

# Resources for a Multifaith Children's Sabbath Celebration



A multifaith community service offers a powerful and meaningful opportunity to bring together people from all across your community who may never have connected before. It is a chance to highlight our shared concern — across religious traditions — for justice and protecting and nurturing children.

It is a meaningful time to discover what our different faith traditions hold in common as well as to learn about the unique perspectives, texts, and traditions that each brings. It is a time to unite in shared commitment to take action to solve the problems facing children in our communities and nation.

**B**e sure to read the planning steps for organizing a multifaith community-wide service, which are outlined in the “Planning Your Children’s Sabbath” section of the Children’s Sabbath manual. Follow them to bring together a planning committee that represents the many religious traditions in your community.

Following, you will find materials to help to create your own multifaith Children’s Sabbath service that is inclusive, respectful of different traditions, focused on the Children’s Sabbath core themes, and adaptable to your particular community and leadership:

- **A suggested outline** for your multifaith community-wide Children’s Sabbath service;
- **A sample multifaith Children’s Sabbath service** that can be used “as is” or adapted. Select those resources that appeal to your planning team, supplement them with your own, or adapt them as desired. Add readings or prayers from other traditions as appropriate to reflect the leadership and participation in your community.
- **Resources from many faiths**





## Suggested Outline for a Multifaith Children's Sabbath Service

### I: Gathering of the Community

The service begins with a “Gathering of the Community” that creates a sense of welcome and inclusion and affirms a sense of shared purpose. These earliest moments in the service should be planned with care to reassure people that this service is a “safe” space in which their own faith will not be denigrated and ease any anxieties that people may bring to a multifaith experience. Your planning team might arrange for “greeters” from each tradition to be at the doors as people arrive, to create an immediate experience of welcome and belonging.

The Gathering of the Community segment of the service may include some or all of the following:

- **Prelude:** Choral or instrumental music that either creates an atmosphere for contemplation and reflection or that builds excitement and generates enthusiasm. One choir or more could offer a selection, for instance, or an organist or pianist could play.
- **Opening Procession of Religious Leaders and Children:** This can provide a visual appreciation for the range of religious traditions represented and add a sense of importance and broad support for the event. You may want to include symbolic elements to the procession or other visual enhancements like banners, liturgical dancers, drummers, candle lighting, or another creative element.
- **Welcome:** The religious leader in whose place of worship the multifaith service is being held may offer a very brief welcome. If the service is not being held in a place of worship, one of the key leaders involved in planning the Children's Sabbath may give a brief welcome, or the welcome may be omitted and the service may move directly from the Opening Procession to the Gathering Words.
- **Gathering Words:** Beginning with an opening prayer, call to worship, or another form of “Gathering Words” can make people from many different communities feel united in why they are there and reassured that all are welcome. See the sample resources below for Gathering Words that can be used, adapted, or simply serve as an inspiration for your own creation.
- **Song, Hymn or Choral Anthem:** A musical selection at this point may keep the service lively. Remember, if *everyone* is asked to sing or say it, the words should include *everyone*. For instance, if all of those gathered will be singing, remember to select a song with inclusive words that people from many different faiths will feel comfortable singing — ensure that it does not use language specific to just one tradition, such as “Jesus Christ.” If a *choir* is presenting an anthem to which those gathered will listen, singing music specific to that choir's tradition, remember to balance the choirs represented and to ensure that no anthem, while specific to a tradition, puts down another faith tradition.

## II: Time of Lament

This is a time to focus attention on the serious problems affecting children, to declare our concern for children's suffering, and recognize our responsibility as people of faith, adults, parents, citizens, and community members for how we have contributed to or failed to prevent or end child suffering and ensure justice and care for all children.

The time of lament portion of the service might include one or more (but not all) of the following:

- **Prayer**
- **Litany**
- **Responsive reading**
- **Creative or symbolic action**
- **Visual experience** that underscores the problems to which we have come to respond (e.g., PowerPoint or slide presentation or a brief video, or liturgical dance)
- **Anthem, hymn or song**

## III: Call to Service

This part of the worship service proclaims the call to justice, compassion, and faithful action for children that is central to our religious traditions.

This part of the service could include some of the following:

- **Readings from sacred texts** such as Torah and other Hebrew texts, the New Testament, Qur'an, Baghavad Gita, and others. If the readings are recited in another language, either have the readers also read the English translation or, to keep the service from becoming too lengthy, provide written translations into English in the service program.
- **Hymns, anthems, and songs** focused on our call to service.
- **A reflection on the theme "How Long Must I Cry for Help?" Bending the Arc Toward God's Vision of Justice:** a brief reflection — perhaps five minutes — during which a leader reflects on the shared concerns for children and the strong call to work for change for children to end poverty heard in our faith traditions.

## IV: Commitment to Action

After the gathering, lament, and call to service, people should be ready to respond to what they've heard and experienced with a commitment to action on children's behalf. This enables them to channel the experience into a positive, forward-looking, hopeful response that puts their faith into action.

The commitment to action section of the service might include one or more of the following:

- **A charge to the gathered community:** a brief, inspirational charge from a powerful speaker that encourages those present to respond to the call to service just heard with a commitment to action manifesting the justice and peace God intends. Five minutes may be an appropriate length to give the speaker for her/his charge.

- **Prayer of commitment**
- **Act of commitment:** a responsive reading that invites those gathered to respond aloud and declare their intention to act on behalf of children.
- **Symbolic action:** a creative action or response through which the people or one or more leaders make visible the commitment to act. Options include: each person writing a commitment on a slip of paper that is collected with the others; distributing a small item to each person present that will serve as a reminder of their commitment; or lighting candles.
- **Song, hymn, or anthem** with words that emphasize the commitment to faithful action.

### V: Blessing

The last portion of the multifaith service prepares the people to leave the time together inspired and committed to action, reassured that the gathered community will be dispersed but still joined in commitment and that they will continue to be guided and sustained by the divine.

The blessing portion of the service might include one or more of the following:

- **Blessing of the children:** many traditions have rituals for blessing the children that could be adapted for a multifaith gathering. Consider ways that those who have not come accompanied by children can feel part of the blessing experience.
- **Charge:** not as lengthy as the “charge to the gathered community” in the commitment to action, this very brief charge can precede the final blessing as a reminder of what we go forth to do;
- **Final blessing:** the last words offered by a religious leader, reminding those gathered that we go forth to seek justice in the power of the eternal/divine source of love;
- **Closing hymn or song:** a final song that has a “sending forth” theme, such as the traditional spiritual, *Guide My Feet*. The religious leaders who processed in may process out during the closing hymn or remain in place.
- **Postlude:** instrumental (or choral) music as those gathered disperse.

In addition to the resources provided below, and those which your planning committee creates or finds, draw from faith resources offered in other sections of the Children's Sabbath resource manual on CDF's website at [www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbaths](http://www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbaths).

# Sample Multifaith Children's Sabbath Service

All resources were written by Shannon Daley-Harris

## “How Long Must I Cry for Help?” Bending the Arc Toward God's Vision of Justice for Children

### Prelude

*(The prelude could feature music from a variety of groups representing different faith and music traditions.)*

### Opening Procession

*(Religious leaders from all of the traditions represented could process in, perhaps each with a child, and be seated at the front facing those gathered — or in a designated section in the front rows — to provide a visual reminder of the broad and united religious representation. Additional options for adding visual interest are:*

- Liturgical dancers;
- Processors bearing candles;
- Youths carrying diverse banners.)

### Welcome

*(The chair of the Children's Sabbath planning committee or the leader in whose place of worship the multifaith service is taking place might offer very brief — a minute or less — words of welcome that affirm the purpose of the gathering, reassure all from every faith tradition that they are welcome, and generally convey that all religions will be respected.)*

### Gathering Words

*(The Gathering Words could be led by one or several leaders — of any age — in turn, with all gathered responding with the lines in bold. Or, it could read by one leader, in which case remove the bolding.)*

We come to hear the voices of children.

We come to hear the wisdom of our various traditions.

**We come to hear words of care and concern, challenge and charge.**

We come to help bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice for children.

We come to help bend the arc in partnership across religion and race, income and ethnicity, age and experience.

**We come to help bend the arc with commitment and determination.**

Come, let us celebrate the 2015 Children's Sabbath.

## Our Cries: Hearing the Voices of Children and Families

### How Long Must We Cry for Help?

*(The leader lines may be read by one or several religious leaders, youths, or children.)*

Through the ages, those who suffer or struggle have wondered, How long must I cry for help?

Today, children and families are struggling and suffering;

**How long must we cry for help?**

1 out of every 5 children is living in poverty;

**How long must we cry for help?**

1 out of every 11 children is living in extreme poverty, at less than half the poverty level;

**How long must we cry for help?**

1 in 9 children is at risk of hunger, unsure when they will next eat or if they will have enough;

**How long must we cry for help?**

Parents working full-time, year-round at minimum wage are still below the poverty line;

**How long must we cry for help?**

Parents who want to work can't find jobs at a living wage;

**How long must we cry for help?**

The gap between rich and poor continues to widen, leaving children and families further behind;

**How long must we cry for help?**

**We ask with urgency;**

children only have one childhood and we don't have a moment to wait or a child to waste.

**We ask with confidence;**

trusting that the Eternal source of love and justice hears;

**We ask with commitment;**

promising ourselves to listen to the cries of children and respond;

**We ask with determination;**

we will work to make our voices heard until change comes and justice is achieved.

May it be so.

### **Hearing the Voices of Families:**

*If possible, share the stories and words of families and young people with first-hand experience of the injustice of poverty and of what it will take to end it. Your planning team will know best how to identify and engage those voices in your community. Be clear about the time allotted and the aim of this sharing, and ensure that it honors the power, dignity, and the perspective of those who are speaking from first-hand experience. There are stories of families and young people in CDF's report Ending Child Poverty Now if you need to draw on them as a supplement or substitute.*

### **Write the Vision: Hearing the Voices of Our Faith Communities**

*Invite leaders and young people from all of the religious traditions in your community to offer a reading or prayer that speaks to the Children's Sabbath theme of ending poverty. The following are examples and may be exchanged for readings or prayers provided by your local leaders. To ensure the Children's Sabbath service stays on schedule and on the theme, ask for copies of alternative readings and prayers in advance. The readings and prayers might also be interspersed with music performed by choirs from various traditions.*

#### **From Islamic Tradition:**

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

Have you considered the person who denies the judgment? It is he who pushes aside the orphan and does not urge others to feed the needy. So woe to those who pray but are heedless of their prayer; those who are all show and forbid common kindnesses.

(Qur'an 107)

**From Mormon tradition:**

But woe unto the rich, who are rich as to the things of the world. For because they are rich they despise the poor, and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures; wherefore, their treasure is their god. And behold, their treasure shall perish with them also.

(Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 9:30)

**From Jewish tradition:**

<sup>1</sup>The pronouncement made by the prophet Habakkuk.

<sup>2</sup>How long, O Lord, shall I cry out  
And You not listen,  
Shall I shout to You, "Violence!"  
And You not save?

<sup>3</sup>Why do You make me see iniquity  
[Why] do You look upon wrong?—  
Raiding and violence are before me,  
Strife continues and contention goes on.

<sup>4</sup>That is why decision fails  
And justice never emerges;  
For the villain hedges in the just man—  
Therefore judgment emerges deformed.

<sup>2</sup> I will stand on my watch,  
Take up my station at the post,  
And wait to see what He will say to me,  
What He will reply to my complaint.

<sup>2</sup>The Lord answered me and said:  
Write the prophecy down,  
Inscribe it clearly on tablets,  
So that it can be read easily.

<sup>3</sup>For there is yet a prophecy for a set term,  
A truthful witness for a time that will come.  
Even if it tarries, wait for it still;  
For it will surely come, without delay:

(Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4)

**From Christian tradition:**

A certain ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery. You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your mother and father.'"

He replied, "I have kept all these since my youth."



When Jesus heard this he said to him, "There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich.

Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

(Luke 18:18-25, New Revised Standard Version)

**From Sikh tradition:**

Bhairao, Fourth Mehl:

To do good deeds is the best rosary.

Chant on the beads within your heart, and it shall go along with you.

Chant the Name of the Lord, Har, Har, the Lord of the forest.

Have mercy on me, Lord, and unite me with the Sat Sangat, the True Congregation, so that I may be released from Maya's noose of death.

Whoever, as Gurmukh, serves and works hard,

is molded and shaped in the true mint of the Shabad, the Word of God.

The Guru has revealed to me the Inaccessible and Unfathomable Lord.

Searching within the body-village, I have found the Lord.

I am just a child; the Lord is my Father, who nurtures and cherishes me.

Please save servant Nanak, Lord; bless him with Your Glance of Grace.

(Guru Granth Sahib p. 1134)

**From Hindu tradition:**

May there be welfare to all beings; May there be fullness and wholeness to all people; May there be constant good and auspicious life to everyone; May there be peace everywhere. . . May all be full of happiness and abundance; May everyone in the world enjoy complete health, free from diseases; May all see and experience good things in their lives, May not even a single person experience sorrow and misery. Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!

**From Bahá'í tradition:**

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, and admonisher to the rich, and answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 285)

**From Buddhist tradition:**

May all beings everywhere plagued with sufferings of body and mind quickly be freed from their illnesses. May those frightened cease to be afraid, and may those bound be free. May the powerless find power and may people think of befriending one another. May those who find themselves in trackless, fearful wildernesses — the children, the aged, the unprotected — be guarded by beneficent celestials, and may they swiftly attain Buddhahood.

**From Zoroastrian tradition:**

We pray to God to eradicate all the misery in the world,  
that understanding triumph over ignorance,  
that generosity triumph over contempt,  
and that truth triumph over falsehood.

**From Native American tradition:**

I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and round about beneath me was the whole hoop of the world.

And while I stood there I saw more than I can tell and I understood more than I saw; for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit, and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being.

And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight, and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter all children of one mother and one father.

And I saw that it was holy.

(Black Elk, Oglala Lakota—Sioux, 1863-1950)

## Our Response: Bending the Arc toward God's Vision of Justice for Children

### Call to Action

*At this point in the service, you could invite a speaker to deliver a brief (about 5 minutes) call to action to help bend the arc toward God's vision of justice. How will each person present — child, youth, and adult — help to end child poverty?*

*Alternatively, you might want to engage participants in "writing the vision and making it plain" — giving voice to their understanding of the love and justice the Eternal intends and how they will spread the vision and work to make it so. For instance, you could distribute sticky notes and pencils as people arrive. At this time, invite each person to write on their note how they will work to spread the vision of justice for children and work to make it come true.*

### Song

*One possible song is Restless Weaver (Words O.I. Cricket Harrison, Music: BEACH SPRING). In Chalice Hymnal and others.*

### Act of Commitment

Fifty year ago, at the conclusion of the march from Selma to Montgomery, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said:

"I know you are asking today, 'How long will it take?' Somebody's asking "How long will prejudice blind the visions of men?' I come to say to you this afternoon however difficult the moment, however frustrating the hour, it will not be long, because truth pressed to earth will rise again.

How long? Not long, because no lie can live forever.

How long? Not long, because you still reap what you sow....

How long? Not long. Because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice."

Half a century later, we know that in some ways justice has come but in others we are still wondering, how long will it take? Let us stand united in our determination to bend the arc toward God's vision of justice for children.

When the clamor of corporate interests threatens to drown out the voices of children,  
**we will hear and heed our children.**

When political leaders pose with babies for campaign photo-ops, but ignore them in setting legislative priorities,  
**we will make sure they hear and heed our children.**

When the media ignores the plight and the power and the potential of children in poverty  
**we will make sure they hear and heed our children.**

When we are weary,  
**we will encourage each other to keep bending the arc toward your vision of justice.**

When we are busy,  
**we will encourage each other to keep bending the arc toward your vision of justice.**

When we are discouraged and wonder if we are making a difference,  
**we will encourage each other to keep bending the arc toward your vision of justice.**

**We will keep working and waiting**  
until no child is in poverty.

**We will keep working and waiting**  
until no child is hungry.

**We will keep working and waiting**  
until all parents can earn living wages.

**We will keep working and waiting**  
until our world reflects love and justice for every child.

**Justice is coming!**

### Closing Song

One possibility is the song, *Freedom is Coming*, from the South African anti-apartheid movement. After the first verse "Freedom is coming..." you could add a second verse "Justice is coming..."

Freedom is coming, Freedom is coming. Freedom is coming, O yes, I know.

Justice is coming...

## Resources from Many Faiths

The following pages provide resources from a variety of faith traditions: the Bahá'í faith, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Native American traditions, Sikhism, and Unitarian Universalism. The resources include passages from sacred texts or other writings central to these traditions, prayers, and reflections. **For Christian and Jewish resources, please draw from the extensive materials provided elsewhere in the Children's Sabbath resource manual.**

These resources may be used in a multifaith Children's Sabbath service, to spark a Children's Sabbath in congregations of these traditions, or to enrich the Children's Sabbath of congregations from other traditions. They also may be used in an interfaith educational program you develop for your Children's Sabbath.



### Bahá'í Resources

(‘Abdu’l-Baha, from *Bahá'í Education*)

O God! Rear this little babe in the bosom of Thy love, and give it milk from the breast of Thy Providence. Cultivate this fresh plant in the rose garden of Thy love and aid it to grow through the showers of Thy bounty. Make it a child of the kingdom, and lead it to Thy heavenly realm. Thou art powerful and kind, and Thou art the Bestower, the Generous, the Lord of surpassing bounty.

(‘Abdu’l-Baha, from *Prayers for Young Bahá'ís*)

Children are even as a branch that is fresh and green; they will grow up in whatever way ye train them. Take the utmost care to give them high ideals and goals, so that once they come of age, they will cast their beams like brilliant candles on the world. . . [and] will set their hearts on achieving everlasting honour and acquiring all the excellences of human kind.

(‘Abdu’l- Baha, from *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Baha*)

O Lord! Make this youth radiant, and confer Thy bounty upon this poor creature. Bestow upon him knowledge, grant him added strength at the break of every morn and guard him within the shelter of Thy protection so that he may be freed from error, may devote himself to the service of Thy Cause, may guide the wayward, lead the hapless, free the captives, and awaken the heedless, and that all may be blessed with Thy remembrance and praise. Thou art the Mighty and the powerful.

(‘Abdu’l-Baha, from *O Thou Kind Lord! Prayers and Readings for Children from the Bahá'í Writings*)





## Buddhist Resources

Life is filled with suffering, but it is also filled with many wonders, like the blue sky, the sunshine, the eyes of a baby. To suffer is not enough. We must also be in touch with the wonders of life. They are within us and all around us, everywhere, any time.

(Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace*)

Better than a hundred years lived in idleness and in weakness is a single day lived with courage and powerful striving.

(The Dhammapada, 112)

Whatever living beings there may be—feeble or strong, small or large, seen or unseen, those who live far or those near, those who are born and those who are yet to be born—may all beings, without exception, experience a happy mind. Let one not deceive another nor despise any person whatever in any place. In anger or ill will let one not wish any harm to another. Let one's thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity.

(Samyutta Nikaya, *The Buddha Speaks*)

It is in this way that we must train ourselves: by liberation of the self through love. We will develop love, we will practice it, we will make it both a way and a basis, take our stand upon it, store it up, and thoroughly set it going.

(Samyutta Nikaya, *The Buddha Speaks*)

Arouse your will, supreme and great, Practice love, give joy and protection; Let your giving be like space, Without discrimination or limitation. Do good things, not for your own sake But for all the beings in the universe. Save and make free everyone you encounter, Help them attain the wisdom of the way.

(Prajnaparamita, from *The Buddha Speaks*)



## Hindu Resources

May there be welfare to all beings; May there be fullness and wholeness to all people; May there be constant good and auspicious life to everyone; May there be peace everywhere. . . May all be full of happiness and abundance; May everyone in the world enjoy complete health, free from diseases; May all see and experience good things in their lives, May not even a single person experience sorrow and misery. Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!

(Daily prayer of Hindus)

The Hindu mind is singularly dominated by one paramount conception: the divinity of life. Regarding the creation of the universe, Hindu tradition, based on the experience of illumined mystics, asserts with deep conviction that God is the supreme creator of everything and every being. . . Hindus give God a favored place in our homes as mother, friend, child, even husband or sweetheart. God, being the most beloved object of life, must find a place in our family life. He must be dear and near to us. This ideal of the sweet God, lovable God, playmate God, child God has been admirably illustrated in Hinduism in the personality of Sri Krishna. So, every child can be looked upon by anyone as a baby God, and spiritual life can be quickened in this manner.

(Swami Tathagatananda, Vedanta Society, New York, from "Our Children, Their Earth," United Nations Environmental Programs)

Oh Brahman Supreme! Formless and colorless are you. But in mystery, through your power you transform your light and radiance into many forms and colors in creation. You bring forth the creation and then withdraw them to yourself. Fill us with the grace of your auspicious thoughts and vision. . . You are in the woman, in the man. You are in the young boy, in the youthful maiden. You are in the old man who walks with his staff. . . You are in the dark butterfly, in the green parrot with red eyes. . . You are without beginning, infinite, beyond time and space. All the worlds had their origins in you.

(From Svetasvatara Upanishad, IV:1-4)

Benediction in Vedic Sanskrit Pasyati Puthram,  
*Pasyati Poutram Aputraahas santu putrinaha,  
Putrinah santhu poutrinaha Daanyam, dhanam,  
Bahuputralaabham.*

May one live to see children, May one live to see grandchildren, May those that are childless have children, May those that have children have grandchildren! May you have lots of grain, wealth, and many children.



## Islamic Resources

In the Name of God the Compassionate the Caring  
 Do you see him who calls the reckoning a lie?  
 He is the one who casts the orphan away  
 who fails to urge the feeding of one in need  
 Cursed are those who perform the prayer  
 unmindful of how they pray  
 who make of themselves a display  
 but hold back the small kindness.

(S. 107, Michael Sells translation)

In the Name of God the Compassionate the Caring  
 By the morning hours  
 By the night when it is still  
 Your Lord has not abandoned you  
 and does not hate you.  
 What is after will be better  
 than what came before  
 To you the Lord will be giving  
 You will be content  
 Did he not find you orphaned  
     and give you shelter  
 Find you lost  
     and guide you  
 Find you in hunger  
     and provide for you  
 As for the orphan—  
     do not oppress him  
 And one who ask—  
     do not turn him away  
 And the grace of your Lord—  
     proclaim

(S. 93, 1-11, Michael Sells Translation )

You who believe, uphold justice and bear witness to  
 God, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or  
 your close relatives. Whether the person is rich or  
 poor, God can best take care of both. Refrain from

following your own desire, so that you can act justly  
 — if you distort or neglect justice, God is fully aware  
 of what you do.

(S. 4: 135, M.A.S. Abdel Haleem translation)

You who believe, be steadfast in your devotion to  
 God and bear witness impartially: do not let hatred  
 of others lead you away from justice, but adhere to  
 justice, for that is closer to awareness of God. Be  
 mindful of God: God is well aware of all that you do.

(S. 5:8, M.A.S. Abdel Haleem translation)

Goodness does not consist in turning your face  
 towards East or West. The truly good are those who  
 believe in God and the Last Day, in the angels, the  
 Scripture, and the prophets; who give away some of  
 their wealth, however much they cherish it, to their  
 relatives, to orphans, the needy, travelers and beggars,  
 and to liberate those in bondage; those who keep  
 up the prayer and pay the prescribed alms; who  
 keep pledges whenever they make them; who are  
 steadfast in misfortune, adversity, and times of danger.  
 These are the ones who are true, and it is they who  
 are aware of God.

(2:177, M.A.S. Abdel Haleem translation)

They ask thee  
 What they should spend  
 (In charity). Say: Whatever wealth  
 Ye spend that is good,  
 Is for parents and kindred  
 And orphans And those in want  
 And for wayfarers  
 And whatever ye do  
 That is good, -Allah  
 Knoweth it well.

(Surah 2, 215, IFTA translation)

***Commentary on Surah 2,215***

“Three questions arise in charity: 1) What shall we give? 2) to whom shall we give? And 3) how shall we give? The answer is here. Give anything that is good, useful, helpful, valuable. It may be property or money; it may be a helping hand: it may be advice; it may be a kind word; “whatever ye do that is good” is charity. On the other hand, if you throw away what is useless, there is no charity in it. Or if you give something with a harmful intent, e.g., a sword to a madman, or a drug or sweets or even money to some one whom you want to entrap or corrupt, it is no charity but a gift of damnation.

To whom should you give? It may be tempting to earn the world's praise by a gift that will be talked about, but are you meeting the needs of those who have the first claim on you? If you are not, you are like a person who defrauds creditors: it is no charity. Every gift is judged by its unselfish character: the degree of need or claim is a factor which you should consider: if you disregard it, there is something selfish behind it. How should it be given? As in the sight of Allah; this shuts out all pretense, show, and insincerity.

(From *The Holy Qura-An, English translation of the meanings and Commentary*,  
Revised and Edited by the Presidency of Islamic Researches,  
IFTA, Call and Guidance)





## Native American Resources

Grandfather,  
Look at our brokenness.

We know that in all Creation  
Only the human family  
Has strayed from the Sacred Way.

We know that we are the ones  
Who are divided  
And we are the ones  
Who must come back together  
To walk in the Sacred Way.

Grandfather,  
Sacred One,  
Teach us love, compassion, honor  
That we may heal the earth  
And heal each other.

(Ojibway Prayer)

It is strictly believed and understood by the Sioux that a child is the greatest gift from Wakan Tanka, in response to many devout prayers, sacrifices, and promises. Therefore the child is considered “sent by Wakan Tanka,” through some element—namely the element of human nature.

(Robert Higheagle, Teton Sioux)

Great Spirit, Great Spirit, my Grandfather, all over the earth the faces of living things are all alike. . . Look upon these faces of children without number and with children in their arms, that they may face the winds and walk the good road to the day of quiet.

(Black Elk, Oglala Sioux holy man)

In many Indian cultures, young children are considered sacred gifts to the family and to the tribe. . . Each child is to be treated with personal respect as an individual bearing special traits. . . Each adult generation is to acknowledge the sacredness of young children and to care for the coming generation.

(Wahacanka Ska Win Gough)

The gods and the spirits of the sacred mountains created a [child]. The [child] was made of all rains, springs, rivers, ponds, black clouds, and sky . . . with feet made of earth and legs of lightning. White shell forms the knees and the body is white and yellow corn; the flesh is of day-break, hair of darkness; eyes are of the sun . . . white corn forms the teeth, black corn the eyebrows and red coral beads the nose. . . tears are of rain, the tongue of straight lightning, and the voice of thunder . . . human's heart is obsidian, the little whirlwind keeps nerves in motion, and motion and movement is the air . . . the name of this new kind of being was “created from everything.”

(A poetic legend of Indians, *Christians and Native American Concerns in the Late 20th Century*. Church Council of Greater Seattle, 1981)

Then I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and round beneath me was the whole hoop of the world. And while I stood there I saw more than I can tell and I understood more than I saw. For I was seeing in the sacred manner the shape of all things of the spirit and the shapes as they must live together like one being. And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people was one of many hoops that make one circle, wide as daylight and starlight. And in the center grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of one mother and one father. And I saw that it was holy.

(Black Elk)

O Great Spirit, Creator of all things;  
Human Beings, trees, grass, berries.  
Help us, be kind to us.  
Let us be happy on earth.  
Let us lead our children  
To a good life and old age.  
These, our people; give them good minds  
To love one another.  
O Great Spirit,  
Be kind to us.  
Give these people the favor  
To see green trees,  
Green grass, flowers, and berries  
This next spring.  
So we all meet again.  
O Great Spirit,  
We ask of you.

(Mohawk prayer)



## Sikh Resources

Oh child! This is your mother's blessing. May you never forget God even for a moment and always remember the Lord of the universe. By meditating on God all the sins are obliterated and generations are enlightened. Ponder over always on that Lord who is boundless. May the true Guru be kind to you and may you nurture love for the company of saints. May the preservation of your honor by the Lord be your attire: Singing of His praise your daily bread. Drink ever the nectar of God's name and live long. By remembering God may you attain bliss. May joys and playful pleasures be yours. May your hopes be realized and may you never get distressed. Let your mind hover like a humming black bee at the lotus feet of God. Says the humble Nanak [the founder of Sikhism], be attached to God like a pied-cuckoo that rejoices in ecstasy on finding rain drop.

(Hymn inscribed in Sikh scripture and composed by the fifth Guru Arjun  
Dev as a blessing to children)

I humbly bow to those who being powerful yet stay meek; To those who having status stay lowly; To those who having wisdom appear naive; To those who live the word and the will of God; To those who obey His code; Such persons are honored in this world and in eternity.

(Bhai Gurdas, Var)

The Lord is my Mother and Father. He it is who blesses me with sustenance, And, the Lord takes care of me. For I am the child of God. He abandons me never and feeds me steadily, And minds not my demerits and hugs me to His bosom, And he blesses me with all I seek; yea, He the Bliss giving Father, And he has blessed me with Words of Wisdom, yea, the riches of the name, and Made me worthy of Himself. And made me a partner (of His Grace)

with the Guru, and now I possess all joys. May my Lord forsake me not: Yea, He, who is my All powerful Lord.

(Hymn composed by Guru Arjan)

### A Sikh Prayer for Peace

God judges us according to our deeds, not the coat that we wear. Truth is above everything, but higher still is truthful living. Know that we attain God when we love, and only that victory endures in consequence of which no one is defeated.

### From the Guru Granth Sahib

BYrau mhlw 4 ] (1134-9)

bhairo mehlaa 4.

Bhairao, Fourth Mehl:

suik®qu krxI swru jpmwII ] (1134-9, BYrau, mÚ 4)

sukariṯ karṇee saar japmaalee.

To do good deeds is the best rosary.

ihrdY Pyir cLY quDu nwII ]1] (1134-9, BYrau, mÚ 4)

hirḍai fayr chalai tuDh naalee. ||1||

Chant on the beads within your heart, and it shall go along with you. ||1||

hir hir nwmu jphu bnvwII ] (1134-10, BYrau, mÚ 4)

har har naam japahu banvaalee.

Chant the Name of the Lord, Har, Har, the Lord of the forest.

kir ikrpw mylhu sqsMgiq qUit geI mwieAw jm jwII ]1]

rhwau ] (1134-10, BYrau, mÚ 4)

kar kirpaa maylhu satsangat̄ toot ga-ee maa-i-aa jam jaalee. ||1|| rahaa-o.

Have mercy on me, Lord, and unite me with the Sat Sangat, the True Congregation, so that I may be released from Maya's noose of death. ||1||Pausell

gurmuiK syvw Gwil ijin GwII ] (1134-11, BYrau, mÚ 4)

gurmukh sayvaa ghaal jin ghaalee.

Whoever, as Gurmukh, serves and works hard,

iqsu GVIAY sbdu scI tkswlI ]2] (1134-11, BYrau, mÚ 4)  
tis gharhee-ai sabad sachee taksaalee. ||2||  
is molded and shaped in the true mint of the Shabad,  
the Word of God. ||2||

hir Agm Agocru guir Agm idKwII ] (1134-12, BYrau,  
mÚ 4)  
har agam agochar gur agam dikhaalee.  
The Guru has revealed to me the Inaccessible and  
Unfathomable Lord.

ivic kwieAw ngr IDw hir BwII ]3] (1134-12, BYrau, mÚ 4)  
vich kaa-i-aa nagar laDhaa har bhaalee. ||3||  
Searching within the body-village, I have found the  
Lord. ||3||

hm bwirk hir ipqw pRiqpwII ] (1134-12, BYrau, mÚ 4)  
ham baarik har pitaa partipaalee.  
I am just a child; the Lord is my Father, who nurtures  
and cherishes me.

jn nwnk qwrhu ndir inhwlI ]4]3] (1134-13, BYrau, mÚ 4)  
jan naanak taarahu naḍar nihalee. ||4||3||  
Please save servant Nanak, Lord; bless him with Your  
Glance of Grace. ||4||3||

BYrau mhlw 5 ] (1137-19)  
bhaira mehlaa 5.  
Bhairao, Fifth Mehl:

KUbu KUbu KUbu KUbu KUbu qyro nwmu ] (1137-  
19, BYrau, mÚ 5)  
khoob khoob khoob khoob khoob ṭayro naam.  
Excellent, excellent, excellent, excellent, excellent is Your  
Name.

JUTu JUTu JUTu JUTu dunI gumwnu ]1] rhwau ]  
(1137-19, BYrau, mÚ 5)  
jhooth jhooth jhooth jhooth dunee gumaan. ||1|| rahaa-o.  
False, false, false, false is pride in the world. ||1||Pause||

ngj qry bMdy dIdwru Apwru ] (1137-19, BYrau, mÚ 5)  
nagaj ṭayray banday deedar apaar.  
The glorious vision of Your slaves, O Infinite Lord, is  
wonderful and beautiful.

nwm ibnw sB dunIAw Cwru ]1] (1138-1, BYrau, mÚ 5)  
naam binaa sabh dunee-aa chhaar. ||1||  
Without the Naam, the Name of the Lord, the whole  
world is just ashes. ||1||

Acrju qyrl kudriq qry kdm slwh ] (1138-1, BYrau, mÚ 5)  
achraj ṭayree kudraṭ ṭayray kaḍam salaah.  
Your Creative Power is marvellous, and Your Lotus Feet  
are admirable.

gnlv qyrl isPiq scy pwiqswH ]2] (1138-2, BYrau, mÚ 5)  
ganeev ṭayree sifat sachay paatisaah. ||2||  
Your Praise is priceless, O True King. ||2||

nIDirAw Dr pnh Kudwie ] (1138-2, BYrau, mÚ 5)  
neeDhri-aa Dhar panah khudaa-ay.  
God is the Support of the unsupported.

grlb invwju idnu rYix iDAwie ]3] (1138-2, BYrau, mÚ 5)  
gareeb nivaaj din rain Dhi-aa-ay. ||3||  
Meditate day and night on the Cherisher of the meek  
and humble. ||3||

nwnk kau Kuid Ksm imhrvwn ] (1138-3, BYrau, mÚ 5)  
naanak ka-o khud khasam miharvaan.  
God has been merciful to Nanak.

Alhu n ivsrY idl jIA prwn ]4]10] (1138-3, BYrau, mÚ 5)  
alhu na visrai dil jee-a paraan. ||4||10||  
May I never forget God; He is my heart, my soul, my  
breath of life. ||4||10||



## Unitarian Universalist Resources

### Give Us the Spirit of the Child

Give us the spirit of the child.

Give us the child who lives within:

*The child who trusts, the child who imagines, the child who sings.*

The child who receives without reservation, the child who gives without judgment.

*Give us a child's eyes, that we may receive the beauty and freshness of this day like a sunrise;*

Give us a child's ears, that we may hear the music of mythical times;

*Give us a child's heart, that we may be filled with wonder and delight;*

Give us a child's faith, that we may be cured of our cynicism;

*Give us the spirit of the child, who is not afraid to need; who is not afraid to love.*

(Sara Moores Campbell)

### Benediction

And now, may we have faith in life to do wise planting that the generations to come may reap even more abundantly than we. May we be bold in bringing to fruition the golden dreams of human kinship and justice. This we ask that the fields of promise become fields of reality.

(V. Emil Gudmundson)

### A Sikh Prayer for Peace

God judges us according to our deeds, not the coat that we wear. Truth is above everything, but higher still is truthful living. Know that we attain God when we love, and only that victory endures in consequence of which no one is defeated.

### New Life Comes to Us

(Congregations may wish to adapt the following reading, traditionally used for a naming or child dedication, to honor all children.)

New life comes to us as a gift.

*Each new life makes its demand, exacts our attentiveness, enlists and organizes our energies, and blesses us. May we be worthy of the gift, and glad receivers of the blessing.*

New life appeals to us.

*Each new life is helpless and so calls forth our help, is weak and so calls forth our strength, is innocent and so calls forth our wisdom. May we be wise in our strength and ever-strong in our help.*

New life grows.

*Each new life ventures first words, first steps, first essays in the art of living. Each grows, ever surpassing the life that was for the life that shall be. May we patiently wait, and watch in wonder.*

New life bears untold promise.

*Each new life has a story to tell, and we shall listen. Each new life goes forth from us, laying the child's sovereign claim on whole realms of being we had called our own.*

All: God of grace, may they be blessed, whatever the pathways they follow, whatever the life they claim as their own.

(George Kimmich Beach)

### Commitment

I am only one

But still I am one.

I cannot do everything,

But still I can do something.

And because I cannot do everything,

I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

(Edward Everett Hale)