

Section 4

The Road Ahead: Action Ideas for the Children's Sabbaths Weekend and Throughout the Year

The Children's Sabbath is all about relationships: our relationship to the Divine; our relationships with others in our faith community; our faith community's relationship to other places of worship and other faith traditions; our place of worship's relationship to those who are serving and advocating for children in the community and across the nation. And it is especially about our relationships with children and families: those in our place of worship, those in our own families, those in the community, and those children throughout the United States whom we may never meet in person but who need us to stand for them.

"...All life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. We are made to live together because of the interrelated structure of reality."⁵⁷

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

There are two kinds of action to plan for your Children's Sabbath: hands-on service and advocacy activities for the Children's Sabbath weekend itself, and actions that can be carried out throughout the year to come to make a lasting difference for children.

The activities that you plan for the weekend of your Children's Sabbath are an essential way that participants can live out their fresh appreciation for these many relationships. While the worship services and education programs help people pray, learn, and reflect on what their faith calls them to do in response to the urgent needs of children, the activities give them an opportunity to

put their faith into action. With the inspiration of the worship and the deepened understanding from the education programs, people will be eager to get into action right away. Activities on the weekend itself provide the immediate satisfaction of responding faithfully to the message of the service of worship and the learning of the educational programs. If people only learn about the crises facing children and families, they can feel hopeless or guilty or helpless. That's when it becomes so easy to think, "I'll just take care of myself and look out for 'my own.'" By contrast, if people are provided with specific ways to help in response to these problems right away, they will feel hopeful, motivated, energized, and positive, and want to do even more. And that is the beginning of becoming the Beloved Community in joyful relationship with one another.

"[If we are to have peace on earth, our] loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective. No individual [or nation] can live alone...and as long as we try, the more we are going to have war in this world. Now the judgment of God is upon us, and we must either learn to live together as brothers or we are all going to perish together as fools."⁵⁸

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

⁵⁷ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution," sermon delivered at National Cathedral, Washington, D.C., March 31, 1968.

⁵⁸ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "A Christmas Sermon on Peace," Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, Dec. 24, 1967.

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Being the Beloved Community of which Dr. King spoke is about an on-going relationship, of course—not just a one-day stand—and so it is vital to plan year-round efforts to improve the lives of children.

This may mean re-energizing existing efforts for children in your place of worship, inspiring individuals to make new commitments to volunteer, donate, advocate, or help children in need in some other way, or it may mean that the congregation as a whole develops a new program or other effort to improve the lives of children and create communities of justice, love, and peace.

These new, effective actions to improve the lives of children in our nation, to forge and strengthen relationships to create the Beloved Community are a vital goal of the Children’s Sabbath. For the *National Observance of Children’s Sabbaths* movement is about far more than one religious service or one weekend of activities. It is about energizing existing efforts, motivating members who may have been on the sidelines, igniting a passion for making a difference, connecting concern to opportunities to act, deepening understanding of how the Eternal calls us to faithful lives of love, justice, and peace and to nurture and protect children, those who are poor, and the vulnerable. It is about uniting all of these relationships and all of these intentions into a nationwide movement that brings us closer to living as the Beloved Community into which the Divine calls us.

The **United Church of Christ in Hayward, Calif.**, has a long and strong Children’s Sabbath tradition upon which they continue to build. In 2004, 40 backpacks filled with school supplies were collected, blessed, and sent to Fresno International Refugees Ministries for Hmong refugees; in 2005 they adopted an inner-city Oakland classroom as one of their members; and in 2006 they explored unique ways in which they could respond to their young neighbors. This past year, they collected food and funds for an Emergency Food Pantry serving hundreds of children and their families each month. The Children’s Sabbath comes after 40 Days of Prayer, a UCC- and Disciples of Christ-sponsored event that culminates in the Children’s Sabbath each year. The sermon, prayers, and music all focused on children and justice. The church prepared a news release to share their inspiring observance with the broader community.

This section provides a range of resources to help you plan relationship-building activities for the weekend and throughout the year as we seek justice, love, and peace for children:

- Tips for Planning Children’s Sabbath Activities and Actions
- Beginning... Renewing... Organizing the Children’s Sabbaths Movement by Matt Rosen, CDF Deputy Director of Religious Action
- Building Relationships with Children and Families
- Building Relationships in the Community
- Building Relationships with Decision-Makers and Opinion-Shapers
- Building Relationships with the Children’s Defense Fund
- Resources for Faithful Child Advocacy

The Union for Reform Judaism describes the success of **Springfield, New Jersey’s Temple Sha’arey Shalom’s** social action. Their approach models the effectiveness of engaging members across the generations, offering a variety of opportunities to match interests, and providing one-time, short-term, and on-going opportunities. “This 350-family congregation in suburban New Jersey has built a strong social action program, seeking to maximize the opportunities for members to be involved, while working to alleviate the problems of a wide range of needs for the disadvantaged. Most of the programs initiated by the congregation require only a short time commitment, which has, in part, led to the congregation’s success in attracting a large percentage of its members. Programs include, among others: providing housing and meals for homeless families at the synagogue for one week every summer; conducting a ‘Mitzvah Mall’ at Chanukah, with students picking the organizations which would receive the donations; an on-going relationship with a local soup kitchen; ‘Paint the Town,’ an interfaith project in which the synagogue takes responsibility for repairing a house of a needy person in the area; and collecting supplies for needy children in a ‘Mitzvah Crib.’” For additional descriptions of effective social action efforts in synagogues, visit www.urj.org.

Tips for Planning Children's Sabbath Activities and Actions

As you plan activities for the Children's Sabbaths weekend and for the year to come, keep the following tips in mind:

First, offer a range of activities focusing on raising awareness, hands-on service, and advocacy. Making a difference for children requires all three kinds of effort! It also enables people to choose activities based on their particular skills and interests.

Second, plan some activities that can be completed on the Children's Sabbath (such as assembling care packages for children going into foster care) **and some that will lead people into long-term commitments** (such as signing up volunteers to do outreach and enrollment for public children's health coverage programs or volunteer with a mentoring or after-school program once a week).

Third, plan activities that will engage all ages. For example, if there is a table to write letters to elected officials, provide crayons and markers so that young children can draw pictures to enclose, or have them dictate their letters to an older child or adult.

Fourth, use the Children's Sabbath to reinforce existing congregational programs that serve children, particularly programs that promote justice and peace, and work to eliminate need, hurt, and hate (for example, you could highlight accomplishments, recruit new people to help, or solicit donations) while introducing new opportunities to serve children and families and keep all children safe from need, harm, and hate.

Finally, be sure you are prepared to guide people in the activities so that they understand the connection between the worship and the action. You may want to provide a preview of the activities on a bulletin insert or during the announcement time in worship. During the activity period, it works best to have several people at each activity who are prepared to explain and guide participation.

Beginning... Renewing... Organizing the Children's Sabbaths Movement

By Matt Rosen, Deputy Director of Religious Action, Children's Defense Fund

In the absence of a clear, easy, feel-good answer to what we need to do so that all children can live out their God-given potential, the below model offers a place to start, re-energize and expand how you and your faith community engage in the Children's Sabbaths movement. The ability to advocate for all our children relies on our capacity to articulate our moral responsibilities, understand our environment, identify the needs of our children and their families, participate in our political process, and create pressure on society to recognize injustice. The power of the Children's Sabbaths movement to create social change through advocacy increases as we increase our capacity to relate with the Creator and creation as well as organize others to participate in advocacy work. Therefore, we must both work to sustain our own action as well as engage those around us.

1. Connect with your core faith beliefs about the extent to which you are responsible to care and protect all children. Pray about, discern, and discuss the following questions:

- A. What specific human rights does God call us to extend to all people simply because we are all children of God (examples include access to health care, housing, education, food, clothing, etc.)?
- B. How does my child advocacy ministry embody and how does it fall short of The Golden Rule, which calls us to do unto others as we would have them do unto us?
- C. How can I continue to rely on God's love for me when I am overwhelmed by the hurt and pain our children face every day?
- D. To what extent am I called, and is my house of worship called, to work for justice and the health of all children?

Tips:

- Share these questions with your religious leaders, faith community, regional and national religious partners.

- Request that your religious leaders incorporate and respond to these questions in his or her messages, writings, and other communications.
- Raise these questions in educational sessions, prayer groups, meetings, and conversations during social gatherings at your place of worship.

2. Increase awareness of the issues affecting children through educating yourself and your community.

On your own or in partnership with others in your congregation and community, look for answers to the following questions and others that arise in the process.

- A. How many children are uninsured in your faith community, city, state and country?
- B. How do the high school graduation rates compare to the youth incarceration rates at the local, state, and national levels?
- C. What social/governmental/bureaucratic and other barriers keep children from having access to needed goods and services?
- D. What healthy, safe, and affordable activities are available for children and youth during the summer and after school?

Tips:

- Work with your local Department of Health and Human Services, schools, other child care providers and other child advocates to answer these questions.
- Schedule visits to local service providers such as area hospitals and schools to see how they work with low-income families.
- Share the information with your faith community through bulletins and small gatherings.
- Write letters to the editor of your local newspapers and encourage them to investigate and educate the public about these concerns.

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3. Get involved in the lives of children and their families.

- A. Establish a personal relationship with children and their families in your faith community and neighborhood so that they know you are available as a caring resource. As you are able, you might offer to assist in taking a child to the doctor or caring for a child who has to stay home sick while the parents are at work.
- B. Donate time, money, and/or other resources to organizations serving the needs of children in your area.
- C. Collaborate with various community organizations and child advocates to host a health fair to ensure all children who are eligible for Medicaid and SCHIP are enrolled. Visit www.coveringkidsand-families.org for more information.
- D. Work with your faith community to create and encourage physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually healthy environments for all children. Free your neighborhoods and homes of trash, guns, drugs, and hate. Fill them with books, toys, nutritious food, creativity, hope and love.

Tips:

- We all interact with children and families in our faith communities and neighborhoods. Talk with these children and their caregivers directly to find out what they need and want to better their lives.
- Take into account different family structures: both parents work, single-parent household, blended families, foster families, and families where children are being raised by grandparents or other relatives.
- Again, work with your local Department of Health and Human Services, schools, other child care providers, and other advocates to care for and protect our children.
- Recognizing that we don’t have the capacity to meet all the needs of children immediately, focus on being the best solution you can be one step at a time.

4. Be a voice for children in the democratic process.

- A. Vote in every election based in part on the candidate’s priority of improving the health and well-being of all children.
- B. Help your elected officials represent you properly by constantly communicating with them about CDF’s Healthy Child Campaign and Cradle to

Prison Pipeline® Campaign through email, postal mail, faxes, phone calls, and personal visits.

- C. Establish a relationship with your local, county, state, and federal elected officials to a point where they know your name, your faith community’s name, and your community’s commitment to justice.
- D. Host candidate forums and town hall meetings to talk about the issues affecting children and get candidates and citizens to publicly pledge to work for a healthier tomorrow.

Tips:

- Do not feel like you have to re-invent the wheel. Partner with other advocacy organizations to get updates on future legislative votes, tips on getting your faith community involved, communication tools, talking points, etc.
- Remember that you don’t need to be an expert to speak up for children. You don’t need to know all the ins and outs of the legislative process; advocacy organizations can help you figure out who your representatives are, how to contact them, and when your communication will make the biggest difference. When you communicate with your elected officials’ staff about how you want them to vote, they don’t expect you to be an expert either, and they won’t ask you “tough questions” if you call to register your opinion; they do want to know how you feel about an upcoming vote, so feel comfortable telling them.
- Remember that this is a nation “of the people, by the people, and for the people”—and YOU ARE THE PEOPLE! Elected officials are eager to hear from you so that they know how to represent you so they can remain in office. Know that there are plenty of special interest groups lined up to talk to your officials if you choose not to take advantage of these opportunities.
- Hold your elected officials accountable for their votes and actions. Express both your appreciation and/or disappointment.
- In thinking about which form of communication to engage in, the rule of thumb is that the more effort you have to exert, the longer you sustain your efforts, and the broader your coalition, the more attention your communication garners and the more effective you will be.

5. Protest.

- A. After other negotiation methods fail and when the political system is not enacting justice fast enough, organize and participate in marches, sit-ins (pray-ins), consumer boycotts, hunger strikes, work strikes, refusal to pay taxes or other actions of non-violent civil disobedience.

Tips:

- Before selecting a specific action, be able to clearly articulate how the action connects with the intended target and his/her/its motivation for continuing the status quo.

- Create a clear message and media plan for your protest to ensure it gets as much publicity for your cause as possible.
- Protest can be about moving policies toward justice, ending a particular social or business practice, pulling the public out of complacency, and/or capturing the public’s attention on a particular issue.
- Be aware and prepare for the possible negative responses to your selected actions, such as public shunning, imprisonment, violence, etc.

Helpful Reminders to Sustain Yourself and Your Community in the Children’s Sabbaths Movement

- **Manage expectations.** Recognize that this work is hard and requires commitment and consistent efforts. Injustice has existed for thousands of years. The Blessed Community will not be created in a day. The keys are to find God and joy in the struggle and focus on being the solution you can be.
- **Engage in advocacy in ways that reflect your skill level, interests, and availability,** and remember that every step, regardless of how small the step, is important and worthy of celebration. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., affirmed, “If you cannot fly, drive; if you cannot drive, run; if you cannot run, walk; if you cannot walk, crawl. But keep moving.”⁵⁹ You are the one you’ve been waiting for! Take on more responsibility as you achieve and celebrate success. Feeling overwhelmed and/or frustrated are indications that you need to take a step back or bring in some additional help.
- **Remember that you are not alone!** We will only get there if we get there together. Join or create coalitions among people of faith, service providers, and staff or supporters of advocacy organizations to share the load, encourage each other, and celebrate together. Also, be in contact with the national, regional, or local staff, committees, or programs for justice, social concerns, and children and families within your faith tradition.
- **Treat everyone as a child of God.** Everyone you come in contact with (children, volunteers, religious leaders, elected officials, celebrities) is human and is faced with difficult choices. All of us have the desire to love and be loved, as well as the capacity to act against God and neighbor. To be the best we can be, we need to answer God’s call to always choose love. There are always ways of expressing ideas and beliefs so as not to dehumanize others; sometimes it takes extra creativity and patience.

⁵⁹ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Spelman College 79th Founders Day,” Sisters Chapel, Spelman College, Atlanta, Georgia, April 10, 1960.

Building Relationships with Children and Families

Making a difference in the lives of children and transforming the priorities of our nation is, ultimately, about building relationships—building relationships with children, with families, with other places of worship, with community leaders and organizations, and with our elected leaders. Read on for how you can forge or strengthen these transformative relationships that will change your life at the same time they change the lives of children. Some of these can be done on the Children's Sabbath weekend itself; others point the way forward for the year ahead.

A Family of Faith: *One of the many blessings of belonging to a faith community is having a family of faith, recognizing ourselves as related to each other as children of God. Just as our understanding of neighbor transcends simply the person next door, so too our understanding of every child as a child of God means that our responsibility to, and relationships with, children go far beyond those in our immediate family and even beyond those who attend our particular place of worship. Plan actions springing from the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths® weekend that will affirm our connection to children and families everywhere and create new opportunities to be in a relationship with them.*

Encourage members to mentor a child or volunteer at an after-school program for youth, or start such a program in your place of worship.

Arrange for a representative from a mentoring or after-school program to talk to congregation members and sign up volunteers. Ask the representative to identify ways that people can help even if they can't commit to an on-going volunteer role, such as donating items or money, arranging for one-time events like tickets to a game or the theater, or providing professional expertise in some area. Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America is just one mentoring program that can help your members get connected to a young person (www.bbbs.org).

Host a CDF Freedom Schools® program.

Freedom Schools provide critical summer and after-school enrichment through a model curriculum that supports children and families around five essential components: high quality academic enrichment, parent and family involvement, civic engagement and social action, intergenerational leadership development, and nutrition, health and mental health. Learn more about the program and how you can get involved by visiting www.childrensdefense.org/Freedom_Schools.

Support members in reaching out to help a single-parent, kinship care, or foster care family

by babysitting, inviting them to events with their children, or providing transportation. Work with a community program or agency working with families to find out what kind of help is needed and share those requests with congregation members to fulfill through the congregation's newsletter, bulletin, announcement time, bulletin

board, or other means of communication. Encourage congregation members to look for informal opportunities to offer to lend a hand as well. One of the congregation's committees or groups, like the social action committee or a parents' group, might take this on as an ongoing commitment.

Invite youths to events at the next educational level,

such as taking a high school student to a college basketball game, or a middle school student to a high school play or band concert. Help them set their sights ahead. Talk with them about their hopes and fears. Do they believe they can succeed at the next stage? What do they fear are the obstacles? How can you help allay their concerns or help them overcome what could get in the way? The high school youth group could organize this for middle school students or the young adults group might plan an outing for high schoolers. If there is a community college, university, or other higher education institution in your area, your congregation might partner with the local high school and that institution to organize a day to bring high school students to campus for a tour. If possible, work with the high school to invite students who would be the first in their family to attend college or who otherwise might not imagine they could make it that far educationally.

Arrange to have volunteer "pew parents"

who sit in a designated pew with children during the worship service so that an exhausted parent or caregiver can sit on their own on occasion and use that time for renewal. If children attend your place of worship unaccompanied by adults, this can also provide them with an important sense of connection. Publicize the availability of pew parents so that visitors and new members know they are available.

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Explore your place of worship's rituals related to birth, coming of age, and membership (such as baptism, infant dedication, namings, adding to the Cradle Roll, bar/bat mitzvah, and confirmation). In what ways does the faith community make a commitment to the child or young person through those rituals? How can your place of worship use these occasions to deepen members' understanding of the commitment they are making to the child or young person, and how can you help them discover ways to fulfill that commitment, not only in spiritual nurture and support but in other aspects of that child's life? How can these rituals and life-cycle events nurture children's own understanding of the connection between faith, justice, and compassion? The Union for Reform Judaism suggests, "*Encourage bar and bat mitzvah students to engage in tzedakah projects as a sign that they are ready to take responsibility for their observance of the mitzvot. Instead of bima flowers, consider decorating the bima with decorative food baskets, which can be donated later to a food pantry. Books can be used as centerpieces and then donated to a needy public school library or other organization. For further bar and bat mitzvah project suggestions visit the [Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism's] Youth Mitzvah Projects website and the social action program bank.*"

Host a movie or game night at your place of worship to encourage families to spend quality time together. Be sure that all feel welcome, so that single young adults or older adults on their own are included and can develop those invaluable intergenerational relationships with children and youths as well as their parents. A movie or game night is a good time for children to invite their friends who don't already have a connection to a place of worship. **Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C.**, instituted a game night several years ago. In addition to the board games on hand at the church, those who attend often bring a favorite game to play with others. They order pizza, supplemented by salad, drinks, and dessert that participants contribute.

Sponsor a parents' night out to give parents and other caregivers a chance to recharge their batteries. **Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church** also hosts occasional parents' nights out. For instance, on Valentine's Day (when it is typically hard for parents to find a sitter), other adults in the church organize a meal and crafts activities for the children in the early evening while their parents head out to area restaurants for a few hours. The parents return in time to get the children home and to bed at a

reasonable hour, while the church volunteers can head out for their own Valentine's celebration. Now that's love! As it happens, a few blocks away **Lutheran Church of the Reformation in Washington, D.C.**, also has a tradition of hosting parents' night out, while nearby **Christ Church Washington Parish Episcopal Church** offers a holiday drop-in program so that parents can leave their children in a safe, playful environment while they tackle shopping lists. These opportunities are publicized to the community at large so that any stressed, short-handed parent can take advantage of the respite.

Start a parent support group for single parents or kinship care families (those headed by a grandparent or other relative). Publicize it to the community beyond just your congregation. **Meyers Park Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina**, hosts a Parenting Circle for parents of children in elementary school and younger. The week of their Children's Sabbath in 2007, parents were invited to discuss Wendy Mogel's *The Blessing of the Skinned Knee*.

Prepare care packages of new clothes, personal toiletries, a small duffel bag or suitcase, and/or a welcome gift for children placed in foster care homes.

Provide internships, year-round and summer job opportunities, or job-shadowing experiences and guidance for families and youth in need. Partner with other places of worship, community organizations, and area high schools to pool the opportunities and to identify those who might benefit from them.

Celebrate the strengths and successes of children and youths in your place of worship and in the community. Hold events, arrange for public recognition, and extend personal congratulations.

Ensure that weekday child care programs affirm diversity. If your place of worship houses or runs a weekday child care program, ensure that it affirms diversity and inclusiveness—as should any programming conducted on the weekend. *The Anti-Bias Curriculum* by Louise Derman Sparks is one example of a resource that can be used to help child care programs promote an anti-bias perspective.

Provide health coverage information to your congregation. Every state has informational material on public children's health insurance programs. This material provides information on how to apply for these programs, what benefits are included, and what, if any, cost is involved in enrollment and participation. Your state public children's health insurance agencies can provide your congregation with such materials as flyers, informational brochures, posters, and applications. Visit www.apha.org/memberships/states/stateregpha to link to your state's public health association. *Before the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths weekend*, get copies of these materials. The state can also provide updates on changes in eligibility levels, documentation requirements, and contact information. *During Children's Sabbath events*, have copies of materials that describe public children's health coverage as well as applications available wherever the congregation gathers (for instance, in the fellowship hall). *After the Children's Sabbath*, continue to make these materials available in an appropriate location in your congregation's buildings, such as your place of worship's library, main office, main meeting hall, or in the lobby area leading to the sanctuary. Provide your religious leaders and staff with a copy of these materials so that they are familiar with them and can assist those who need it.

“Food, Fun, and Physicals”: That was how **Pratt United Methodist Church in Jackson, Mississippi**, billed the Health Fair for Children that they hosted from 9:00 until noon on Saturday of the 2007 Children's Sabbath weekend. The children were given health checks from registered nurses. They also participated in games and enjoyed a nutritious meal. Before leaving, they viewed a DVD about good dental practices and were given a package of materials for healthy dental care as well as other health-related gifts. The following day, the church celebrated a Children's Sabbath worship service with children and youths in leadership roles. The church plans to follow up the Children's Sabbath by monitoring the children's health with further health checks.

Provide free tax filing assistance to low-income working families. Before the Children's Sabbath, find out about Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites in your community or other places that are conducting outreach and enrollment efforts to help low-income families receive the benefits for which they are eligible. On the Children's Sabbath, sign up volunteers for these existing outreach projects. To find a nearby VITA site:

- Call the IRS at 1 (800) TAX-1040 or 1 (800) 849-1040
- Visit AARP's website (www.aarp.org/money/taxaide) or call their toll-free hotline for information: 1 (888) 227-7669

Publicize free family-friendly events offered by your place of worship or in the community. Make all feel welcome.

Building Relationships in the Community

Beloved Community: *Dr. King asked the question: “Where do we go from here: chaos or community?” By participating in the National Observance of Children’s Sabbaths—a nationwide effort—places of worship are taking a stand for community in the broad, inclusive way that Dr. King intended. Making connections locally is an important aspect of that community building, too. Places of worship, community organizations and programs, and other community members who care about children and also want to create change are all out there. Now is the time to reach out and make new connections, so that together we can weave a web of community support so tight that no child can fall through.*

Partner with other places of worship and community organizations to combine resources, meet needs, and build connections. Working through the appropriate staff and committees in your own place of worship, assess the interests, resources, needs, and partners available for a new or expanded effort to improve the lives of children:

- 1. Interests:** What is your congregation already doing to serve or advocate on behalf of children? How are their needs included and met through your place of worship? What past or current efforts have been most successful? Why do you think that is? What past or current efforts were not successful? Why do you think that is? What methods, programs, and events have been most successful in motivating and empowering members of your congregation to act on behalf of others?
- 2. Resources:** What resources are available in your congregation to meet the needs of children and families? What resources are already committed to children and social justice? What are potential resources that might be committed? In addition to financial resources, consider your physical resources—buildings, vans, playground, audiovisual, and the like. Think about your people resources. What kinds of skills, experience, contacts, time, and interests do your members have that could be contributed to an effort to help children and families?
- 3. Needs:** What are the needs of children and families in your community, state, and nation that your congregation might feel called to help meet? There are many resources to help you develop an understanding of urgent unmet needs your congregation might address. Those that touch members themselves are powerfully motivating. There are also needs that are evident through the media and others identified by community organi-

zations. Conversations with community members is a vital way to learn what problems are pressing on others about which your members might be unaware.

- 4. Partners:** Who in the community might become your partners in a new effort or join you to strengthen an existing effort? Concern for children is a powerful unifying force. Make the most of this opportunity to build relationships with other places of worship and with community organizations and leaders to improve the lives of children. Develop a list of effective organizations, agencies, and programs in the community that might welcome a partnership with your place of worship. Develop another list of other places of worship that might be good partners. Each partner might bring something different to the relationship—varied interests and resources, different reach into communities that would benefit from the new services or effort, unique perspectives on the problems and what is needed. Invest time in listening to and learning from each other, and developing a shared plan in which all feel ownership.

In **Baltimore, Maryland, Temple Oheb Shalom and St. Gregory’s**, an inner-city African American congregation, have nurtured a flourishing and fruitful relationship through a community garden partnership. The *Gan Chiaie* (“Garden of Life”) community garden is located on the grounds of the synagogue and named after a late member who was an early childhood educator, religious school administrator, and social activist. The fresh, nutritious produce from the garden helps sustain guests at St. Gregory’s soup kitchen. Reports the Union for Reform Judaism, “Temple Oheb Shalom and St. Gregory volunteers harvested at least 4,000 pounds of fresh produce each year for the past two years. In addition

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to providing food for the hungry, this interfaith project fosters relationships between the local Jewish and African American communities." For more information about this social action project and others, visit www.urj.org.

Organize a community forum on incarcerated youth and the funding disparities between prisons and education in our nation. Potential speakers include juvenile court judges, educators and school administrators, and others. Or host an event to dramatize problems facing our children and galvanize others to act.

A diverse group of **Houston, Texas**, congregations and community organizations came together to present a powerful afternoon of theater, song, and action for the Children's Sabbath in 2007. Sister Mama Sonya wrote a play directed by Ms. B of "3 Sisters" in the Spirit Theatre Ministry dramatizing true stories of children without health insurance titled, "The boat may be small... yet we all will get on." Children from **A Safe Place Christian Center, Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, Community of Faith Church, L.W. Harrison Youth Group, New Faith Church, Promised Land Christian Worship Center Church, Rivers of Living Water Global Ministries, St. Mary's United Methodist Church, The Church Without Walls, Brookhollow Baptist Church, and Trinity East United Methodist Church** took turns acting out parts, rapping, singing, and reading poetry in the production. The script for the play concluded not with the customary "The End" but with "The Beginning" as audience members heard from a staff person from the Children's Defense Fund's Texas Office and then a young person took the stage with the challenge not to just "shed a few tears and go back to business as usual," but instead to use information provided in the lobby to let their representatives know how audience members felt about the lack of health insurance for all children.

Connect with another congregation to explore issues of diversity. For their eighth annual Children's Sabbath weekend, **Buffalo United Methodist Church in Kosciusko, Mississippi**, had two small group discussions about diversity, CDF, and roles that children play. The church plans to follow up their Children's Sabbath by

joining with another church for a diversity seminar with a skit.

Encourage members to host a house party to educate others about the *Cradle to Prison Pipeline* crisis and what they can do to dismantle it. The Children's Defense Fund recently issued *America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline*SM Report and other resources that you can draw upon. Invite a speaker from the community to talk with those who attend to outline the dynamics of the Pipeline and as a resource for your discussion about what you can do. For more information, visit www.childrensdefense.org/Cradletoprison.

Sponsor community events that bring people together, raise awareness, and help meet an urgent need. Director of Christian Education Marie Matthews of **Woodside United Methodist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland**, reports, "After the [Children's Sabbath] service we have our own Help the Homeless Mini-Walk [to raise funds] for Fannie Mae [which works to expand access to affordable housing] that the children organize and they register walkers in advance. This is their day, and they do it all!"

Help enroll eligible children in children's health coverage programs. Before the Children's Sabbath, contact your state's public children's health insurance agency. Ask if a staff person or qualified volunteer could come to your Children's Sabbath to enroll any eligible families, or if a volunteer from the congregation could be trained to help with the enrollment process. Publicize the availability of child health coverage enrollment assistance throughout the congregation and community, using posters, flyers, notices in community newspapers, and other channels. On the Children's Sabbath, provide a location in your congregation's buildings that will provide privacy and confidentiality to increase congregation and community members' comfort in making use of this service. Have your enrollment volunteer or staff and enrollment materials available, and be sure people know when and where to go. After the Children's Sabbath, make arrangements to provide this service again. Consider offering it on different days of the week and different times to be accessible to members of the community as well as the congregation. Share your experience with other congregations that may want to do the same, especially those that serve populations most likely to be uninsured (African American, Latino, and low-income). If you notice members of your congregation are experiencing ongoing difficulties enrolling in child health insurance programs (for example, difficulty getting

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to an office to sign up), consider taking steps to overcome these barriers (for instance, asking for volunteers at the church to provide transportation).

Find out what children in the community need, and help rally members to provide it. The Children’s Sabbath at **Meyer’s Park Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina**, was an occasion to publicize a collection of used bikes to restock the Trips for Kids Re-Cyclery Program and recruit volunteers for an “Interfaith Habitat Build” to build new homes through Habitat for Humanity. The church also offers an Open Gym session in its facilities.

Create a child advocacy bulletin board. Choose a public gathering place for your bulletin board to share news about children in need and initiatives taken by the local, state, and federal government on economic justice and children’s concerns. Contact your faith group’s public policy office or other body providing legislative and justice information and post that on the bulletin board as well. Use the bulletin board to highlight ways that your congregation is already meeting the needs of children and to highlight opportunities for members and visitors to support those efforts, too.

Making connections: Last year was the 12th Children’s Sabbath celebrated by **First Baptist Church in Springfield, Ohio**. In addition to linking their faith with children’s needs through the music, call to worship, readings, litany, prayers, act of commitment, and benediction using resources drawn from the *National Observance of Children’s Sabbaths* Manual, the Children’s Sabbath had a guest speaker who is the home and school “connector” for an elementary school. The Children’s Sabbath organizer reports that the church has built on the Children’s Sabbath with a presentation for the adult Sunday school class by the special education supervisor from the school district. The church has already had exploratory conversations with the neighborhood children’s health clinic about how together they might serve special needs children.



Building Relationships with Decision-Makers and Opinion-Shapers

Vote early, vote often. *We have a chance to influence our nation's leadership more than just during elections. Of course we should vote in every election, but that's just the beginning. Every person of faith should be encouraged to build an ongoing relationship with their elected officials and their staff to support those representatives' just and compassionate leadership that reflects your priorities for children and families. Congregations and leaders cannot and should not make partisan statements or endorse particular candidates or parties. But our faith, while personal, is not a private matter. Our values inform our vision for the nation and how we want our elected representatives to represent us. Help members build relationships with legislators to urge them to protect the needs of children, especially those with the greatest need.*

Hold an educational event to discuss the intersection of faith and public policy.

As a community or congregational forum, a short-term or one-time class, or as a book group, engage participants in learning about and discussing how our faith informs our lives as citizens who vote, speak out, and seek justice in the public square. Many denominations, movements, and other faith groups have prepared excellent materials to guide such a discussion—find out what yours provides or explore the resources of groups like the Interfaith Alliance (www.interfaithalliance.org) including *Religion and Politics: A Guide for Houses of Worship*. The Interfaith Alliance also hosts a national phone seminar with religious leaders and the IRS discussing the guidelines of appropriate political activity for houses of worship in an election year. Or invite a speaker to address the topic. Book groups might want to tackle a book like Jim Wallis's *God's Politics*.

Wrote one 2007 Children's Sabbath organizer, "We have not yet done a community type service, although the year before last we had a few visitors attend the service. Afterwards, they commented on how excited they were to hear us speak about social issues and said they couldn't imagine talking about something so 'politically relevant' in their service. While we try to keep the service from being 'political,' all of our youth leaders as well as our pastors have realized that it does have something to do with politics, inasmuch as we need to raise our voices and concerns through our elected leaders as well as in our church communities."

Build relationships with elected leaders to help them be voices for children's justice.

With others in your place of worship, plan a visit. If there is someone in your congregation or community who has met previously with their member of Congress, you may want to invite them to describe their experience and guide the group through its first visit. Make appointments to visit your members of Congress in their home district offices. You don't have to go to Washington, D.C., to meet with your elected officials, and, in fact, visits when they are home in their district can be more influential than being just one of the many groups of tourists who stop by for a photo-op while in the nation's capital. Share with them your concerns about the problems facing children in your community and state. Talk about your values and priorities for how we protect children, especially those who are poorest and most vulnerable. Ask what leadership they will provide on the issues that concern you most. When key justice concerns arise, you'll be ready to gather those concerned members to visit your elected officials again and urge specific action.

Contact your faith group's Washington or public policy office, if it has one, for information on key concerns and legislative action alerts. The Children's Defense Fund also provides information and alerts. Sign up at www.childrensdefense.org/Newsletter_Subscribe.

Meeting with Your Legislators

Before Your Visit

Begin planning for your visit. Don't worry if you have butterflies in your stomach at the thought of meeting with your legislator for the first time. It would be unusual if you didn't. Know that the best way to communicate with your legislator is to make a personal visit. You probably will enjoy the experience—and the legislator will appreciate the time you spent communicating your views. So, take a deep breath and begin planning! First, decide on the issues you want to discuss.

Make an appointment. When making an appointment, explain what issue you would like to discuss. If the legislator is unavailable, the aide who deals with your issue often will be knowledgeable and influential in helping to form the member's views. Don't feel slighted if you end up meeting with the aide. He or she can be very influential and, if your meeting goes well, may also encourage your legislator to meet with you in person the next time.

Do your homework. Study the legislator's voting record on a number of issues using the Children's Defense Fund Action Council® Nonpartisan Congressional Scorecard and other sources, so you can comment on something positive, if possible, and know if the particular issue is one on which the legislator tends to agree or disagree with you. If there is a bill that interests you, know its status and whether your legislator has taken a position on it.

Remember the experts! Parents, grandparents, service providers, educators, religious and business leaders, police officers, doctors and nurses, and others who witness children's needs on a daily basis are children's best advocates. They really are the experts when it comes to how bills and policies will affect children, and it's important that policy makers have a wide variety of people to call upon when they have questions about their work's impact on children. Children's advocacy groups often seek out these everyday experts to present the most compelling information during legislative visits. Tell of personal experiences you have had, if possible, to illustrate your point.

Be prepared. Before meeting with the legislator or aide, plan and organize your presentation, and practice what you are going to say. If you are going with other people to the meeting, get together beforehand to make sure that you all have the same purpose. Take along helpful information to back up your arguments: newspaper articles about the problems children face, statistics, or a fact sheet. (CDF can provide some of the information you need. Call the Religious Action Division at (202) 662-3641.)

During Your Visit

Make your message concise. You may think your meeting is for 30 minutes and then arrive to find the legislator's schedule so tight that you get only five minutes. Know exactly what you want to say and be prepared to say it quickly, if circumstances demand that. The better your communication, the more seriously you will be taken, and the more willing the representative and his or her staff will be to rely upon you and your judgments.

Present solutions. People often feel overwhelmed by problems they consider too massive and diverse for corrective action, so don't just talk about the problem. Share one or two concrete ideas for ways to improve the lives of children in your community. Tell your legislator what it will take to ensure that no child is left behind.

Talk about what works. Using success stories of real children and families who are being helped by Head Start, child care, job training, or health insurance will strengthen your argument and counter claims that all government programs are ineffective.

Search for common ground. Don’t be exclusive or judgmental. Keeping in mind the wide range of viewpoints in Congress and in every community and state legislature, frame your messages carefully to include words and themes that will reach new audiences and persuade them to become new allies. Children’s advocates care as much as anyone about efficiency, accountability, fiscal responsibility, and personal responsibility. Use themes like these to frame your message.

Be honest. It’s fine to say you don’t know the answer to a question and to promise to provide information later, by phone, fax, or email. This also gives you another opportunity to contact the office.

Following Your Visit, Continue to Build the Relationship

Send a letter thanking the legislator for the time spent listening to your concerns. Enclose any documentation you had agreed to provide to bolster your position, and briefly restate your views.

Provide additional information. Send articles, write letters with further information, or offer assistance in thinking through solutions that could work in your community.

Call periodically with updates. Keep in touch with your legislator’s office by calling to let them know about any new developments.

Invite them to speak. Invite the representative or the staff person who handles children’s issues to speak before your congregation or a community group in which you are involved.

Show broad support for your concerns. If your legislator or aide disagrees or is noncommittal, don’t threaten or argue after you have made your case, because it is counter-productive. A better strategy is to plan another visit with others to show more community support for your position, to put together a bunch of letters from constituents, or to think of another tactic such as a letter to the editor. Persistence often pays.

Watch how your legislator votes and respond. If the legislator votes with your position on the issue, recognize that vote with a written “thank you.” Such recognition may influence his or her next vote on children’s issues. It also lets your legislator know that you are watching closely. If the legislator votes against your position, write or call to express your disappointment, and urge reconsideration of the issue the next time it comes up for a vote.

Invite your elected officials and other decision-makers and opinion-shapers (like the media) to visit programs sponsored by your congregation or programs in your community that demonstrate the challenges children face, like a juvenile detention facility, as well as sites that show what works, like an after-school tutoring program or a school-to-work program. Put a human face on problems affecting children that otherwise might just be a statistic to them.

Establish a Justice for Children letter-writing table that is available to congregation members every week or once a month. Supply it with paper, pens, envelopes, and action alerts or other advocacy information from your faith group’s Washington or public policy office or a children’s concerns group like the Children’s Defense

Fund. In addition to writing or calling when legislation is coming up and their vote is important, remind members to contact legislators after the vote to congratulate them for their leadership on behalf of children or to express disappointment and urge better leadership the next time. Let them know that you are watching what they do and will hold them accountable. Review CDF’s non-partisan voting record to see how your elected officials stood for children.

Tip: Set the table up in a location like the fellowship or social hall, library, or another gathering spot where it will be convenient to stop by. Provide informational materials and letter writing supplies that can be used right away or, if your tradition requires, taken home to be used at another time, as soon as permissible.

Tips on Writing Letters to Your Members of Congress

- Be brief. Address only one issue. A letter need not be longer than four or five sentences.
- Be specific. If you are writing about specific legislation, include its bill number or title.
- Write your own letter, adapting a sample letter as appropriate. Form letters do not receive the same attention as individually written letters.
- Be positive and constructive. Try to say something complimentary in the first paragraph. It is just as important to thank members of Congress for voting the right way as to criticize them for voting the wrong way.
- Say in your own words why the legislation matters to you and to children. Clearly state your reason for supporting or opposing the bill or issue you are writing about.
- If you have a personal story about your child or a child you know, consider sharing it. These personal stories are the most effective way for your legislator to truly understand the issue and the impact it has on real lives.
- If you have particular knowledge or expertise, describe it. Relating the bill to local or state conditions is especially effective.
- If you wish, feel free to include a copy of a report, a newsletter story, or a local survey to support your arguments. Don't presume that the legislator is aware of such information, even if you think it is common knowledge.
- Be sure to sign your name legibly and include your address and telephone number so your Representative or Senator can respond.
- If possible, fax the letter (since postal mail may be delayed by screening procedures) or send the letter electronically. Your legislator will likely have a link on his or her website directing constituents to "contact us."

Step-by-Step Sample Letter

Please note: The letter below only focuses on one issue and is meant as an example only. Please feel free to write your letter in your own words to reflect your concerns, experience, and perspective. Visit CDF’s website (www.childrensdefense.org) for the most up-to-date statistics. To ensure the quickest delivery, we recommend mailing letters to your elected officials’ local offices. For address information, visit www.congress.org.

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Or:

The Honorable _____
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

1. Introduce yourself: My name is *Janet Doe* and I am a member of *Mytown Congregation* in *Mytown*. I appreciate your commitment to public service and your desire to do the right thing.

2. Share your concern for children: I am writing out of concern for uninsured children in our community and throughout America, most of whom live in working families. Did you know that between 2004 and 2006 the number of uninsured children increased by more than one million?

3. Share your vision for children: As a person of faith, I believe it is our moral obligation to provide all children and pregnant women with affordable, seamless, comprehensive health coverage.

4. Talk about the solutions and urge action on them: As my representative in Congress, I encourage you to only support bills that include the following principles:

- Ensure that all children and pregnant women have ACCESS TO COMPREHENSIVE health coverage and timely health care REGARDLESS OF WHERE THEY LIVE.
- Simplify enrollment so it’s easy for all children to get and stay covered.

These principles are all embodied in the All Healthy Children Act (S.1564/H.R.1688).

5. Thank the member of Congress and ask for a reply: Thank you for your commitment to public service as well as your attention to our community’s children and to the 9.4 million children who are uninsured. I look forward to your reply informing me of how you will address these concerns. I will keep you in my prayers.

Sincerely,

Your name

Your address

Your telephone number

Talk about a healthy start! At the first-ever Children's Sabbath celebrated by **Covenant United Methodist Church in Arlington, Texas**, last year, they focused on the plight of children without health insurance and God's call to hope, healing, and wholeness. *"Fifty-two people filled out and signed cards to our Senators supporting the State Children's Health Insurance Program,"* reported one of the Children's Sabbath organizers, a retired deacon and choir director. In addition to providing CDF information about the problem and steps to take action, she and the United Methodist Women who organized the day distributed an update on the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) from a state advocacy organization, Texas Impact, which provided contact information for the Texas Senators. The church plans to follow up with the Senators on health coverage and to plan their second Children's Sabbath this year.

Encourage members to speak up on behalf of children in the local newspaper to influence many others. After they've written a letter to a member of Congress or other elected leader, members can take a little time and turn the letter into a Letter to the Editor or op-ed for the local newspaper. Encourage them to think about a current "hook," an article recently published in the paper that relates to the topic or a recent or upcoming event, to make it timely. Perhaps keep copies of recent papers on the letter-writing table set up in the congregation's building. Theologian Reinhold Niebuhr urged pastors to step into the pulpit with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. Now we can take that newspaper and bring our moral voice and call for leadership that upholds a priority for children and the poor to it!

It's not always easy... **Connie Millikan of Central Christian Church in Anderson, Indiana**, sent a packet of letters about children's health coverage to CDF, with a note, *"Here are the letters gathered from members of my church on Children's Sabbath. I was hoping to have more than this. We are a small congregation so I am thankful to those who did respond. Only one person spoke up adamantly opposed. I want to commend everyone there for their tireless efforts on behalf of children. Many of us from my district have been vigilant in contacting our representative... to no avail. I just don't know what more to say to him. He seems not to have all the facts straight... Our church is committed to being a safe harbor for children."*

"Now it isn't easy to stand up for truth and for justice. Sometimes it means being frustrated. When you tell the truth and take a stand, sometimes it means that you will walk the streets with a burdened heart.... [Do not despair] because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."⁶⁰

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

⁶⁰ Dr. Martin Luther, Jr., "Why I Am Opposed to the War in Vietnam," sermon delivered at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, on April 30, 1967.

Tips on Writing a Letter to the Editor⁶¹

- 1. Respond to a recent news story or editorial:** A good letter might begin, “Your article on the new health statistics (‘More Americans Are Uninsured,’ Oct. 4) was excellent. Readers might want to know that of those 47 million uninsured Americans, 9.4 million are children....” You don’t have to agree with the article, editorial, or column. Say respectfully whether you think they got the story right or not, and assert your views.
- 2. Make your letter short:** Check your local paper for submission criteria; a letter should contain 200-300 words. Provide a few striking facts that might surprise an editor or a reader. (“One out of every eight children in the U.S. is uninsured. Most of them have parents who work.”)
- 3. Use descriptive words that communicate your passion about the issue:** Don’t be dry. (“Imagine walking into a classroom of 32 second grade students. Could you look around and pick four children in that room who don’t deserve health insurance?”)
- 4. Offer a solution to the problem:** Instead of finding another band-aid to solve the crisis of uninsured children, Congress should seek out policies that provide all children and pregnant women access to affordable, seamless, comprehensive health coverage, like the *All Healthy Children Act* (S. 1564/H.R. 1688).
- 5. Review:** Re-read your letter and check for any spelling or grammatical mistakes before you submit it. Include your address, day, and evening phone numbers; editors often verify the identity of the writer before they print the letter.

⁶¹ Adapted from *Reclaiming Our Democracy: Healing the Break between People and Government*, by Sam Daley-Harris.

Building Relationships with the Children's Defense Fund

In it for the long haul: *The Children's Defense Fund has long recognized the practical and moral imperative for the religious community to be at the forefront of CDF's Leave No Child Behind® mission. Practically speaking, every great social achievement and transformation of values and priorities in our nation has required the leadership of the religious community with its moral authority, vast infrastructure, roots in every community, and wide range of resources. From the abolition of slavery to the end of child labor in the U.S. to the civil rights movement, no great social transformation has been achieved without the leadership and partnership of the religious community. In the memorable images of Dr. King, we are called to be the headlights shining the way forward, not the taillights; we are called not to be the "thermometers" that just take the prevailing temperature, but the "thermostats" that set the temperature.*

The religious community's leadership is not only a practical necessity but also a moral imperative for the religious community, itself: How can we profess to love a God whose abiding concern for the widow, orphan, and stranger, the poor, vulnerable, and excluded that is evident in every great religious tradition, if we do not stand and speak out for children? For more than three decades, CDF has had staff committed to partnership with the religious community—from national bodies to local congregations—so that together we can put faith into action and nurture and protect our children.

Make sure your place of worship is connected to the Children's Defense Fund's Religious Action staff.

CDF's Religious Action Division works to build faith-based leadership in the *Leave No Child Behind* movement through securing institutional support of national religious denominations, movements, and other organizations, promoting effective public witness and faithful child advocacy, strengthening state and regional religious efforts for children, cultivating a cadre of religious leaders prepared to speak and act for children, activating religious individuals and congregations to help children, and communicating the moral basis for the children's movement. Please let us know how we can support your child advocacy efforts! Feel free to contact **Matt Rosen**, Deputy Director of Religious Action, at mrosen@childrensdefense.org or **Scott Jacobsen**, Religious Action Program Assistant, at sjacobsen@childrensdefense.org.

Here are some ideas for building a stronger relationship:

- Designate a child advocacy liaison or team to bear responsibility for connecting and communicating CDF resources and calls for action to the congregation.
- Identify which committee, staff member, group, or other within your place of worship will include carrying

forward the work of seeking justice for children in their scope of responsibility.

- Send CDF a description of your Children's Sabbath celebration, so we can share the information with the media in our next Children's Sabbath Manual or in other ways.
- Send CDF a description of a model program through which your place of worship is effectively meeting needs of children in the community, so we can share the ideas and inspiration with others.
- Let us know the children's concerns that your place of worship wants to address so we can connect you with CDF resources to help you do so.
- Encourage individual members to make use of CDF's resources.
- Designate a child advocacy resource shelf in your congregation's buildings (the library, educational room/s, social hall, office, or wherever works best.) Stock it with copies of books, reports, and other resources from CDF and other child advocacy organizations and with resources related to children and justice from your faith tradition. Include brochures on your state's Children's

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Health Insurance Program and other community resources that would be helpful to members of your congregation and community.

Connect with the Cradle to Prison Pipeline® Campaign (www.childrensdefense.org/cradletoprison). Join this national call to action to stop the funneling of tens of thousands of youth, predominantly those who are poor and minority, down life paths that often lead to arrest, conviction, incarceration and, in some cases, death. Race and poverty are the major factors fueling the Pipeline. Other factors include: inadequate access to health care; gaps in early childhood development; disparate educational opportunities; intolerable abuse and neglect; unmet mental health needs; rampant substance abuse; and overburdened and ineffective juvenile justice systems. The urgent challenge for each of us and for our nation is to prevent this waste of our children's lives and our nation's capabilities. We created the Pipeline, and we have the power, knowledge and will to dismantle it. The need is urgent.

Link your place of worship's website to the Children's Defense Fund website (www.childrensdefense.org). Find out the latest information on national and state child statistics, child welfare policies and advocacy actions on all the various initiatives CDF is engaged in to ensure a successful passage to adulthood for all children. Link your place of worship's website to the CDF website.

Join the Healthy Child Campaign (www.childrensdefense.org/healthychild). The 9.4 million uninsured children in America and the millions more who are underinsured need your voice to move our federal and state elected officials to pass legislation that ensures all children and pregnant women access to comprehensive, seamless, affordable health coverage regardless of where they live.

Send a team (including pastors, Christian educators, and/or lay leaders) to attend The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry (www.childrensdefense.org/Proctor). Join clergy, seminarians, Christian educators, young adult leaders, and other faith-based child advocates for five days of spiritual renewal, networking, movement building workshops, and continuing education about children in need so that we can work with new partners, put in place new programs and policies, and transform our nation to manifest new priorities that put children first. Come for fresh ideas, inspiration, and actions to bring more joy and

justice to the lives of children in your congregation, community, and our nation!

Start a child advocacy book group. Host a book group in your own place of worship or with several others. Select a book or other resource about children's concerns and child advocacy. The resource section in this book has many suggested titles. Your faith tradition's website or publishing house may have additional resources. How you structure the book group can be tailored to suit the interests and availability of group members. You could meet weekly and discuss one chapter of the resource or monthly to discuss the entire resource.

Order and utilize CDF's other resources. All of the following may be ordered by visiting the CDF web store at www.childrensdefense.org or by calling (865) 457-6466. Many of the publications can be downloaded for free at www.childrensdefense.org/Publications.

Did Your Members of Congress Protect Children? The 2007 Children's Defense Fund Action Council Nonpartisan Congressional Scorecard

This Scorecard documents how well your state's congressional delegation voted to protect the children in your state and the nation in 2007. Based on crucial votes that affected the lives of millions of children in America, the CDF Action Council names the best and worst Senators and Representatives in protecting children. Download this edition for free at www.childrensdefense.org.

America's Cradle to Prison PipelineSM Report

CDF's recent report documents our nation's Cradle to Prison Pipeline, an urgent national crisis at the intersection of poverty and race that puts Black boys at a one in three lifetime risk of going to jail, and Latino boys at a one in six lifetime risk of the same fate. Tens of thousands of children and teens are sucked into the Pipeline each year. Report contains the most recent statistics, case studies of children in the Pipeline, moving photographs, and what we as a nation must do. 234 pages, 2007. \$9.95

Protect Children, Not Guns 2008

CDF's annual report about the toll gun violence is taking on our children and society. Contains tables and graphs outlining the latest data for firearm deaths of children and teens, as well as action steps that you can take to help prevent this senseless loss of lives. CDF, 16 pages, 2008. Available for free by calling 1 (865) 457-6466.

Katrina's Children: Still Waiting 2007

In 2006, CDF released *Katrina's Children: A Call to Conscience and Action*, a report highlighting the trauma and heartrending stories of young Katrina evacuees struggling with their devastating losses. As our nation's attention has moved on to the next big story, thousands of Katrina survivors are still scattered across the country or crowded into "temporary" trailers waiting to return home. This second "call to conscience and action" looks at what still needs to be done to help them get their lives back and address their health and mental health needs, especially as it relates to chronic and acute traumatic stress disorder. Report is available for free by calling (865) 457-6466.

2007 National Observance of Children's Sabbaths Manual

Focusing on the theme, "My Boat Is So Small: Creating a Safe Harbor of Hope and Health Care for *All Children*," this multi-faith, easy-to-use resource manual provides congregations everything they need to plan, promote, and present a Children's Sabbath celebration. 189 pages. \$8.00

In Harm's Way: True Stories of Uninsured Texas Children

Texas has the highest rate of uninsured children in the nation, 20.2 percent, compared to 11.6 percent nationally. In this report from CDF-Texas, families lacking health coverage tell their stories, from frustrating to frightening, of the overwhelming obstacles they encountered in trying to get medical care and health insurance for their children. This report is dedicated to Devante Johnson, who went without health coverage for four months while struggling against cancer of the kidneys. He died at the age of 14 in March 2007. Report can be downloaded for free from CDF's website at www.childrensdefense.org.

The State of America's Children 2005

This edition of CDF's analysis of the status of children in America puts a special focus on child poverty and the nearly 13 million children who are poor, and includes the latest developments and data related to family income, child welfare, child health and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), early childhood development, education, and juvenile justice. Foreword by Marian Wright Edelman offers both vision and challenge. The 2005 edition can be downloaded from CDF's website at www.childrensdefense.org. ***The 2008 edition will be available in the fall.***

Hold My Hand: Prayers for Building a Movement to Leave No Child Behind

An inspiring collection of Marian Wright Edelman's heartfelt prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of petition, and pledges of commitment that will move and encourage you. CDF, 92 pages, 2001. \$6.95

Holding Children in Prayer: A Lenten Guide

Each spring renew your spirit and your commitment to children with this Lenten Guide offering daily lessons, reflections, and prayers to encourage and strengthen your commitment to continue serving and advocating for children. CDF, 60 pages, 2005. \$2.00

Holding Children in Prayer: An Advent Guide

During the holiday season, keep children in your thoughts and prayers with this Advent Guide. Includes Lighting the Advent Candle, scripture readings, reflections, prayers, and Acts in Faith for every day of Advent. CDF, 72 pages, 2001. \$2.00

I Can Make a Difference: A Treasury to Inspire Our Children

Marian Wright Edelman has drawn from a variety of cultures and peoples to compile these timeless stories, poems, quotations, and folktales that speak to all children to let them know they can make a difference in today's world. Illustrated by Barry Moser, the book highlights 12 values children and youth can aspire to achieve. Harper Collins Publishers, hardcover. \$19.99

Lanterns: A Memoir of Mentors

Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, shares powerful stories about the mentors in her life from her childhood through the Civil Rights Movement to the founding and building of CDF. She pays tribute to the extraordinary personal mentors who helped light her way: Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, Fannie Lou Hamer, William Sloane Coffin, Ella Baker, Mae Bertha Carter, and many others. She brings home the importance of mentoring, caring about, and standing for children every day. 180 pages, 1999. Hardcover \$20.00, softcover \$14.00

The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours

A touching and moral message from Marian Wright Edelman to her sons—a message both introspective and

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compelling that all of us can use in our daily struggle to find the right balance. She passes on a family legacy based on service to others and the 25 lessons for life she wants most to impart to her sons. 97 pages, 1992. \$9.00

Guide My Feet: Prayers and Meditations on Loving and Working for Children

Marian Wright Edelman offers inspiration, prayers of thanksgiving, pleas for guidance, and pledges of commitment. Beacon Press, 210 pages, 1995. Hardcover \$17.95, softcover \$10.00

I'm Your Child, God: Prayers for Our Children

by Marian Wright Edelman. Contemporary, multi-cultural prayers for children and teens dealing with the complexities of growing up in today's world, accompanied by stunning illustrations by Caldecott Honor Medal winner Bryan Collier. 90 pages, 2002. \$19.99

Dream Me Home Safely: Writers on Growing Up in America

This book tells the stories of the many ways children make a place for themselves in their families' hearts and in the world. With insight, skill, great humor, and zestful candor, the writers offer a glimpse of their childhood selves. Written by some of America's most outstanding authors (Anna Quindlen, Alice Walker, Joyce Carol Oates, and many others), this compilation highlights the complexities and preciousness of childhood and the importance of family and rituals in the lives of children. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. \$13.00

"A Prayer for Children" video

This moving poem by Ina Hughs is read by Marian Wright Edelman, along with footage of children, creating an inspirational three-minute video that may be used in worship, educational programs, or to begin or end a meeting. \$6.00



Additional Resources for Faithful Child Advocacy

Our Day to End Poverty: 24 Ways You Can Make a Difference by Shannon Daley-Harris and Jeffrey Keenan with Karen Speerstra

Imagine ending poverty at home and around the globe in our own lifetimes. With creativity this book invites us to look at our very ordinary days, from waking up in the morning to going to bed at night, and to begin to think about combating poverty in new, inventive ways. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2007.

Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation by Jonathan Kozol

This book draws extensively upon poverty as spoken through the voices of children and their families who live in the South Bronx, the poorest Congressional district in the United States. New York: Crown, 1995.

The following are **Unitarian Universalist Association** resources and/or other resources available through the UUA Bookstore. Phone: 1 (800) 215-9076, email: bookstore@uua.org

Common Fire by Laurent A. Parks Daloz, et al.,

Landmark study reveals how we became committed to the common good and sustain our commitments in a changing world. Beacon, 1997.

The Best Things in Life Aren't Things: Celebrating What Matters Most by Joann Davis

Through inspirational essays on family, faith, friends, virtue, service, community, and the beauty of the natural world, the author explores and celebrates the real stuff of life. She reminds us that life is a spiritual exercise that brings fulfillment when we savor the intangibles that are often right in front of us. Beacon Press, 2003.

How Much Do We Deserve? An Inquiry into Distributive Justice by Richard Gilbert

"It is my intent to bridge the gap between scholars in economic and theological/ethical disciplines and concerned laity and clergy." Draws on Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, humanist, and other traditions to reflect on ethical and economic issues. Can be ordered online at www.uua.org. Skinner House, 2001.

The Prophetic Imperative: Social Gospel in Theory and Practice by Richard Gilbert

Explores the connection between spirituality and social action. Helpfully presented in two parts, "Theoretical

Foundations" and "Social Gospel in Practice." Contains vital advice and models to help congregations engage in effective justice work. Can be ordered online at www.uua.org. Skinner House, 2000.

Poems to Live by in Uncertain Times, Joan Murray (ed.)

Sixty poems by an international mix of distinguished poets, including W.H. Auden, Czeslaw Milasz, Bertolt Brecht, Yehuda Amichai, Mary Oliver, Miquel de Unamuno, Gwendolyn Brooks, Billy Collins, Yusef Komunyakaa, and Sharon Olds. In six sections: death and remembrance, fear and suffering, affirmations and rejoicings, warnings and instructions, war and rumors of war, meditations and conversations. Beacon, 2001.

You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train: A Personal History of Our Times by Howard Zinn

Acclaimed historian Zinn has both chronicled and participated in some of the most important social movements of our time. His experiences speak to the future as much as to the past, showing in vivid detail how small actions can effect historic change. Beacon, 1995.

The People Speak: American Voices, Some Famous, Some Little Known, Howard Zinn (ed.)

Collected dramatic readings that celebrate the enduring spirit of dissent. Here, in their own words, are Christopher Columbus, an unnamed Lowell mill girl, Frederick Douglas, John Brown, Mark Twain, Malcolm X, a Gulf War resister, a family member of a victim of the September 11 Twin Towers attack, and many others. Includes commentary by Zinn. Harper Collins Publishers, 2004.

Bahá'í Resources

The following resources all are available from Bahá'í Distribution Service: 1(800) 999-9019 or www.bahai-bookstore.com/index.cfm:

- ***In Service to the Common Good*** by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the U.S., 56 pages, 2004.
- ***For the Betterment of the World*** by the Bahá'í International Community, 32 pages, 2002.
- ***Foundations for a Spiritual Education***, Research of the Bahá'í Writings
- ***Family Life and Bahá'í Education***, compiled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice

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- *To Be a Mother and To Be a Father*, both compiled by Wendi Momen, George Ronald Press
- *When We Grow Up* by Bahiyyih Nakhjavani, George Ronald Press
- *The Brilliant Stars: The Bahá'í Faith and the Education of Children* by H.T.D. Rost, George Ronald Press
- *The Virtues Project Educator's Guide: Simple Ways to Create a Culture of Character*, Jalmar Press
- *Healing Racism: Education's Role*, Editors: Nathan Rutstein, Michael Morgan, Whitcomb Publishing
- *On the Front Lines: Bahá'í Youth in Their Own Words*, Editors: Heather Brandon, Aaron Emmel, George Ronald Press
- *ONE Magazine: Wealth & Poverty*, Vol. 2.5, Editor: The Bahá'ís of Eliot, Maine
- *Youth: Channels for Change*: A Compilation of Extracts from the Writings of the Bab, Baha'u'llah, Abdu'l-Baha, Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice Relating to Youth

Protestant Resources

Thus Far On the Way: Toward a Theology of Child Advocacy by the Reverend Dr. Eileen W. Lindner

Based on sermons and speeches that Rev. Lindner delivered over more than a decade at CDF's Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry each July, this superb book develops a theology of child advocacy, skillfully weaving together theology, church history, biblical exegesis, and more, with Lindner's classic stories and humor that move the reader through laughter and tears to faithful action. Foreword by Marian Wright Edelman. Louisville: Presbyterian Publishing House, 2006. Available from Presbyterian Distribution Services at 1 (800) 524-2612 and www.amazon.com.

Congregational Health Ministries Resource Packet

An information packet containing resources useful in developing congregational health ministries using the parish nurse, lay counselor, participatory approach and congregations as healing community models. Packet available through the United Methodist Church, www.umc.org.

Health for All: A Congregational Health Ministries Resource

Manual for congregational use exploring health issues and factors that promote a healthier life for all. Each chapter contains a Bible study, information case study, discussion questions, and suggestions for action. Available through the United Methodist Church, www.umc.org.

A Church for All God's Children

In 1996 the Council of Bishops called upon The United Methodist Church to reshape its life in response to the crisis among children and the impoverished and in faithfulness to Jesus Christ. Congregations are invited to undertake specific actions to make their churches more responsive to the needs of children and their families in the church and community. This packet contains resources (checklist, guidelines, resource list, and reporting form) for churches that want to participate and to qualify as a "Church for All God's Children." The packet, which was sent to every United Methodist congregation, is available on The United Methodist website at <http://archives.umc.org/initiative/pdf/cp.pdf>.

Putting Children and Their Families First: A Planning Handbook for Congregations

This book offers strategies for assessing children's needs in the congregation and the community; identifying the strengths and assets of children, families, and communities; and developing a plan for comprehensive ministries. It also provides a biblical framework for ministry and suggestions for implementing new ministries. General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church. To order, call 1 (800) 305-9857.

Community with Children and the Poor: A Guide for Congregational Study

This six-session study guide for use by small groups in a congregational setting is based on the United Methodist Bishops' Letter Community with Children and the Poor and was prepared by the Task Force for the Bishops' Initiative on Children and Poverty. Sessions focus on the Bishops' Initiative, Community with the Poor, Economic Globalization, Global Debt, the State of Poor Children in the U.S., and Where Do We Go from Here. Nashville: Cokesbury, 2003. To order, call 1 (800) 672-1789.

The Child-Friendly Church by Boyce Bowdon

One hundred and fifty examples of how churches of various sizes and settings are faithfully ministering to and with children and the impoverished. Models include ways churches attract children and their families, models that help children grow as disciples of Christ, models that enable churches to minister to their communities, and models for ministry to and with the poor. Concludes with consideration of what it takes to make a child-friendly church. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999, 142 pages.

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Children's Ministries: Ministries That Help Children Grow in Faith by Mary Alice Gran

A practical resource that helps children's ministries leaders understand elements of that ministry and how it fits within the mission of the congregation and the United Methodist Church. Sections include children in the life of the congregation, ministry in the community and world, and more. Nashville: Cokesbury, 2004, 40 pages.

Listen to the Children! (35-minute video)

This video takes a look at the lives of children—their needs, fears, and hopes. To create this video, children at four church settings in diverse communities were given video cameras. Hear children's own messages to us through singing, dance, drama, and interviews. To order, call the United Methodist Church at 1 (800) 305-9857.

The United Methodist Women's Campaign for Children, Phase III

The third phase of this campaign is focused on advocacy in public school education. A brochure and booklet are available from the Service Center, 7820 Reading Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45222-1800. To order, call (513) 761-2100 or email Scorder@gbgm-umc.org.

United Methodist Women's Division Action Alerts

Updates on legislative issues that address concerns of United Methodist Women including children's issues. Receive by contacting the Women's Division, Office of Public Policy, 100 Maryland Ave., N.E., Suite 530, Washington, DC 20002. For other information about current campaigns related to children's issues, contact the Women's Division, Office of Community Action, 15th Floor, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115.

Seeing Children, Seeing God: A Practical Theology of Children and Poverty by Pamela D. Couture

A holistic theology that incorporates the reality of poverty and the plight of children, this book is a resource for theologians, pastors, and other church leaders. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 144 pages.

Safe Haven for Children, Hope for Congregations and Communities

From the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a folder of tools and information to help Lutheran churches become "Safe Havens" for children in the community. Folder includes an emblem identifying the congregation as a Safe Haven for Children, a reproducible congregational resolution to become a Safe Haven, a certificate, and practical materials spelling out how congregations can be safe

havens for children in poverty, needing child care, at risk of abuse, and more. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Published by Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1999, ISBN 6-0001-0865-6. To order, call 1 (800) 328-4648.

Introducing Caring for Health bulletin insert
Bulletin insert offering suggestions for bringing the social statement to life in your congregation. Download from www.elca.org/socialstatements/health/bulletin.

Decade of the Child

A brochure, newsletter, and range of other resources are available to help congregations participate in the General Assembly designated "Decade of the Child" and lift up the special gifts and needs of children and youths, birth to 18, within the church, beyond the church, and throughout the world. For more information, call 1 (888) 728-7228 and ask for the Presbyterian Child Advocacy Office or write to: The Decade of the Child, The Child Advocacy Office, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396.

Light a Candle for Children Prayer Vigil Project

This brochure provides information about the Light a Candle for Children project coordinated by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in which congregations are encouraged to pray for children and learn more about children's needs. People in the congregation and/or community are invited to take one of the 40 days to light a candle and spend the day in prayer for children. For information, visit www.homelandministries.org/FamilyandChildren/candle.htm.

Building Assets in Congregations: A Practical Guide for Helping Youth Grow Up Healthy

This guide offers everything you'll need to create a congregation that builds assets—young people's strengths. Perfect for youth workers, clergy, volunteers, and others, this practical book includes: worksheets for assessing and planning your current priorities and programs; strategies and ideas for introducing assets into youth programs; tips for creating intergenerational programs and parent workshops; and ten reproducible bulletin inserts. Search Institute, 1998, 176 pp., #113. To order, call 1 (800) 888-7828.

Jewish Resources

The Religious Action Center website, www.rac.org, has a variety of advocacy resources including information on issue areas including children and poverty, legislative

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reviews and agendas, and links to write letters to the President and Congress. You can also join RAC's Advocacy Network and sign up to receive emails; RACNews delivers Chai IMPACT Action Alerts, the RAC's Weekly Legislative Update, all RAC press statements, program announcements, Web updates, and other timely information to anyone with an email address. "Social Action" is an interactive electronic social justice activists' discussion group, where you can share your successes, learn from others, and discuss pressing issues of the day with other committed social justice activists.

K'hilat Tzedek: Creating a Community of Justice

K'hilat Tzedek is a discussion guide intended to help congregations through a process of reflection to determine where their social action programs fit into the scheme of congregational life, and how they can become models of integrated, justice-seeking congregations. The K'hilat Tzedek process will invigorate and deepen your congregation's social justice work.

Speak Truth to Power: A Guide for Congregations Taking Public Policy Positions

A publication to assist congregations in taking public policy positions, created by the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism (CSA) and the Ida and Howard Wilkoff Department of Synagogue Management of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ).

Lirdof Tzedek: A Guide to Synagogue Social Action

Whether you are looking to expand a successful social action program or are working to build one, this guide is an important resource for you and your congregation. Lirdof Tzedek provides step-by-step guidelines for all aspects of synagogue social action programming, from establishing the appropriate structures within the congregation to effecting change on the local, regional, and national levels.

2004 Get Out the Vote Program Plan and Action Manual

Your guide for Get Out the Vote efforts for the 2008 election. Get Out the Vote 2004 aims to demystify the registration process, to focus communal energy on the privilege and responsibility of voting, and to provide information to plan a successful voter engagement effort in advance of Election Day. While this guide was designed for use by Jewish congregations and communal organizations that wish to conduct their own voter registration drives, we also encourage you to participate in voter registration drives in the general community. The same procedures and materials that are suggested here for use in the Jewish

community can be adapted for use in voter registration activities in the broader community.

Catholic Resources

Health Care for All Campaign brochure

Introduced at the 2005 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, it is available for download at www.usccb.org.

Health and Health Care: A Pastoral Letter of the American Catholic Bishops

This statement issued in 1981 addresses the message of the Gospel and tradition, responsibility for health, formal health apostolate, and public policy. It is available for download at www.usccb.org.

Catholic Campaign for Children and Families: Parish Resource Manual

This comprehensive resource includes practical planning and support materials, clip art, bulletin quotes, liturgical and preaching guides and models to help parishes integrate a focus on children and families into all aspects of parish life. Includes the Bishops' Statement, "Putting Children and Families First: A Challenge for Our Church, Nation, and World," a resource developed by committees on domestic social policy, international policy, and marriage and family life. A video is also available. Also available in Spanish, \$6.95. To order, call the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at 1 (800) 235-8722 and ask for publication number 525-9.

Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops addresses the call to personal discipleship, evangelization, and leadership. Offered as a "blueprint" for the continued development of effective ministry with young and older adolescents, this framework is an affirmation of the faith, gifts, energy, and fresh ideas of young people, a Christ-centered vision, and a call to empower young people. Available in English and Spanish, 61 pages., \$5.95. To order, call 1 (800) 235-8722.

Organizations

The following key national Catholic social ministry organizations are associated with the USCCB and provide valuable resources to support the Catholic community in its work on poverty and health-related concerns:

Catholic Campaign for Human Development: For information and educational materials on poverty in the

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United States, go to www.povertyusa.org. For information on the Church's program to support self-help groups in low-income neighborhoods, go to www.usccb.org/cchd.

Catholic Charities USA: For parish social ministry resources, advocacy materials, and information on how the Catholic community serves people in need throughout the United States, go to www.catholiccharitiesusa.org.

Catholic Health Association: For resources and information on Catholic health care and efforts to provide accessible and affordable health care for all, go to www.chausa.org. Its framework for health care reform published in April 2000 is *Continuing the Commitment: A Pathway to Health Care Reform*. In addition, it has an extensive resource catalog of health-related publications and other resources for the Catholic community.

Catholic Relief Services: For advocacy and educational materials on international issues as well as information on the relief and development efforts of the Church in the United States at sites around the world, go to www.catholicrelief.org.

USCCB Department of Social Development and World Peace: For parish resources and educational materials as well as advocacy resources and general information on the U.S. bishops' efforts to address issues of justice and peace, go to www.usccb.org/sdwp.

USCCB Migration and Refugee Services: For parish resources, advocacy materials, and general information on programs of the Church in the United States to support and resettle immigrants and refugees, go to www.usccb.org/mrs.

There are many additional organizations within the Catholic community and beyond that offer programs and resources for understanding and responding to poverty. Throughout the country, there are many *diocesan and parish programs* that offer essential help to poor people who are struggling to live in dignity. In addition, *state Catholic conferences* and *diocesan social ministry* offices work on justice issues and provide helpful information to schools and parishes. Catholics join with many ecumenical, interfaith, and other groups to defend human dignity. For more information, go to www.usccb.org/sdwp.

USCCB Statements on Health Care and Economic Issues
USCCB documents outlining policy criteria on a range of key issues related to health care and poverty include:

- *Health and Health Care*
- *A Framework for Comprehensive Health Care Reform*

- *A Catholic Framework for Economic Life*
- *A Commitment to All Generations: Social Security and the Common Good*
- *A Decade After "Economic Justice for All": Continuing Principles, Changing Context, New Challenges*
- *A Jubilee Call for Debt Forgiveness*
- *Called to Global Solidarity*
- *Economic Justice for All*
- *Food Policy in a Hungry World*
- *Homelessness and Housing: A Human Tragedy, a Moral Challenge*
- *In All Things Charity*
- *Moral Principles and Policy Priorities for Welfare Reform*
- *Putting Children and Families First*
- *Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities*

These documents can be ordered from USCCB Publishing by calling toll-free 1 (800) 235-8722 or obtained by visiting the U.S. bishops' website. Also available on the USCCB website (www.usccb.org) are recent testimony and action alerts on these and related issues.

Unitarian Universalist Association Curricula

In Our Hands, Grades 4-6: A Peace and Justice Program
by Barry Andrews and Pat Hoertdoerfer, Unitarian Universalist Association, 1990
Explores the concepts of peace and justice. 16 sessions.

**** *The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander: From Preschool to High School – How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence***
by Barbara Colorosa, Quill, 2003

It's a deadly combination: bullies who get what they want, victims who are afraid to tell, bystanders who either watch, participate, or look away, and adults who see these incidents as a normal part of childhood. Parenting educator Colorosa provides the tools to break this cycle of violence.

In Our Hands, Grades 1-3: A Peace and Justice Program
by Samuel Goldenberg, et al., Unitarian Universalist Association, 1989
Explores peace and fairness through active learning. 16 sessions.

Race to Justice: A Racial Justice and Diversity Program for Junior High
by Robin F. Gray and José A. Ballester y Marquez, Unitarian Universalist Association, 1995
Program affirms human diversity through role-playing, real-life stories, and games. 15 sessions.

** Resource for teachers and parents

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Weaving the Fabric of Diversity by Jacqui James and Judith A. Frediani, Unitarian Universalist Association, 1996
Take stock of the “isms” that may be holding you back from embracing diversity: racism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, and ageism. Eight-session program for adults to learn strategies for increasing diversity in their congregation.

Resources for Children

Black Is Brown Is Tan by Arnold Adolph, Harper Trophy, 2002

The winning portrayal of a loving family—a brown-skinned mother, white-skinned father, two children, and their various relatives—beautifully illustrated with watercolors by Caldecott Medalist Emily McCully. Ages 4-8.

Bucketful of Dreams: Contemporary Parables for All Ages

by Christopher Buice, Skinner House, 1994

A charming cast of characters brings values such as diversity, justice, faith, and empowerment to life in 18 original parables. Playful cartoon illustrations by the author. All ages.

The Kids' Guide to Working Out Conflict: How to Keep Cool, Stay Safe, and Get Along by Naomi Drew, Free Spirit, 2004

Proven, practical ways to avoid conflict and defuse tough situations. Includes tips for how to counter bullying, calm down, reduce stress and tension, let go of anger, and eliminate put-downs and other hurtful language.

What Do You Stand For? A Kid's Guide to Building Character by Barbara A. Lewis, Free Spirit, 1997

Guided exploration of issues of honesty, empathy, integrity, respect, and more. With quotations, activities, problem-solving exercises, true stories, and reproducible handouts. Ages 11 and up.

What If Nobody Forgave? And Other Stories by Colleen M. McDonald (ed.), Skinner House, 2002

“From Buddha to Jesus to the Sufi masters, spiritual teachers have used stories to convey basic messages about truth and right living.” This edition contains 11 new stories (19 in all) that echo the seven Unitarian Universalist Principles. Each story is followed by discussion questions, activities, and a reading list. All ages.

Different Just Like Me by Lori Mitchell, Charlesbridge, 1999
While April is waiting for the days to pass before she visits her grandmother, she encounters all sorts of different,

interesting people. By the time she returns from her visit, she realizes that people—like the flowers in her grandmother's garden—have different needs and come in many colors, shapes, and sizes. Ages 4-8.

Ten Amazing People and How They Changed the World by Maura Shaw, Skylight Paths, 2002

Profiles of Black Elk, Dorothy Day, Malcolm X, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Janusz Korczak, Mother Teresa, Albert Schweitzer, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Desmond Tutu show kids that spiritual people can have an exciting impact on the world around them. Includes a map showing the place of origin for each individual and a timeline. Ages 6-10.

If the World Were a Village by David J. Smith, Kids Can Press, 2003

What if we imagine the whole world as a village of just 100 people? The shrunk-down statistics about everything from religion to language, electricity to water quality, and literacy to money help children gain a better understanding of the world's peoples and their ways of life. Includes two pages of games, activities, and thought-provoking questions to teach “world-mindedness.” Ages 7 and up.

Jimenez, Francisco, *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child*

Bunting, Eve, *Smoky Night*

Bunting, Eve, *The Wall*

Cronin, Doreen, *Click, Clack, Moo (Cows That Type)*

Cuyler, Marge, *That's Good, That's Bad*

Lasley, Kathryn, *She is Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head*

Howe, James, *The Misfits*

Leonni, Leo, *Swimmy*

Leonni, Leo, *Frederick*

Mochizuki, Ken, *Baseball Saved Us*

Mochizuki, Ken, *Passage to Freedom*

McKissack, Patricia, *Honest-to-Goodness Truth*

Muse, Daphne, *Prejudice – A Story Collection*

Na, An, *A Step from Heaven*

Nye, Naomi, *Sitti's Secrets*

Rembert, Winfred, *Don't Hold Me Back: My Life and Art*

Stieg, William, *The Real Thief*

Seuss, Dr., *Sneetches and Other Stories*

Seuss, Dr., *Horton Hears a Who*

Seuss, Dr., *Lorax*

Seuss, Dr., *Butter Battle Book*