly, we will advocate and fight in solidarity for the liberation of all God's people, from all forms of poverty and oppression.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. **Amen.**

The priest alone standing or deacon kneeling

Almighty God, have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep you in eternal life. Amen.

THE INVITATORY AND PSALTER

O God, creator and sustainer of all, as we come to the end of this evening with love and adoration, we lift our hearts to you.

PSALM 92: 1-10

It is good to praise the LORD, to sing praises to God Most High.

It is good to tell of your love in the morning and of your loyalty at night.

It is good to praise you with the ten-stringed lyre and with the soft-sounding harp.

LORD, you have made me happy by what you have done.

I will sing for joy about what your hands have done.

LORD, you have done such great things!

How deep are your thoughts!

Stupid people don't know these things.

Fools don't understand.

Wicked people grow like the grass.

Evil people seem to do well.

But they will be destroyed forever.
But, LORD, you will be honored forever.
LORD, surely your enemies, surely your enemies will be destroyed.
All who do evil will be scattered.
But you have made me as strong as a wild ox.
You have poured fine oils on me.

THE LESSONS

A reading from Genesis 1:1-2, 26-30

In the beginning God created the sky and the earth. The earth was empty and had no form. Darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit was moving over the water...

Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image and likeness. And let them rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky. Let them rule over the tame animals, over all the earth and over all the small crawling animals on the earth."

So God created human beings in his image. In the image of God he created them. He created them male and female. God blessed them and said, "Have many children and grow in number. Fill the earth and be its master. Rule over the fish in the sea and over the birds in the sky. Rule over every living thing that moves on the earth."

God said, "Look, I have given you all the plants that have grain for seeds. And I have given you all the trees whose fruits have seeds in them. They will be food for you. I have given all the green plants to all the animals to eat. They will be food for every wild animal, every bird of the air and every small crawling animal." And it happened.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

We will reflect on the lesson in silent meditation as we listen to the Canticule:

[Click to listen](#)

A READING FROM REVELATION 7:9-12

Then I looked, and there was a great number of people. There were so many people that no one could count them. They were from every nation, tribe, people, and language of the earth. They were all standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They wore white robes and had palm branches in their hands. They were shouting in a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." The elders and the four living things were there. All the angels were standing around them and the

throne. The angels bowed down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God. They were saying, "Amen! Praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power, and strength belong to our God forever and ever. Amen!"

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

We will reflect on the lesson in silent meditation as we listen to the Cantic: The Church's One Foundation

[Click to listen](#) - #525 in the Hymnal 1982

THE APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead;

He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

Amen.

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

God who created humankind in your very image and likeness

Your steadfast love endures forever.

God from whose abundance and grace provides all that is truly needed

Your steadfast love endures forever.

God whose covenant is true and sure

Your steadfast love endures forever.

God of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, and Keturah. God, who takes those things that may be meant to harm and works them together for your good, we pray that as this evening comes to a close, you find our hearts fixed on you and our spirit inclined to your will. Grant us peace this night as we prepare to rest, that we may rise in the morning with the sun/Son, and be about your business.

PRAYER AND INTERCESSIONS (SILENT OR ALOUD)

Loving, liberating, and life-giving God, by your grace you have brought us safely to the end of this day. As we gather together in your Name, we trust that your presence is with us, that you are for us, and from creation to the final consummation, your steadfast love will endure. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, guide us with your Wisdom, govern us with your Grace, and hold our lives eternally boundless in your love, for the Glory of your Holy Name. **Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

**Canticles may be altered according to congregational worship style, talent and gifts.*

The Daily Office: Compline

Written and adapted by the Rev. Dr. Kathy Bozzuti-Jones and the Rev. Dr. Mark Bozzuti-Jones

*Let us be quiet.
Let us quiet our minds and settle our thoughts,
suspending our plans and worries, for a little while.
Let us open our hearts to God's loving care for all children,
especially the most vulnerable, and come into stillness.*

Those who worship God must worship God in spirit and in truth. —John 4:24

God is Love. If it is not about Love, it is not about God. God is Love.

Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.

God is Love. If it is not about Love, it is not about God. God is Love.

You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth.

God is Love. If it is not about Love, it is not about God. God is Love.

Great is the Lord and worthy of all praises.

God is Love. If it is not about Love, it is not about God. God is Love.

Beloved, let us love one another because love is from God and all who love know God.

God is Love. If it is not about Love, it is not about God. God is Love.

Blessed be God who has brought us to the closing of this day.

Loving God, we rest in Your holy presence.

For the next few minutes, let us pause and reflect silently on the day using the following form:

EXAMEN (REFLECTION ON THE DAY)

1. Become aware of God's presence.
2. Review the day with gratitude. Recall moments, encounters, conversations...
3. Call to mind your emotions, in the good moments and the challenging moments.
4. Choose one experience from the day. Offer a prayer of thanks, pardon or guidance.
5. Invite the Holy Spirit to help you face tomorrow as a child of God.

PSALM 62

For God alone my soul waits in silence,
for my hope is from God.
God alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
On God rests my deliverance and my honor;
my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.
Trust in God at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before God; God is a refuge for us. Selah
Glory to the Father and the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now: and shall be
forever. **Amen.**

Please observe a moment of silence.

A READING

Mark 6:30-31

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.

(OR)

Matthew 11:28

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Please observe a moment of silence

Choose one or more of the following prayers:

Now is the time for stillness.

Now is the time to set aside any ideas of separateness from God or one another,
and to rest in God's presence, here and now.

We hold in our hearts our brothers and sisters struggling to grow, to learn,
and to thrive in harsh conditions of hunger and need.

We ask for inspiration to become involved in protecting and empowering all children at risk,
as well as their parents and families. **Amen.**

(OR)

At the end of a day of working and dancing, of receiving and giving,
of light and shadow, of joy and of suffering,
both personal and social, give us Your peace, O Holy One.

Give rest to our bodies, replenish our spirits, and restore our souls.

Open our hearts and imaginations to the struggles of vulnerable children and the caregivers who nurture
them.

Unite us all in love and service.

May our shared desires to live lovingly awaken your Spirit within us
and find expression in all that we do. **Amen.**

(OR)

Fill us with your Spirit, O God, as we lift our hearts to You this night.

Guide us in the morning light, to walk in your way, and to tell the truth,
to ourselves and to others,

about whether we are actually on the path of Love.

May we become the world that we deeply desire and long for
through loving action in our daily lives,

in our families and partnerships, in our communities and connections.

Bless all who bring positive change to the lives of children and families
struggling with access to good nutrition, healthcare,

and the opportunity to grow into their fullness

as unique and beautiful expressions of God's Love. **Amen.**

CANTICLE

Nunc Dimittis

Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace.

Now, Master, let your servant go in peace.

You have fulfilled your promise. My own eyes have seen your salvation,

which you have prepared in the sight of all peoples. A light to bring the Gentiles from darkness;

the glory of your people Israel.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. **Amen.**

Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYERS

Be with us where we are at the end of this day, O God. May your divine inspiration move in us and through us as we rest in the hope of another new day. And when we awaken, may justice be our way. May every child step into the fullness of Your vision of human flourishing for all. May we be gifted with the grace to see the holy everywhere and to serve the world with hearts transformed by compassionate care and just action, on behalf of the poor and marginalized. **Amen.**

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Those who worship God must worship God in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24)

God is Love. If it is not about Love, it is not about God. God is Love.



A young boy, in Ghana while his parents attend a health workshop sponsored by Ghanaian Health Service and the Anglican Diocesan Development and Relief Organization.

Intergenerational Eucharist

Written and adapted by Lisa Puccio and Jamie Martin-Currie, M.S. Ed.

The people's responses are in bold

OPENING SONG (See suggested songs and hymns below)

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever.

We can love God with all our hearts.

We can love God with all our souls.

We can love God with all our minds.

We can love our neighbors as ourselves.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

God who is always with us, we pray for healthy food to eat, beautiful music that moves us, relationships that bond us, for play with friends and grown-ups, and for the gift of listening.

Thank you for these ways to care for each other and inspire us to continue to share in your love.

Amen.

GOSPEL READING

Homily

Jesus began his ministry after he was baptized by John in the River Jordan, and that's when our ministry begins too. When we're baptized, we are made ready to serve God. Even if we are just babies, our baptism makes us part of God's family and turns us into his helpers.

When we're baptized, the people who love us make promises with us and for us to do the work that Jesus taught people to do. We promise to respect and love our neighbors, to follow Jesus, and to help those in need. These are important and serious promises, but God gives us people to help us keep the promises.

Today we're going to think about neighbors that we will probably never meet but are part of God's big family. Children around the world want to grow up healthy and strong and their families love them just like your family loves you. But not everyone has the things they need to grow up healthy and strong, and that's when we can help be good neighbors.

Children and grown-ups need healthy food and people to love. We all need someone to listen to us and someone to play with. We need music and laughter, friends and hugs and prayers. Most of us have the things we need, and there are people who work to help everyone have the things they need. These helpers go around the world to be teachers and friends to families who want to learn about growing up safe and strong. We can help too by praying for children and families who are missing the things they need.

Praying is a good way to be a helper, and a good way to keep your promise to God. You can also tell your friends that you are praying for children and families who need help. You can be thankful for all the things that you have and learn about how people around the world grow and learn in different ways. Our church, and other churches like ours, are helpers too. We send money and prayers to Episcopal Relief & Development. This way we can share with families who are learning to grow and be healthy. The people who work for Episcopal Relief & Development want us to all work together to better know our neighbors.

We are all part of God's big family. Be thankful for neighbors we haven't ever met, who live far away, but who know that we care about them.

THE CREED

These are the things we believe.

We believe in God, who made everything.

We believe in Jesus, God's son, who loves us.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is always with us helping us to love each other.

Now we pray for others.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray for the life of the world...

For our loved ones ... those whom we know and hold in our hearts, and all of your children who are unknown to us but always known to you. Help us keep the needs of all, especially the youngest amongst us, in our prayers. Bond us through your love and inspire us to action alongside the voiceless. God of love,
Receive our prayer.

For those who teach us... our teachers at school and church, our family at home, and in all places we learn and grow. Help us to listen and pray with patience as we learn from God and one another. God our teacher,
Receive our prayer.

For those who lead us... give the leaders of our nations, towns, communities, and homes wisdom to serve people of all ages in love and peace. Give us all the language and intention to share your love in the world. God who guides us, **Receive our prayer.**

For the sick and poor... We pray for access that meets the needs of those who do not have enough. For nutritious food, housing, loving relationships, and all of the things that help us to thrive. God of the vulnerable, **Receive our prayer.**

For ourselves... Thanksgiving for play, for music that moves us and all of the good things you bless us with. Inspire us to dwell in the stories of others and respond to the needs of our neighbors as you have taught us. God who walks with us, **Receive our prayer.**

Exchange the Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Offering

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Holy God, we thank you for everything you have given us:

This beautiful world, our families and friends and our gifts and abilities.

Especially we thank you for sending us Jesus, your Son.

Jesus came and took care of the lonely and the sick,

The poor and the people who were left out.

And he showed us how to love one another.

We learned from Jesus to put you first God, to love you and to listen for your word to us.

Jesus followed your word even to the cross, showing us that God's love can overcome even death and bring new life. For all of this, we praise you, saying:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

On the night before he died, Jesus sat at the table with his friends. He gave them bread and said, "Take this bread. Whenever you eat it, I will be with you. Then he took the cup and said, "Whenever you drink it, I will be with you." Now we offer this bread and this wine and ourselves at this table, in faith remembering that:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

We ask that your Holy Spirit come to this table and fill this bread and this cup with God's powerful love that can make all things new. Remember _____, _____, _____ for whom we pray this day. We pray that we too will be filled with the Spirit and joined together as one people blessed and filled with hope. We pray this giving honor and praise to God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

And now in the words that Jesus taught us to pray:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

[Alleluia.] Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

Therefore let us keep the feast. [Alleluia.]

Post Communion Prayer

Holy God, you have welcomed us into the family of Jesus, your son, and you have given us spiritual food to nourish our body and soul. Send us out into the world to make all things new. Give us strength, courage, and hope to love and serve you with grateful hearts through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song

Concluding Collect

God, we thank you for always being with us. Open and transform our hearts that we might connect more deeply with the needs of others and be moved to be your love and care in the world. Help us to keep courage as we learn, share, and give. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

CLOSING SONG

Suggested Playlist

Songs

“Bare Necessities” from Disney’s *Jungle Book*

“What the World Needs Now Is Love”

“Happy” by Pharrell Williams

“Can’t Stop This Feeling” by Justin Timberlake (from the *Trolls* movie)

“Count on Me” by Bruno Mars

“What a Wonderful World” by Louis Armstrong

“Lean on Me” by Bill Withers

“Best Day of My Life” by American Authors

Hymns

“Sweet, Sweet Spirit”

“This Little Light of Mine”

“We are Marching in the Light of God”

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

“Morning has Broken”

“This Is the Day”

“I’ve Got Peace Like a River”

“Let There Be Peace on Earth (and Let it Begin with Me)”

Children's Chapel: An Order of Service

Written and adapted by Lisa Puccio and Jamie Martin-Currie, M.S. Ed.

OPENING COLLECT

God who is love; we pray in thanksgiving for the ways you nurture us. We pray for children everywhere and for the grown-ups who care for them. That they, with open hearts, continue to look, listen and feel for ways to grow, learn, share and give. Amen.

HOMILY

Jesus began his ministry after he was baptized by John in the River Jordan, and that's when our ministry begins, too. When we're baptized, we are made ready to serve God. Even if we are just babies, our baptism makes us part of God's family and turns us into his helpers.

When we're baptized, the people who love us make promises with us and for us to do the work that Jesus taught people to do. We promise to respect and love our neighbors, to follow Jesus and to help those in need. These are important and serious promises, but God gives us people to help us keep these promises.

Today, we're going to think about neighbors who we will probably never meet but are part of God's big family. Children around the world want to grow up healthy and strong, and their families love them just like your family loves you. But not everyone has the things they need to grow up healthy and strong, and that's when we can help be good neighbors.

Children and grown-ups need healthy food and people to love. We all need someone to listen to us and someone to play with. We need music and laughter, friends and hugs and prayers. Most of us have the things we need, and there are people who work to help everyone have the things they need. These helpers go around the world to be teachers and friends to families who want to learn about growing up safe and strong. We can help, too, by praying for children and families who are missing the things they need.

Praying is a good way to be a helper and a good way to keep your promise to God. You can also tell your friends that you are praying for children and families who need help. You can be thankful for all the things that you have and learn about how people around the world grow and learn in different ways.

Our church, and other churches like ours, are helpers, too. We send money and prayers to Episcopal Relief & Development. In this way, we can share with families who are learning to grow and be healthy. The people who work for Episcopal Relief & Development want us to all work together to know our neighbors better.

We are all part of God's big family. Be thankful for neighbors we haven't ever met, who live far away but know that we care about them.

SIMPLIFIED CREED

Storyteller: This is what we believe.

All: We believe in one God who made us and all things.

We believe in Jesus, the only son of God, who saves us.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us grow to be like Jesus.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray for the life of the world... for our loved ones, those whom we know and hold in our hearts, and all of your children across the world. Bond us in your love. God of love, **Receive our prayer.**

For those who teach us... our teachers at school and church, our parents and family at home, and in all places we learn. Help us to listen with patience as we grow. God our teacher, **Receive our prayer.**

For those who lead us... give the leaders of our nations, towns and communities wisdom to serve people in love and peace. Give us all the language to share your love in the world. God who guides us, **Receive our prayer.**

For the sick and poor... We pray for access that meets the needs of those who do not have enough. For nutritious food, housing, loving relationships and all of the things that help us to thrive. God of the vulnerable, **Receive our prayer.**

For ourselves... Thanksgiving for playing with friends and grown-ups, for music that moves us and all of the good things you bless us with. Inspire us to respond to the needs of our neighbors as you have taught us. God who walks with us, **Receive our prayer.**

CONFESSION

Storyteller: We are sorry for the things that we've done wrong
and for the things we should have done but didn't.
We will try our best to love you and follow you.

All: Amen.

Storyteller: God loves us and forgives us and helps us.

CONCLUDING COLLECT

God, we thank you for always being with us. Open and transform our hearts so that we might connect more deeply with the needs of others and be moved to be your love and care in the world. Help us to keep courage as we learn, share and give. **Amen.**

CLOSING SONG

Suggested Playlist

Songs

“Bare Necessities” from Disney’s *Jungle Book*

“What the World Needs Now Is Love”

“Happy” by Pharrell Williams

“Can’t Stop This Feeling” by Justin Timberlake (from the *Trolls* movie)

“Count on Me” by Bruno Mars

“What a Wonderful World” by Louis Armstrong

“Lean on Me” by Bill Withers

“Best Day of My Life” by American Authors

Hymns

“Sweet, Sweet Spirit”

“This Little Light of Mine”

“We are Marching in the Light of God”

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

“Morning has Broken”

“This Is the Day”

“I’ve Got Peace Like a River”

“Let There Be Peace on Earth (and Let it Begin with Me)”

A Prayer for Children & Caregivers

Written by Meredith Scott and Jamie Martin-Currie, M.S.Ed.

Hear our prayers, O Lord, for the vulnerable children of the earth as they survive the harsh realities of this world. We grieve for those living in communities of constant hardship where children struggle every day.

Let your light shine upon them and keep them from the darkness.

Give strength and courage to the caregivers who nurture these children.

Walk beside them on all difficult journeys.

When they are weary, carry them.

Protect their bodies from ailments and heal those already sick.

Guide them to places of comfort, care and kindness.

Merciful Father, open our hearts and minds to persevere in service to the needs of others.

We lovingly ask that you grant us this prayer, for the sake of your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.



Episcopal Relief & Development has been working with our partner, the Zambia Anglican Council (ZACOP), to create safe spaces for children to grow and thrive. The program's holistic approach leverages the churches' networks and volunteers – to organize communities, empower parents and caregivers, and provide stimulation and enrichment for young children.

Children's Litany: An Order of Service

Written by Jamie Martin-Currie, M.S.Ed.

Leader: We thank you, Jesus, for the people who mother and father us.

Children: **We thank you for the gift of love.**

Leader: We give thanks for all the people in our families who help take care of us.

Children: **We thank you for the gift of love.**

Leader: We give thanks for our brothers, sisters, and friends who play with us.

Children: **We thank you for the gift of love.**

Leader: We thank you, Jesus, for teaching us how to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Children: **We thank you for the gift of love.**

Leader: We thank you, Jesus, for music that inspires us to sing and dance.

Children: **We thank you for the gift of love.**

Leader: We thank you, Jesus, for the patience of our parents to listen.

Children: **We thank you for the gift of love.**

Leader: We thank you, Jesus, for those who help us make sense of the world with words.

Children: **We thank you for the gift of love.**

Leader: We thank you, Jesus, for those who pray with us.

Children: **We thank you for the gift of love.**

Leader: We thank you, Jesus, for healthy food to help us grow strong.

Children: **We thank you for the gift of love.**

Leader: We especially thank you, Jesus, for the gift of love we give to others. We ask you to bless all vulnerable children on the earth with gifts that nurture them so that they can thrive as children of God. **Amen.**

Collects and Prayers of the People: For Children's Chapel or Intergenerational Worship

Written by Emily Keniston and the Rev. Katie Holicky

COLLECTS

To be used for Children's Chapel or Intergenerational Worship

God who is love; we pray in thanksgiving for the ways you nurture us. We pray for children everywhere, and for the grown-ups who care for them, that they, with open hearts, continue to look, listen and feel for ways to grow, learn, share and give. Amen.

God who is always with us, we pray for healthy food to eat, beautiful music that moves us, relationships that bond us, for play with friends and grown-ups and for the gift of listening. Thank you for these ways to care for each other and inspire us to continue to share in your love. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

For Children

Let us pray for the life of the world...

For our loved ones ... those whom we know and hold in our hearts, and all of your children across the world. Bond us in your love. God of love, **Receive our prayer.**

For those who teach us... our teachers at school and church, our parents and family at home, and in all places we learn. Help us to listen with patience as we grow. God our teacher, **Receive our prayer.**

For those who lead us... give the leaders of our nations, towns and communities wisdom to serve people in love and peace. Give us all the language to share your love in the world. God who guides us, **Receive our prayer.**

For the sick and poor... We pray for access that meets the needs of those who do not have enough. For nutritious food, housing, loving relationships, and all of the things that help us to thrive. God of the vulnerable*, **Receive our prayer.**

For ourselves... Thanksgiving for playing with friends and grown-ups, for music that moves us and all of the good things you bless us with. Inspire us to respond to the needs of our neighbors as you have taught us. God who walks with us, **Receive our prayer.**

CLOSING COLLECT

God, we thank you for always being with us. Open and transform our hearts that we might connect more deeply with the needs of others and be moved to be your love and care in the world. Help us to keep courage as we learn, share, and give. **Amen.**

*The word vulnerable is included as it is important for children's understanding of the Gospel message. Our suggestion is that it also be included and defined in other places in the liturgy and formation.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

For Intergenerational Worship

Let us pray for the life of the world...

For our loved ones ... those whom we know and hold in our hearts, and all of your children who are unknown to us but always known to you. Help us keep the needs of all, especially the youngest amongst us, in our prayers. Bond us through your love and inspire us to action alongside the voiceless. God of love, **Receive our prayer.**

For those who teach us... our teachers at school and church, our family at home, and in all places we learn and grow. Help us to listen and pray with patience as we learn from God and one another. God our teacher, **Receive our prayer.**

For those who lead us... give the leaders of our nations, towns, communities, and homes wisdom to serve people of all ages in love and peace. Give us all the language and intention to share your love in the world. God who guides us, **Receive our prayer.**

For the sick and poor... We pray for access that meets the needs of those who do not have enough. For nutritious food, housing, loving relationships, and all of the things that help us to thrive. God of the vulnerable, **Receive our prayer.**

For ourselves... Thanksgiving for play, for music that moves us and all of the good things you bless us with. Inspire us to dwell in the stories of others and respond to the needs of our neighbors as you have taught us. God who walks with us, **Receive our prayer.**

CLOSING COLLECT

God, we thank you for always being with us. Open and transform our hearts that we might connect more deeply with the needs of others and be moved to be your love and care in the world.

Help us to keep courage as we learn, share and give. **Amen.**

CLOSING SONG

Suggested Playlist

Songs

"Bare Necessities" from Disney's *Jungle Book*

"What the World Needs Now Is Love"

"Happy" by Pharrell Williams

"Can't Stop This Feeling" by Justin Timberlake (from the *Trolls* movie)

"Count on Me" by Bruno Mars

"What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong

"Lean on Me" by Bill Withers

"Best Day of My Life" by American Authors

Hymns

"Sweet, Sweet Spirit"

"This Little Light of Mine"

"We are Marching in the Light of God"

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

"Morning has Broken"

Sample Homily: For Children's Chapel or Intergenerational Worship

Written by Lisa Puccio

Jesus began his ministry after he was baptized by John in the River Jordan, and that's when our ministry begins, too. When we're baptized, we are made ready to serve God. Even if we are just babies, our baptism makes us part of God's family and turns us into his helpers.

When we're baptized, the people who love us make promises with us and for us to do the work that Jesus taught people to do. We promise to respect and love our neighbors, to follow Jesus and to help those in need. These are important and serious promises, but God gives us people to help us keep these promises.

Today, we're going to think about neighbors who we will probably never meet but are part of God's big family. Children around the world want to grow up healthy and strong, and their families love them just like your family loves you. But not everyone has the things they need to grow up healthy and strong, and that's when we can help be good neighbors.

Children and grown-ups need healthy food and people to love. We all need someone to listen to us and someone to play with. We need music and laughter, friends and hugs and prayers. Most of us have the things we need, and there are people who work to help everyone have the things they need. These helpers go around the world to be teachers and friends to families who want to learn about growing up safe and strong. We can help, too, by praying for children and families who are missing the things they need.

Praying is a good way to be a helper and a good way to keep your promise to God. You can also tell your friends that you are praying for children and families who need help. You can be thankful for all the things that you have and learn about how people around the world grow and learn in different ways.

Our church, and other churches like ours, are helpers, too. We send money and prayers to Episcopal Relief & Development. In this way, we can share with families who are learning to grow and be healthy. The people who work for Episcopal Relief & Development want us to all work together to know our neighbors better.

We are all part of God's big family. Be thankful for neighbors we haven't ever met, who live far away but know that we care about them.

Resources for Special and Seasonal Observances

Back-to-School Prayer

O Lord, as our children return to school, we pray for the safety of all students, teachers, administrators and staff. We pray for strength to comfort the fearful and face the challenges ahead. Surround parents and caregivers with peace to ease any anxiety about reentering the buildings. Give our children patience to deal with new rules as they renew friendships and develop new relationships in safe ways. Encourage parents and caregivers to nurture children at day's end so that they may thrive another day in school. We pray for churches to surround all those in schools with more prayer and support this year than ever before so that all children reach their full potential. **Amen.**



Health volunteer visiting a family in Malawi. Episcopal Relief & Development partners with the Anglican Council in Malawi to support families through our Moments that Matter® program partnership. Moments That Matter® is an evidence-based early childhood development initiative that prepares parents and caregivers to provide more moments of engagement, nurturing and stimulation in the first 1,000 days of children's lives.

St. Nicholas Day

Written by Lisa Puccia

Saint Nicholas is honored on December 6. This feast may be an opportunity to connect the gift-giving of Santa Claus with the generosity of one of the saints of the church.

“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.”

—Matthew 6:1

LEARN

Who was St. Nicholas?

The true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas, who was born during the third century in the village of Patara in Asia Minor. At the time, the area was considered part of Greece; today, the village is on the southern coast of Turkey. Nicholas’s wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while he was still young. Obeying Jesus’s words to “sell what you own and give the money to the poor,” Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children and his concern for sailors and ships. [Read more here.](#)

Ways to Engage:

- [Find Myra and Turkey](#), where Saint Nicholas lived on a globe or map.
- Help children learn about the difference between St. Nicholas and Santa Claus. St. Nicholas was a real person who lived hundreds of years ago. Many people around the world celebrate his life and good deeds on December 6. This is a day to think more about giving than receiving!
- Adults and older teens can learn about helping the poor today. Another saint who modeled how to help the poor was [Basil of Caesarea](#).

SHARE

Especially for Older Children and Youth

- Do you like origami? Make [St. Nicholas' bishop's miter](#) and use them to decorate your house or add them to St. Nicholas treat bags and Christmas gifts.
- This can be a great day for older children and youth to better understand the story of St. Nicholas. Watch [this short video](#) about how to "become" St. Nicholas. The video shows how to become St. Nicholas every day by making simple acts of kindness a routine. Start on St. Nicholas Day with some special "Nicholas Deeds."
- Post a St. Nicholas image on social media or in a text stream to let others know you are celebrating the life of St. Nicholas. You can choose from [one of these](#) or choose another. Nicholas gave secret gifts to those in need and people he cared about. Plan a day of sharing the story of this beloved saint!
- Make gift bags for neighbors for older folks in your community and plan a way to leave them on their porch or doorstep when no one is looking.
- St. Nicholas Treat Bag. You can decorate your own or find [a fancy one](#). Fill the bag with gold-wrapped chocolate coins (a reminder of Nicholas's many gifts of gold coins to the needy), a candy cane (a sweet treat shaped like the bishop's crozier), and a St. Nicholas prayer.

St. Nicholas Prayer:

God of joy and cheer, we thank you for your servant,
the good bishop Nicholas.
In loving the poor, he showed us your kindness;
in caring for your children, he revealed your love.
Make us thoughtful without need of reward
so that we, too, may be good followers of Jesus. **Amen.**

GIVE

- As a family, make a list of what you would buy if you had \$15. In the [Gifts for Life](#) catalog, you can spend \$15 to help support a caregiver in Africa, Asia or Latin America. Instead of purchasing items on your list, share that \$15 with those in need.
- Oranges signify the gold St. Nicholas gave away to the poor. At this time of year when oranges aren't in season, they were once considered a rare winter treat. Donate a case of oranges to your local food pantry.
- Begin or end your day with a [3-minute retreat](#) that will help you put the holiday season in perspective and leave you inspired by the life of St. Nicholas.

Advent Wreath Prayers and Reflections

How can you, as an individual, a family or a congregation, make a significant change in the lives of children this Advent?

Episcopal Relief & Development offers [Advent Wreath Prayers and Reflections](#). Set aside time each day in Advent to light the candle, pray and learn about Episcopal Relief & Development's Early Childhood Development work.

Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday

A Day to Remember Those in Need

Your community is invited to observe [Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday](#) on the **first Sunday in Lent**. You are welcome to celebrate the work of Episcopal Relief & Development whenever it makes sense for your community, and you are invited to join us in praying for those living in need throughout the Lenten Season.

The Episcopal Church's General Convention has officially designated Lent as a time to encourage dioceses, congregations and individuals to remember and support the life-saving work of Episcopal Relief & Development. (You can view the official designation statement [here](#).)

*Because in Jesus Christ
our Lord
you knit us together in love
to strengthen communities,
empower those who are poor, nourish those who are hungry,
heal those who are sick
and
renew victims of disaster.*
— PROPER PREFACE FOR EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT SUNDAY



Formation: Study and Grow

This section features faith formation resources to teach about Early Childhood Development and Episcopal Relief & Development's integrated approach to [local solutions for communities](#) around the world. Here, you will find ideas and activities for children, teens and adults to use at home or in your church community.

In this section, you will find:

- » *An overview of the Moments That Matter® early childhood development program partnership*
- » *Acts of Love – Lists for Children, Youth and Adults*
- » *Let's Talk: Conversation Starters – Conversation starter cards for families or groups*
- » *Love Hunt – Intergenerational scavenger hunts to use at home or in the community*

Other ideas and resources include:

- [1,000 Second Challenge](#) – Pray, learn, share and give to Episcopal Relief & Development
- [Day of Love](#) – A day to reach out, thank someone and do something for children
- [Acts of Love Cards](#) – Cards to share an act of kindness
- [Acts of Love Bingo Card](#) – Acts of Love to share with your community
- [Coloring Book](#) – Based on FAMA (Facts, Associations, Meaning, Action) cards used by our volunteers in the field
- [Conversations about Empathy and Abundance](#) – Originally designed for use in Easter eggs. Similar in substance to the “Let’s Talk” cards, these conversation starter slips can be applied to all ages, in and outside of the home
- [Abundant Life Garden Project® Resources](#) – Children’s faith formation program
- [DIY Advent Wreath Making](#) – A variety of ideas for creating this seasonal prayer tool
- [Nativity: Creche building & Blessing for Children](#) – Print and build your own nativity scene using rocks, blocks or craft sticks. Also includes accompanying storytelling and prayers for use during the season of Advent and a card activity teaching the “nine gifts of growth that every child needs.”

Learn About *Moments That Matter*[®]

Moments That Matter[®] (MTM) is an early childhood development program partnership of Episcopal Relief & Development focusing on children ages 0-3 when the quality of nurturing care children receive can affect them for the rest of their lives. MTM equips and supports parents and other primary caregivers, often in remote communities where information and resources about nurturing care are limited or nonexistent, and trains community leaders, including faith leaders, to support families with young children. This [Fact Sheet on Integrated Early Childhood Development](#) provides information about our strategic approach to Early Childhood Development programming in *Moments That Matter*[®], including assessment data and program results.



The primary objectives of the program are:

Responsive Care & Early Learning: Teaching parents and caregivers the essential work of watching and tuning into a child’s cues, figuring out what they really mean and responding to them in a sensitive way. This stimulates connections in the brain that affect the growth of a child. Lack of early stimulation can impact long-term potential.

Nutrition and Health: Access to nourishing food/nutrients and access to care, when needed, help children grow. This is not just about the absence of disease or ill health but also involves the provision of essential nutrients that prevent cognitive delays, stunting, blindness and death.

Physical Development: Safe environments and attentive adults give very young children opportunities to gain control over small muscles, including those needed to change position from lying down to sitting up or walking and picking up objects. This focus also helps children develop larger muscles used to walk or throw a ball and build a healthy body that gets stimulation and exercise.

Social and Emotional Development: This focus helps children learn how to develop relationships and get along with other children and adults as well as develop a sense of identity and self-esteem.

Communication Development: This gives children the ability to understand language, express ideas and learn how to read and write. Later in the toolkit, we have ways you can help with these objectives on a local level. You can also support the global work of *Moments That Matter*[®] [here](#).

Acts of Love: With Children

Do everything in love. – 1 Corinthians 16:14

This list offers simple ideas of ways children can engage in Acts of Love. When grown-ups encourage children to do these simple acts of love, they are not only teaching children about compassion but also about how easy it is to show love to others, even those they do not know.

Ask children, “How would you know if someone is having a bad day and may need a little extra love? What are some safe and simple ways to share love?”

AT HOME

- Clean your bedroom without being asked and say, “I wanted to do something special to say I love you.”
- Call a grandparent to tell them you love them.
- Acknowledge that you care about the earth by helping recycle.
- Write notes or draw pictures of appreciation for every family member.
- Read a book to someone—in person or via social media.
- Help your sibling learn something new.

IN COMMUNITY

- Listen to someone tell you about their day. “I love you and want to hear about your day.”
- Write an encouraging note with sidewalk chalk somewhere in your neighborhood.
- Hold the door for someone.
- Leave letters of encouragement on people’s cars.
- Acknowledge that you care about people you don’t know who are in need. Ask an adult to help you donate to a food bank.
- Smile at everyone who walks by.

IN THE WORLD

- Print and color a page of the [Color Our World coloring book](#) and mail it to a friend to share the work of Episcopal Relief & Development.
- Create a special envelope or decorate a cup to use as a hope chest or bank. Put money in your hope chest every day for one month.
- Count the money you collected. Did you save enough to purchase from the [Gifts for Life catalog](#)?
- Ask a grown-up to help you donate the remaining money in your hope chest to Episcopal Relief & Development.

Acts of Love: With Youth

Teenagers can have lots of fun when it comes to random acts of love. Here are some ideas—but encourage teens to develop other creative ideas on their own.

AT HOME

- Choose a day not to complain.
- Sweep or vacuum the house without being asked.
- Clean your bedroom without being asked.
- Share an encouraging word for someone.
- Take a sibling outside to play.
- Make a family member breakfast.

IN COMMUNITY

- Ask an adult to help you hand out paper bags of granola bars, water and socks to people experiencing homelessness.
- Water your neighbor's lawn.
- Pay for the person behind you in the drive-thru.
- Wash the neighbor's car – with their permission, of course!
- Collect stuffed animals, towels or blankets to donate to an animal shelter.
- Paint kindness rocks and place them in random spots.

IN THE WORLD

- [Watch a video](#) describing Episcopal Relief & Development's Early Childhood Development work.
- Launch a peer-to-peer [online fundraiser](#) for Episcopal Relief & Development.
- Design a DIY t-shirt or have one printed in various sizes. Sell them and invite friends to join you in giving to Episcopal Relief & Development.
- Film a YouTube video to share your random Acts of Love experience.
- Post your random Acts of Love on Instagram [#episcopalrelief](#).
- Count the money you collected for t-shirts. Did you save enough to shop from the [Gifts for Life catalog](#)? If not, go in with a friend who also saved. Consider purchasing a gift for moms and newborns.

Acts of Love: With Adults

Performing random acts of love and kindness humanize us; they lift us spiritually and they're good for us. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

AT HOME

- Write a note to an old teacher or another person who made a difference in your life.
- Thank a family member when they help wash the dishes.
- Pick up trash in your neighborhood.
- Mow your neighbor's lawn.
- Forgive someone.
- Say this prayer from The Social Justice Bible Challenge:

Merciful God, your children cry to you night and day. Open our ears to hear their cries, open our eyes to see your love for all children; open our hearts to the work of transforming unjust systems. Increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and love through your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

IN COMMUNITY

- Let someone merge in front of you in traffic.
- Buy groceries for a family in need.
- Wipe off your grocery cart and offer to the person behind you.
- Pay the adoption fee for a rescue animal.
- Drop off dinner for your neighbor
- Give a handwritten thank you note to the drive-thru bank teller.

IN THE WORLD

- [Watch a video](#) describing Episcopal Relief & Development's Early Childhood Development work.
- Get permission from the leadership to lead a campaign initiative in your community. [Order complimentary Episcopal Relief & Development materials](#) through Forward Movement. Hand out or mail materials to church members.
- Invite friends and family to honor your birthday or anniversary by giving to [Episcopal Relief & Development](#).
- Order Christmas or Valentine's gifts from the [Gifts for Life catalog](#).
- [Become a sustainer](#) and give monthly to [Episcopal Relief & Development](#).
- Write a note to your Bishop asking their office to support you in launching a diocesan-wide fundraising campaign.

Let's Talk: Family Conversation Starters

Legend:



Adults ask Children/Youth



Children/Youth ask Adults



For Everyone

Instructions:

For durability, print the document on cardstock if possible. Cut the cards on indicated dashes and place them in a jar or basket on a table. Choose a day of the week when family members take turns asking each other questions. There are specific questions for adults to ask children/youth, children/youth to ask adults and questions for everyone to ask and answer.

There are seven cards in total. They could be spread over seven weeks at mealtime, used as a family road trip resource, used as table talk cards for intergenerational formation sessions, or printed and mailed to the families in your congregations. There are also two additional blank cards for you to add a conversation starter that is meaningful to your family or community. The possibilities are endless!

Let's Talk cards are composed to be open-ended, without a simple yes or no answer to create a time of storytelling. Sometimes parents and grandparents feel they must always have answers for children, but that's not true. A story that includes your feelings will connect you to your children much more than having a concrete answer. For instance, the Prayer card has children and youth asking adults how they can tell that God hears our prayers. Be honest but hopeful in answering these questions. Do you have a story of when you did not feel your prayer was answered? How do you reconcile that in your faith? Do you have a story of when God gave you what you needed? What other stories of your faith journey can you share with your children?

All of these questions are designed to bring families together. Be prepared for answers that surprise, delight and even startle you. For instance, if your teen says they don't think you ever listen to them, take a breath and ask how they think you could be better at talking and listening to each other. If your youth is playing music with references to violence, don't just make them turn it off. Ask open-ended questions about what they like about that music, how it makes them feel and share why it concerns you, without judgement.

Enjoy the conversations!

Building Nurturing Relationships



When do you remember feeling loved and safe? What does it feel/sound/look like to know you are safe? Where do you feel safe?



What were my favorite games to play with you when I was a baby? What about when I was a toddler? What games did you play when you were my age?



What are some of our favorite traditions and things we love to do together? Do we have holiday traditions? Do we love to celebrate with a certain meal? How do we prepare for special moments? Are there new traditions we'd like to create?

Just as water reflects the face, so one human heart reflects another.
(Proverbs 27:19)



Encouraging Children's Growth



What are the most important things we've taught you so far? What do you wish we would teach you? What is something you hope to be able to do when you're older?



What was my first word? Where were we when I took my first steps? How did you know I was tired when I was a baby? What do you hope I learn in the next few years?



What do we think every child needs to be healthy in their first 3 years? How many things can we name as a family?

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
(Galatians 5:22-23)



Feeling Safe and Knowing We Are Loved



What do we do to keep you safe? What do you know how to do to keep yourself safe? What things should we trust you to do by yourself now?



How did your parents punish you when you were growing up? Did you think it was fair at the time? Do you think it was fair when you look back now? Do you use any of the same words or actions that your parents did when you're teaching me?



What are the best ways for children to learn right and wrong? How does our community help us make hard decisions? What can we do when we know we've treated someone badly?

Keep alert, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.
(1 Corinthians 16:13-14)



Growing Healthy Bodies



What makes a food healthy or unhealthy? Is there a healthy food you hope we never give you again? Is there a different healthy food we can put in its place? What meals would you like to help prepare?



What was your least favorite food growing up? Did your parents make you eat it? What were your family's special meals for special occasions? Did you like to help prepare meals with your family?



How can we work together to eat more healthy foods? Do we have a garden where we could grow vegetables and herbs, or do we want to go shopping together? Are there recipes we'd all like to make together?

*God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food."
(Genesis 1:29)*



Connecting Through Music



What are your favorite songs/singers/bands/types of music right now? What do you like about them; is it mostly the lyrics (words), the melody (the tune), the percussion (drums and bass) or something else?



What were your favorite songs/singers/bands/types of music when you were our age? Did your parents like them too? Do you still like them?



Let's take turns playing DJ for a family dance party or a long car ride where everyone gets a turn to choose the music. We all promise not to complain if someone's choice isn't our favorite because we will get another turn soon.

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
(Psalm 98:4)*

(We can set limits around explicit lyrics, but remember that the most important part of this game is to learn more about what kind of music each person in our family connects to, and why.)



Building Strengths like Patience



Tell us about the times when we are waiting for something exciting or joyful to happen. Why is the waiting so hard? How can we help each other practice patience during these times of waiting?



Tell us about a time when you had to wait for something you really wanted when you were a kid. Is it harder to be patient as a child or as an adult? Do adults need patience? Can't they just do whatever they want whenever they want to?



What is a big thing our family dreams of doing together? Is it going on a big trip, or buying a house, or getting a dog someday? How can we work together as a family to plan and work toward that goal?

*Love is patient, love is kind, love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
(1 Corinthians 13:4-7)*



Let Us Pray



Do you think there's a right or wrong way to pray? Do you think God hears our prayers if they're silent (just in our head and heart)? Can a song, a drawing, or a poem be a prayer?



When do you pray? What are some of the things you pray for? How do you know if God hears your prayers?



When can we pray together as a family? Is there a prayer practice we'd like to try together? We could place a basket or bowl on a table, write or draw our prayers and place them in it, and then pray together every night or every week.

(There are daily devotions for families in the Book of Common Prayer, pages 137-140.)

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)



My Family—Conversation Starter



My Family—Conversation Starter



An Intergenerational Scavenger Hunt for All Ages

These “Love Hunts” are educational experiences that encourage families and communities to learn about our work with children, share love and experiences, and give their time, talent and treasure to Episcopal Relief & Development’s Early Childhood Development work.



LOVE HUNT AT HOME

The Activity Guide with **instructions** is [here](#).

The Activity Cards for **printing** are:

For Color Printing



For Black & White Printing



THE LOVE HUNT FOR CHURCHES & COMMUNITIES

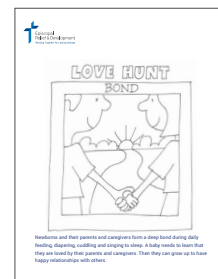
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Coloring Pages that accompany the themes in the activities can be printed from [this link](#).



Won't You Be My Neighbor? Outreach & Creative Community Engagement

One of the miracles of the company of children is how they remind us of God's great love for this broken world. They bring light and joy to our families and communities. We have a sacred duty to care for them, as God cares for all of us. Community leaders, including faith leaders, play a major role in raising awareness about the importance of Early Childhood Development, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalized children.

In this section, you will find:

- » A resource to help you apply the foundations of [Moments That Matter®](#) in your community, including:
 - » *Responsive & Early Learning*
 - » *Nutrition & Health*
 - » *Physical Development*
 - » *Social & Emotional Development*
 - » *Communication Development*

This prayer reminds us that children are essential to our communities and lead us into joy, wonder and peace:

Deliver all children, that we may also be delivered;

Open their hearts, that ours may also be opened;

Fill them with your spirit, that we may also be filled;

Lord, teach them to love and serve, that we may love and serve as well;

And bring them your peace, for without it, we cannot know peace ourselves.

Lord, hear our prayer.

What can you do locally?

There are many ways your faith community can get involved in making early childhood development a priority. Here are just a few ways to begin, based on the integrated approach of our program partnership, [Moments That Matter](#)[®].

Responsive Care & Early Learning

- Invite teachers, early childhood educators and Headstart professionals to offer group and individual training with parishioners and neighbors on a weekend or weeknight. Provide childcare for older siblings, and cook them all dinner.
- Offer a “Parents Night Out” for your parents. Collaborate with other faith communities or a local community center to provide similar evenings or events for the neighborhood.
- Offer childcare during a recovery support group. Includes materials for fortifying a caregiver’s relationship to infants.
- Join with other faith groups and non-profits to offer free workshops (with childcare and food) on early childhood development training for caregivers in your community.

Nutrition and Health

- Recruit and train volunteers to learn about the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. These volunteers can then help your local food program leaders and clients better understand and enroll in the [underutilized WIC program](#) created for early childhood nutrition.
- Invite a pediatric nurse to train food program volunteers and clients on the proper distribution of donated infant formula.
- Host a weekend breakfast or other meal specifically targeting families with young children, especially those who count on schools during the week for their primary nutrition.
- Partner with a social worker to find a way to provide space and childcare for families who need appointment options that accommodate work, school, and transportation schedules.

Physical Development

- Recruit volunteers or a local scout troop to adopt a safe play area, indoors or out (or both!) for infants and toddlers. Include safety information about the use of bucket swings for the very young. Make it open and available to the neighborhood.
- When conducting diaper drives, also ask for clean play mats and floor rugs for infants to explore.
- Make sure your toy drives specify building and exploration toys and activities for those aged 0-3.

Social and Emotional Development

- Host play groups for the neighborhood, including adults to help oversee play, crafting and snacks for attendees. Recruit and train reading “tutors” to read with children at these events.
- Partner with Retirement Communities and other retired persons.

Communication Development:

- Provide beautifully printed materials, flashcards and books designed for infants aged 0-3 in your common areas, waiting rooms and nurseries.
- Partner with your local library to offer space for family reading nights, book drives and sales and children's author events.
- Have a "Free Little Library" on your campus and specifically ask for board and vinyl books for children aged 0-3.

Encourage participation in these events with the families in your faith community. These priorities matter for children and their caregivers from all walks of life. Take care not to take for granted the wellness of families in our faith communities. Parenting and growing up have challenges for everyone, and we can all learn from each other. Every child matters. Children are excellent role models and peers for one another, and their wellness and good health can raise the wellness of other children. They exhibit care and compassion for each other. They are authentic, mindful and value the freedom.



School children gather during a morning break in Ghana.



Fundraising: Join us in Making Lasting Change

Episcopal Relief & Development promotes nurturing care that fosters responsive caregiving, good health and nutrition, and early learning and play with children aged 0-3, while working to reduce unhealthy environmental factors like poverty, malnutrition and exposure to violence.

Thanks to leaders like you and faith communities across the church, awareness about our work continues to grow, and we are able to expand our capacity to make lasting changes in Early Childhood Development at home and across the globe. Using educational and outreach materials from Episcopal Relief & Development, like those found in this *Joy & Wonder* toolkit, inspires people to want to do more to join us in this work.

Another important way to join us in this work is to join those who financially support Episcopal Relief & Development through annual campaigns, fundraisers and the creative use of our *Gifts for Life* program in their faith communities.

Your generosity enables us to unlock transformation and empower people to promote Early Childhood Development in their communities. In this section, we offer some creative ways to help your community play a part in this work worldwide. Thank you.

“Children are like buds in a garden and should be carefully and lovingly nurtured, as they are the future of the nation and the citizens of tomorrow.”

— Jawaharlal Nehru, former Prime Minister of India

In this section, you will find:

- » *How to Plan a Campaign – A flexible play-by-play plan, including Helpful Tips for a successful campaign.*
- » *Terrific and fun ways to build community and raise money using our Gifts for Life program.*

Other resources and ideas include:

- [How to Hold an Alternative Gift Market](#) – A creative way to engage all ages in fighting disease and extreme poverty.
- [Virtual Ideas for Engaging Community](#) – An excellent opportunity to engage your community in the work of Episcopal Relief & Development.



Rosemary, a volunteer with Anglican Council in Malawi holding a participant's child during a home visit. Moments That Matter® enables parents to address children's cognitive, psychosocial and physical development needs while also equipping communities to support their healthy development.

How to Plan a Campaign

Here are some simple steps to get you started on a successful fundraising campaign for Episcopal Relief & Development.

STEP 1: ASSESS INTEREST AND CAPACITY IN A CAMPAIGN

- Begin conversations about a fundraising campaign.
- Discover if there is energy and excitement for Episcopal Relief & Development's Early Childhood Development work.
- Talk to members of your community, congregation, your rector and your deacons.

STEP 2: DEVELOP AND DISCUSS A PLAN

- Goal: Will there be a total fundraising goal?
- Timing: Set the duration for one day, one month or a specified time.
- Launch: Discuss when to launch and announce the campaign to your community.

STEP 3: PRE-LAUNCH PREPARATION OR CAMPAIGN PLANNING

- Prepare for the launch.
- Ensure the Rector will add announcements to their remarks.
- Determine who will speak for the group.
- Develop a presentation on your effort.
- Utilize the resources and toolkits on our [website](#) to generate ideas for your campaign.

STEP 4: ANNOUNCE THE CAMPAIGN

- Present an overview of Episcopal Relief & Development, the fundraising goal (if you have one), your proposed timeline and how members can get involved.
- Ask the church leadership to reinforce this message as well.
- Organize a campaign booth to provide resources to members and collect donations.

STEP 5: SEND UPDATES ON CAMPAIGN

- Keep members informed on campaign progress to maintain your momentum!
- Use weekly announcement times to share your progress.
- Schedule emails or website updates for your community.
- Share stories and photos of your efforts on the website or weekly e-blasts.

STEP 6: CELEBRATE SUCCESS!

- Announce the completion of campaign, recognize leadership and thank everyone!
- Publish an article in your community newsletter.
- Be sure to inform us of your activities so that we can share and celebrate your success with you!

Helpful Tips

YOUR ROLE

- Be sure to collaborate with your Episcopal Relief & Development Diocesan Ministry Partner. We can help you locate yours or one from your province. Email us at engagement@episcopalrelief.org
- Spread the word with your local bishop, clergy and church leadership to raise awareness about the Episcopal Relief & Development fundraising campaign.
- Share stories about benefits from the campaign realized by your communities.
- Be a resource for information and material. The [website](#) has toolkits and additional resources.
- Your successes, large and small, can build awareness and encourage creative and exciting fundraisers that engage and inspire your diocese, parish and community.

EXAMPLES OF AWARENESS-BUILDING

- Share stories about how Episcopal Relief & Development's programs nurture the potential of caregivers and young children, reduce violence against women and girls, strengthen communities' resilience to climate change and facilitate humanitarian response to disasters.
- Offer prayers in support of the work of Episcopal Relief & Development.
- Invite a speaker from Episcopal Relief & Development to join an adult forum or other meeting to speak about our work.

EXAMPLES OF FUNDRAISING

- Organize bake sales, movie nights, Super Bowl parties or other activities to support the campaign. Your imagination is the limit!
- Share the donation link via email and social media to suggest donations for birthdays and other occasions "in lieu of gifts."
- Create crowdfunding or peer-to-peer online fundraising pages around events like walk-a-thons, fun runs, read-a-thons, etc.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Explore our [Faith Formation resources](#).
- Episcopal Relief & Development print resources, including brochures and donation envelopes, can be ordered for free from [Forward Movement](#).

Be sure to share those stories with Episcopal Relief & Development. We will highlight the work of communities across the country throughout the campaign. You can send updates to engagement@episcopalrelief.org.

Questions? Send an email to: engagement@episcopalrelief.org.

Get Creative with *Gifts for Life*

Here are some fun ideas for fellowship and other ways your community can support Episcopal Relief & Development through our [Gifts for Life](#) program:

- Organize a read-a-thon, dance-a-thon or walk-a-thon. Collect pledges from family friends for each mile or hour of your activity.
- Organize a weekend car wash and use the proceeds to purchase [Gifts for Life](#).
- Arrange a silent auction for your church and community members. Ask members of your congregation to donate items that can be put up for bidding.
- Have your adult or children's Sunday school class host and make an inexpensive dinner with an admission charge. Decide together what [Gifts for Life](#) selections to purchase with the proceeds.
- Encourage your children to write letters to family members, friends, classmates and club or team members to raise money to purchase a special gift. Have them mention that the gift will make a difference for children in need.
- Sponsor a church or neighborhood garage sale. Gather gently used books, crafts, clothes and household goods to sell, and use the money you raise to purchase items from the [Gifts for Life](#) catalog.
- Hold a wine-tasting event and use the proceeds to purchase clean water or other basic needs for a family or community. [Click here](#) to learn how St. Paul's Episcopal, Franklin, TN, hosted a "Wedding at Cana" event.
- Instead of going out to dinner with friends, hold a potluck and put the money saved into a basket. Then go through the [Gifts for Life](#) catalog as a group and choose items based on the amount collected.
- Hold a Game Night and ask people to make a donation in order to participate. The group can then decide together what gifts to purchase with the collected funds.
- "Get the Warden's Goat:" Raise enough money to buy a goat in honor of your church's warden. In the same way, you can "get the priest's goat," the treasurer's, the auditor's or whoever you choose.



- Instead of holding a regular family, office or group gift exchange, pool the funds that would have been spent and choose [Gifts for Life](#) as a group, or give gifts to everyone based on their various interests. For example:
 - * For your child's teacher: [Nurture & Nourish the Earliest Learners](#) or [Educate Children Orphaned by AIDS](#)
 - * For new parents or grandparents: [Care for Moms & Newborns](#)
 - * For an avid gardener: [Seeds, Tools & Training, Fruit Trees](#) or a [Family Garden](#)
 - * For a farmer: a [Cow, Pig](#) or [Flock of Chickens](#)
 - * For someone in health care: [Disaster Relief Kits](#)
 - * In honor of a baptism: [Clean Water](#)
 - * For campers: [Mosquito Nets](#)
 - * For a banker, accountant or church treasurer: [Micro-credit Loans for Women](#)

Ideas contributed by Barb Hagen, former Ministry Partner of the Diocese of Montana. Find out how you can become a Ministry Partner by emailing us at engagement@episcopalrelief.org.



Thank you for using this *Joy & Wonder* toolkit.

We hope that it has made a difference in how your community sees themselves as guardians of our very youngest children and their caregivers around the world.

Please visit our website for additional toolkits from Episcopal Relief & Development that will guide your community to join us in making lasting change around our other priorities:

- Creation Care & You - Climate Resilience
- Grace, Justice & Hope - for Women & Girls Everywhere
- Restore & Renew - Disaster Response

For over 80 years, Episcopal Relief & Development has worked with an extensive network of faith and community partners to advance lasting change in communities affected by injustice, poverty, disaster and climate change. Inspired by our faith, we reach over three million people each year by focusing on four interconnected priorities: nurturing the potential of caregivers and young children, reducing violence against women and girls, strengthening communities' resilience to climate change and facilitating humanitarian response to disasters. Together with our partners, we leverage what's working well to drive impact, learning and sustainability. Together, we create lasting change.

www.episcopalrelief.org