

Prayers

Select one or more of the following prayers, or prepare your own, to use in the services.

Prayer

O God, forgive and help us transform our rich and powerful nation where toddlers and school children die from guns sold quite legally.

O God, forgive and help us transform our rich and powerful nation which protects guns before children.

O God, help us never to confuse what is quite legal with what is just and right in Your sight.

Help us to stand up together and speak up together and pray together and act together to make America safe, just and right for all Your children.

By Marian Wright Edelman

Prayer of Confession

We cannot change what we do not confess. Hear us, O God, as we confess the ways that we have failed you by failing to love and protect all children. *[Time for silent prayers.]* Gracious God, forgive us for weeping without work, for love without labor, for prayer without action. Forgive us for crying, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace, for papering over problems rather than tackling the hard, messy work of repairing our world. There is anger in our world, in our nation, in our communities, in some of our homes—forgive us for denying it rather than dealing with it, for raging rather than resolving conflict. There is anguish in friends and family, strangers and schoolchildren—forgive us for hardening our hearts rather than helping to heal it. There is fear in our nation and neighborhoods, schools and souls—forgive us for letting it grow rather than uprooting it. Plant in us seeds of peace and purpose, justice and joy, forgiveness and faithfulness. Help us now to turn in a new direction. Amen.

By Shannon Daley-Harris

Litany of Lament

Reader 1: Every day in our nation, more than 7 children and teens are killed by guns.

People: O Lord, how long shall I cry for help and you will not listen, or cry to you 'Violence!' and you will not save?

Reader 2: Every day in our nation, children are reported abused or neglected.

People: Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble?

Reader 3: Every day in our nation, children lack adequate health and mental health coverage.

People: So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails.

Reader 4: Then the Lord answered...and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. (Habakkuk 2:1b-4)

By Shannon Daley-Harris

Act of Commitment

Leader: Write the vision, make it plain!

People: We will work and pray to share God's vision for our world.

Leader: "And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets." (Zechariah 8:5)

People: We will work and pray for the day when all children may safely revel in the joys of childhood.

Leader: "No more shall the sound of weeping be heard or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days or an old person who does not live out a lifetime." (Isaiah 65:20a)

People: We will work and pray for the day when children receive the care they need for health, mental health, and well-being, and all live to see the fullness of years.

Leader: "The wolf shall lie down with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." (Isaiah 11:6)

People: We will work and pray for the day when the gifts and leadership of children are celebrated and honored and children lead us all in the way of peace.

Leader: "May our sons in their youth be like plants full grown, our daughters like corner pillars, cut for the building of a palace." (Psalm 144:12)

People: We will work and pray for the day when all young people have the care and guidance they need to flourish to their potential and leave lives of strength and stability.

Leader: “For there is still a vision of the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.” (Habakkuk 2:3)

By Shannon Daley-Harris