

WELCOME TO THE 2025 NATIONAL OBSERVANCE OF CHILDREN'S SABBATHS® CELEBRATION

Call to Action

From Prayer to Policy, From Reflection to Justice

Introduction

Children's Sabbath is a summons to act. Prayer and worship awaken us to God's vision for children's dignity, and advocacy and organizing move that vision into public life. To love children faithfully means protecting them through the choices we make together as communities and as a nation.

This resource offers practical tools and spiritual grounding to help your community move from concern to commitment, from reflection to action. It is designed for congregations and groups of every size — whether you are just beginning to step into advocacy or building on years of faithful witness.

This resource will guide your team through:

- Advocacy templates you can adapt for policymakers, organizations, or neighbors.
- Organizing steps for hosting Child Watch visits to witness children's lived realities.
- Congregational action tools — pledge cards, bulletin inserts, and checklists — that mobilize communities.
- Reflection prompts and prayers to anchor advocacy in faith and courage.

The call to action is a gift — an opportunity to embody *Beloved Community* in public life. By taking even one faithful step, your community joins a growing movement of people of faith and conscience who believe children deserve not only prayers but protection, justice, and love.

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Grounding Quote Reflection

Freedom Faith as Fuel

This activity grounds advocacy in faith and history. Reflecting on Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall's powerful witness reminds us that courage and faith are at the center of every step toward justice.

Who this is activity for: Organizers, congregations, small groups, youth/adult study groups

Why we're doing it: To anchor advocacy in spiritual courage and community memory.

Steps

1. Read the quote aloud (invite a youth/elder).
2. Silent minute → underline a word/phrase that stirs you.
3. Share: *What risk feels faithful right now? What freedom are we seeking for children?*

Facilitator Help:

- Invite a youth, elder, or respected leader to read the quote aloud.
- Allow silence for reflection before sharing.
- Encourage participants to underline or circle words that stir them.
- Offer the option to "pass" during sharing.
- Close by naming one collective risk/commitment aloud.

It may cost my job, it may cost my life, but I want to be free, and I want my children to be free. So I'm going down to the courthouse, and I'm going to sign my name. And I'm going to trust God to take me there, and I'm going to trust God to bring me back. That's courage. That's faith. That's Freedom Faith.

-Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall

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**Getting Started — First Steps
for Organizers***Small Teams, Big Impact*

Every movement begins with a small, committed group. This activity helps organizers gather a team, choose a focus, and share personal stories that will shape their advocacy.

Who this is activity for: Organizers, clergy, lay leaders, advocacy teams

Why we're doing it: To help organizers take the first concrete step toward action.

Steps

1. Gather your team (2–5 people).
2. Choose one action for Children's Sabbath (letters? Child Watch? meeting?).
3. Tell your story—each person drafts a 3–5 sentence “why children matter” story.

Facilitator Help:

- Keep the team small but committed (2–5 people is enough).
- Give each person 3–5 minutes to share their “why.”
- Write commitments on chart paper or a whiteboard.
- Set a date for your first concrete action before leaving.

NAMES

Ashley

ROLESLetter
writing lead**MY “WHY”**

As a foster
parent, I've
seen the power
of after-school
care—let's
advocate
funding for it.

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Choose Your Issue

Focus for Faithful Action

Choosing one focus area helps your congregation or group channel its energy where it matters most. This activity helps you discern an issue and connect it to your community's context.

Who this is activity for: Organizers, advocacy teams, congregations

Why we're doing it: To focus energy and sharpen advocacy.

Steps

1. Review potential issues aloud.
2. Circle one focus for this quarter.
3. Write one sentence: *Why this issue matters here, now.*

Facilitator Help:

- Review the issue list out loud for clarity.
- Invite youth voices to guide or challenge the choice.
- Encourage participants to connect issues with lived experience.
- Use a consensus method (show of hands, dot voting) to choose one focus.

ISSUE

ACCESS TO
HEALTHCARE AND
MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICES

WHY NOW?

WE CHOOSE YOUTH
MENTAL HEALTH—OUR
DISTRICT HAS ONE
COUNSELOR FOR 900
STUDENTS.

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Advocacy Letter Lab

Words that Move Decision-Makers

Letters are a simple and effective way to raise children's issues with decision-makers. This activity provides templates to make writing easy for groups or individuals.

Who this is activity for: Organizers, youth groups, congregations, interfaith partners

Why we're doing it: To engage decision-makers directly.

Steps

1. Pick a template (Policy, Organizational, Community, Personal).
2. Fill in blanks with your story and ask.
3. Collect and send together.

Facilitator Help:

- Provide a fact sheet with 2–3 statistics and one local story.
- Remind participants to keep letters to one page.
- Encourage use of personal stories (brief, heartfelt).
- Assign someone to collect, mail, or scan letters.
- Take a group photo (optional) and share on social media.



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Congregational Action Tools

Mobilizing the Whole Community

Tools like pledge cards, bulletin inserts, and checklists help congregations move from worship into concrete action. This activity provides ready-to-use templates for your community.

Who this is activity for: Clergy, congregations, organizers

Why we're doing it: To engage the entire congregation in advocacy.

Steps

1. Distribute pledge cards.
2. Insert bulletin prompts.
3. Use checklists for tracking.

Facilitator Help:

- Place pledge cards in bulletins or on pews.
- Set up a collection basket or return table.
- Announce from the pulpit how to return completed cards.
- Assign volunteers to tally pledges and track outcomes.
- Post results visibly to encourage accountability.

Pledge Card

I STARSKY commit to taking action on
behalf of children by:

- ☐ Sending a letter to my elected official
- ☐ Signing a petition
- ☐ Sharing my story on social media
- ☒ Donating or volunteering at the Children's
Defense Fund

Email: INFO@CDF.ORG

Phone: 555-555-1234

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Share Your Story

A Testimony that Travels

Stories stir hearts and shape policy. This activity helps participants write a short testimony of why children's well-being matters, to use in advocacy letters, meetings, or worship.

Who this is activity for: Youth, adults, small groups, worship leaders

Why we're doing it: To move decision-makers with lived experience.

Steps

1. Ask: Why do children's well-being matter to me?
2. Write 3–5 sentences with one detail.
3. Share in letters, worship, or meetings.

Facilitator Help:

- Provide 2–3 sentence starters ("I care about children because...").
- Encourage brevity (3–5 sentences max).
- Remind participants to avoid identifying details without consent.
- Collect stories for use in advocacy letters or meetings (again, with consent).
- Encourage youth to share in their own words.



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Report-Back & Celebrate

Accountability with Joy

Sharing outcomes keeps communities encouraged and committed. This activity ensures you celebrate wins, track impact, and set the next faithful step.

Who this is activity for: Organizers, congregations, advocacy teams

Why we're doing it: To build momentum and honor efforts.

Steps

1. Share totals of letters/pledges.
2. Name one concrete impact.
3. Celebrate and set next action date.

Facilitator Help:

- Share totals of pledges, letters, or visits.
- Highlight one concrete impact story.
- Thank participants publicly.
- Celebrate with song, prayer, or testimony.
- Set and announce your "next action date."

