

# Promoting Your Children's Sabbath: Ideas for All Faiths



**Y**our Children's Sabbath will have the greatest impact if it is effectively promoted and publicized both within your place of worship and to the broader public.

This chapter has suggestions and resources for:

- Spreading the Word in Your Place of Worship;
- Reaching Out to the Community and Media .

## Spreading the Word in Your Place of Worship

- ❑ **Bulletin Inserts:** Distribute bulletin inserts/leaflets before the Children's Sabbath to raise awareness and on the Children's Sabbath to inform and offer opportunities for action. Check CDF's website for bulletin inserts/leaflets focused on the current year's Children's Sabbath theme.
- ❑ **Newsletter:** Include other information in your place of worship's newsletter. Adapt the sample newsletter article in this section or write your own.
- ❑ **Posters:** Make posters announcing the Children's Sabbath and display them in appropriate locations in your building(s). Involve youths and children in making these posters.
- ❑ **Announcements:** Request time to make an announcement during the worship service one or two weeks before the observance.
- ❑ **Emails:** If your place of worship has an email list of members, get permission to send an email to the members reminding them of the upcoming Children's Sabbath.
- ❑ **Yard Sign:** Make a yard sign to place on the grounds in front of your place of worship, announcing the Children's Sabbath.
- ❑ **Letters:** Send the bulletin insert or a letter about the Children's Sabbath home with the children who participate in your place of worship's educational programs. After securing any needed permission to send a letter to the mailing list for your place of worship, write a letter describing the Children's Sabbath that encourages members to join the celebration on the designated weekend.
- ❑ **Website:** If your place of worship has a website, post an announcement.
- ❑ **Social Media:** Use various forms of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat and LinkedIn to spread the word about your Children's Sabbath activities.
- ❑ **Keep it up!** Don't forget to continue to focus attention on the Children's Sabbath and the needs and opportunities for response after the weekend itself. Use these same media channels to report on your place of worship's response, announce the total items and money collected, share stories of children and families who were helped, and encourage continued action.

## Sample Article for Your Place of Worship's Newsletter

(This is a sample based on a previous year's Children's Sabbath title and focus. Use it as a model only to develop an article based on the current year's Children's Sabbath theme and focus.)

### **Moving Forward with Hope: Love and Justice for Every Child Focus of 2017 Children's Sabbath**

The 2017 National Observance of Children's Sabbaths® Celebration, "Moving Forward with Hope: Love and Justice for Every Child," takes place this October (*enter date*). We will be joining with thousands of places of worship all across the nation as together people of faith affirm their determination to move forward with hope to assure every child love and justice. One way we can do that is by ending child poverty in our rich nation so all children have their basic needs for food, housing, and health care met. We will be raising a voice of concern about child poverty, learning how we can help end it and exploring other ways to move forward with hope to assure every child love and justice. We will be taking action on the Children's Sabbath weekend and looking at ways we can continue to work faithfully throughout the year through direct service, raising awareness, and working for justice so every child has a hopeful future in which they have not only what they need to survive but also what will help them to thrive.

Here at [*name of your congregation*], we will [*name elements of your Children's Sabbath observance*]. For more information and to find out how you can be involved, contact [*name of contact or coordinator in your place of worship*].



## Reaching Out to the Community and Media

- ❑ **Introduce the Children's Sabbath to clergy and interfaith associations**, civic groups and other organizations that may be interested in supporting, attending or publicizing your Children's Sabbath.
- ❑ **Mail a letter to civic, social and religious organizations in your community**, and offer to speak about the Children's Sabbath at their meetings or gatherings. For example, you might contact the PTA, Lions Club, Rotary, interfaith associations, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America and other community organizations. Invite them to participate in your place of worship's Children's Sabbath or to plan their own Children's Sabbath.
- ❑ **Attend community events** such as school open houses, local health fairs and parades to distribute information about the Children's Sabbath. Make sure to obtain permission from event organizers.
- ❑ **Put up posters or flyers** on community bulletin boards and in other permissible locations throughout your community.
- ❑ **Remember the impact of an invitation and the influence of "word of mouth."** Encourage members to invite friends, neighbors and colleagues to the Children's Sabbath. People who have written off organized religion as irrelevant to them and their lives may be pleasantly surprised to find your place of worship working joyfully for justice to improve the lives of children across our nation.
- ❑ **Include information about the Children's Sabbath on your blog, Facebook page and other social media channels.**
- ❑ **Adapt the sample news release focused on the current year's Children's Sabbath theme that CDF will post at <http://www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbath> and submit it to the religion page of your local newspaper, local online news feeds, and to religious newspapers or newsletters in your area**, including denominational publications as appropriate. Follow up with a telephone call to each.
- ❑ **Reach out to a newspaper columnist.** If you have any contacts who know a columnist for the local paper, solicit their help in pitching the Children's Sabbath to the columnist.
- ❑ **Contact your local radio station** to learn the requirements and formats for having your Children's Sabbath events publicized as a Public Service Announcement (PSA) or on its community calendar or community bulletin board. You may be asked to prepare a "live read" script—a brief (10 second) script giving the basic information. For example:

Type it, double-spaced, with accurate names, times and addresses. Be sure to include your name as a contact for the station, with daytime and evening phone numbers. Send it to the station at least two weeks in advance.

### PSA Live-Read Script

This weekend, all across our nation thousands of religious congregations of many faiths will be uniting to focus on [*name the current year's Children's Sabbath focus, such as "the more than 14.5 million children who live in poverty."*] Together, people of faith will be committing to improve the lives of our nation's children through direct service and work for justice to [*name the goal, such as "end child poverty in our rich nation."*] The National Observance of Children's Sabbaths will be marked here in [*name of town*] by [*name of congregation*] on [*date*] at [*time*] with [*name type of event, e.g., worship or education program*]. All are invited to participate as part of the National Observance titled, [*current year's title*].



## PROMOTING YOUR CHILDREN'S SABBATH

- ❑ **Invite the local media—television, radio and print—to attend and publicize the Children's Sabbath.** Tell them about aspects of the event that promise to be visually interesting and emotionally compelling. Point out that the Children's Sabbath is a way to focus attention on serious problems facing children and on positive ways to make a difference. Let them know about any well-known speakers who will be participating in your Children's Sabbath.
- ❑ **Arrange for a local spokesperson or an interfaith panel of speakers to participate on a radio or television talk show program** about an issue of concern for the children in your community.
- ❑ **If your community has a cable or public access television station, contact the station's producers to arrange an interview.** Check if they will list the Children's Sabbath on their billboard of local events.
- ❑ **Write a letter to the editor** about the concerns which your Children's Sabbath is focusing on, such as ending child poverty or assuring all children health care. Offer the Children's Sabbath as a way to learn more and become involved. Watch the newspaper for articles about the concerns your Children's Sabbath will address, such as poverty or health care, and children in general so that you can relate your letter to those articles and time it appropriately.

### News Release for Local Media

One of the goals of the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths is to reach a wider, secular audience with a message about children's needs and the religious community's concern and commitment to meeting those needs. We encourage you to use the sample news release focused on the current year's Children's Sabbath theme which CDF will post on our website at [www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbaths](http://www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbaths) as a model for explaining the Children's Sabbath to your local newspaper's religion or community news editor and as a means of generating a news story. If you know of other congregations in your community that will also be celebrating the Children's Sabbath, contact them about preparing a joint news release.

Here are steps to follow:

- 1) Call your newspaper** to obtain the name of the religion writer or city editor. If you know someone who works for the newspaper or has contacts there, ask for their help in getting the news release into the right hands.
- 2) Email the news release** to the right person at the paper in early October, two to three weeks before your Children's Sabbath.
- 3) Follow up with a telephone call a few days later.** Remember, the news media are looking to cover a newsworthy story, not to promote a particular event. In your communication with them, emphasize that the Children's Sabbath is about children's issues of concern to many people and is a practical and inspiring example of how people are taking action. Emphasize that your celebration is part of a growing national movement among religious congregations to improve the well-being of America's children. Suggest that reporters contact the Children's Defense Fund's Communications Department at (202) 628-8787 for background information and a national perspective to supplement your own.
- 4) Send a letter of thanks to the reporter** if the paper does cover your story, with copies to superiors. Building and maintaining a good relationship with the religion writer or other reporter may help gain coverage of follow-up efforts developing from your Children's Sabbath and of the event in subsequent years.
- 5) Send a copy of any coverage you receive to the Religious Action Division of the Children's Defense Fund** to assist in further promotion of the Children's Sabbath. Send information about your Children's Sabbath to CDF Attn: Communications, 25 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001 or email a description to [religiousaction@childrensdefense.org](mailto:religiousaction@childrensdefense.org)