



Imagine a child. They're grinning with uncombed hair, scuffed shoes from playtime and gripping their favourite toy. They're standing there, alone.

Now place them on a road in a village, town or city you know well. Consider everything that makes up that community – shops, a school, the doctors' surgery, the youth club, parks, a church, homes, families.

The child becomes distressed – they feel lonely, hungry, scared, unwell. They look around anxiously – is this a neighbourhood that would help them, and if so, to whom might they turn?

Amongst the sea of faces of commuters, shoppers, workers and passers-by: who cares?

This scenario might sound like something from a film, but this is very much real life for tens of thousands of vulnerable children around the world – children who, through no fault of their own, live day-by-day without the love and support of others.

Children whose parents have died or walked out on them.

Children who are too poor to go to school or receive healthcare.

Children who, in the eyes of the authorities, simply do not exist.

The African proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child." More communities around the world – in both developed and developing countries – must understand this and live it out.

'How do you put the child at the centre of life in your community?'

Imagine a child – surrounded by a loving family, kept safe by society, cared for by the clinic, educated by the school, integrated into the local church and fulfilling their God-given potential in every way. Just like the child flying the kite in the photo.

It's a vision of the future we all hope and pray for.

Child-friendly communities is our focus for the **2014 World Weekend of Prayer** campaign. And you can be a part of it.

Join us wherever you are – in your home, church, Sunday school, youth group – as we turn to God together in prayer for **a change of attitude and action** by communities towards their children.

Look inside and you'll find **statistics, stories, prayers, activity ideas** and **Bible readings**.



Further resource sheets are downloadable online at www.worldweekendofprayer.com

Know the facts



Birth registration

Over a **third** of all births in urban areas are not registered, and that proportion is closer to **50 per cent** in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. (UNICEF)

➤ Pray that children would feel valued and able to access their rights.

Child labour

About **215 million** girls and boys aged 5-17 are engaged in child labour, 115 million of them in hazardous work. (UNICEF)

➤ Pray that children would enjoy a childhood filled with fun.

Church

The Church in the UK will have lost an estimated **1.1 million** children between 1990 and 2020. (Christian Research)

➤ Pray that children would find hope through Christians and God's love.

Education

61 million primary school-age children were not enrolled in school in 2010. (UNESCO)

➤ Pray that children would learn to read and write.

Environment

Each year around **3 million children** under the age of five die due to environment-related diseases. (WHO)

➤ Pray that children would live in clean, unpolluted places.

Family

132 million children across the world are on record as 'orphans'. (UNICEF)

➤ Pray that children would know the love and care of a family.

Healthcare

Preventable diseases like diarrhoea and pneumonia take the lives of **2 million** children a year who are too poor to afford proper treatment. (UNHCR)

➤ Pray that children would be healthy and free of illness.

Violence

Each year as many as **275 million** children worldwide witness domestic violence, according to estimates. (UNICEF)

➤ Pray that children would be protected from harm.

Activity ideas

... for children aged 7+



People who care for children

You will need: Cube outlines for each child, pens and pencils, scissors and glue

Talk with the children about the people who help us in our community. To help children think of ideas you could suggest different places in the community (eg hospital, school, police station, church) and think about who helps children in that place (eg children may mention policemen, teachers, Sunday school teachers, community workers, doctors, nurses, neighbours). Give each child a copy of the cube outline.

Ask children to draw a different community helper on each side of the cube. Colour the pictures and help the children to cut out and glue together the cube.

When everyone has finished, take it in turns for children to roll their "dice". Talk about the helper who is selected – what kind of children do they help? What problems might children have who need their help? Are there any children who might need this help but might not be able to get it? Pray for the helper and the children you have talked about.

... for teenagers

What could we do?

You will need: Flipchart paper and pens



It's important to remember that as well as all the adults who have responsibility to care for children and young people, as young people ourselves we can also pray and take action to help others.

Talk together about the needs of children and young people in your community. Which children might be struggling, and why? If it is hard to think of ideas, think about all the places in your community where children are, and think about what needs they might have.

Write your ideas down on flipchart paper.

Can you think of something you could do together that might improve the situation? Some ideas could be:

- Clear up rubbish in your local park or streets
- Donate toys or clothes to an organisation which helps children
- Do a sponsored event to raise money for a local children's charity
- Collect money to buy food or other items for families who need it

Make it real

Three examples of God's people following his call, in community, making a difference for children

Church in action

Jane is six and shares one room with five other family members in Lamala, Tanzania. Living conditions are cramped and unhygienic. Jane's father has left the family, meaning there is no regular income to pay for food, clothing or school fees and stationery. There are thousands of children just like Jane in her town, growing up not knowing where their next meal is coming from, not going to school and without hope for the future.



A solution has come in the shape of local Christians who have started a pre-school for 300 children like Jane and also provide clothing, food, mosquito nets, parenting training, family support and basic medical aid and healthcare. The project has secured primary school placements for the children it helps across the city and maintains contact with them as they make progress.

'Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Luke 18: 16-17

... for an all-age service

Praying for people in our community who care for children

Prepare people in advance to share about the way they work with children in the community and the needs of children that they come across (eg police officer, health worker, businessman, educator, local politician).

They should talk a little about their role and share prayer requests for the needs of children related to their work and role.

These are just for starters! If this wrapper doesn't already contain more prayer-focused activity sheets to share in your church, Sunday school, school or youth group, you can download them from www.worldweekendofprayer.com or by using the contact details on the back cover.

Rescued and registered

Odilia is 17 and lives in Guatemala City. Growing up, she and her three siblings suffered unimaginable physical and psychological abuse at the hands of their parents. After her mother, father and older sister moved away, Odilia and her two younger brothers were abandoned in one of the city's most dangerous areas. Dirty and eating waste, they were not even legally registered and so lacked any official identity.



It's not hard to imagine what might have happened next for Odilia and her brothers if it wasn't for frontline workers from a project called Early Encounter. Children are given accommodation, healthcare, education and life skills training, and Odilia has lived in a safe home for three years, learning to read, write and cook. Through another programme called 'I Exist', she and her brothers have at last been registered as citizens of Guatemala.

Strengthening families

Sanjay is 14 from Patna, a city in eastern India. A few years ago he found learning difficult and dropped out of school. While looking for work, Sanjay began to steal and spent his money on eating, drinking and watching movies. He started maintaining a lifestyle he couldn't afford. His mother, who raised three children and sold vegetables for a living while her husband drank, despaired of Sanjay.



Enter Mahima – a trained Christian counsellor who mentored Sanjay, inspiring him to recall his hopes, dreams and aspirations, and provided parental guidance for his mother. Now Sanjay's life has improved significantly. He is employed at a Xerox centre and works hard to support his family. His mother encourages him to get to work and school on time and today she is his closest friend, understanding the importance of giving time to her son.

'Just as a body has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.'

1 Corinthians 12: 12, 24-27

Pray with us

A short selection of prayer points, plus a set prayer, to use during WWP 2014 – ideal whether you're alone, with family, gathered in a group or within the context of a church service. We would also suggest you use the eight areas of statistics on page 2 as prayer prompts.

Please pray:

- ▶ For vulnerable children without family support who desperately need the **care** of churches, schools, neighbours and local groups.
- ▶ That all children would know afresh the **love and comfort** of parents, siblings and wider family members.
- ▶ For those in authority and in positions of leadership – that they would exercise great **wisdom and discernment** in creating policies and programmes that better promote the rights of children.
- ▶ For churches to become **more aware** of the needs of children in their neighbourhood – both those who attend church and those outside. May more Christians have a heart for children.
- ▶ For **protection** from those who would seek to harm children, especially traffickers and business owners who employ children.



A prayer

Father God

We thank you that you've called us into community. Help us to bring together our different individual skills and abilities, as the **body of Christ**, to reach out and help those who are vulnerable where we live.

We pray that, through the power of your Holy Spirit, you would help us create **communities that are child-friendly** – safe, caring, loving places where children can flourish and reach their God-given potential.

We place in your hands today, Lord, all those children at risk around the world who feel lonely, hungry, scared, unwell – protect them, we pray, and bring about a **lasting change** through the love of your people.

In your name we ask this. Amen

'At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."

Matthew 18: 1-4

Get more

Go to www.worldweekendofprayer.com to download further resources for use during the weekend and join our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WWPrayer> to see what others are doing.

Alternatively to request resource sheets by post, contact Viva via the website or by emailing comms@viva.org

The World Weekend of Prayer campaign is held every year over the first weekend of June. This global initiative brings together hundreds of thousands of adults and children across more than 40 countries.

Viva is an international Christian charity working with supporters and partner networks to inspire lasting change in children's lives through the power of collective action.

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