

Candle Lighting Litany for the Children of Louisiana

You will need 12 tea light or votive candles and one tall Christ candle or white pillar candle for this litany, arrange the candles on a table covered in a cloth that represents children.

Works best with two readers that alternate reading and lighting. Pause briefly between each reading. As one reader is reading the other person lights a candle. This continues until all are lit. The Christ candle is lit during the close.



We light a candle for the **16.1 million children** throughout the United States that are living their lives in poverty; The **27.7% of the children** living in our communities in Louisiana that are affected by poverty in their families.

We light a candle for the **1 in 50 children** in the United States that are homeless; The **21,000 children** in public schools in Louisiana that are without a place to call home.

We light a candle for the **1 in 9 children** throughout the United States living in households struggling to afford the food they needed to ensure their children would not go to sleep or to school hungry; the children that represent **23.5% of all children** in Louisiana. While **one-third of the children** in the United States are overweight or obese.

We light a candle for the **over five million children** in the United States who are uninsured; the **59,000 children** in Louisiana without health insurance.

We light a candle for the **teen mother and her baby** that will be born **every 1.5 minutes**; for the **7,083 teens and their babies** born in Louisiana.

We light a candle for the **7,000 children** who drop out of a public high school each day; for the **26,386 children** in Louisiana that drop out of high school.

We light a candle for **the child that enters foster care** every 2 minutes throughout the United States; for the **4,044 children** in Louisiana living in foster placements; and the more than **23,000 youth** that age out of foster care each year with no permanent family.

We light a candle for the **678,810 children** under 18 in the United States that are abused or neglected; The more than **8,458 children** that suffer from abuse or neglect each year in Louisiana; The families of the **more than four children** who will die today from child abuse or neglect.

We light a candle for the **580 families** from around our country that call the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children each day, for the **2,185 children** that go missing each day and the **797,500 children** that go missing each year in the United States.

We light a candle for the **325,000 children** that become victims of exploitation each year throughout North America, and the **5.5 million children** that are victims of trafficking and forced labor practices around the world each year.

We light a candle for the **2,694 children** that die each year in a senseless act of violence in the United States; the **87 children** in Louisiana that lose their life to violence.

We light a candle for the over **1.6 million children** under age 18 that are arrested or incarcerated in the United States; the **16,582 children** in Louisiana affected by their criminal offenses.

We light the Christ Candle and remember that You are ever present in our lives and in the lives of your precious children of the United States, and the World. God, we come to You in Worship today to adore and Praise you for all that you have done for us and continue to do in the lives of Your children. **Amen.**

“Pass The Basket” – A Children’s Message for Children’s Sabbath

Scripture: Is there anyone among you who if a child asks for bread will give a stone? - Matthew 7:9

Need: Breadbasket, Paper or cloth napkin, couple dinner rolls, and a rock or stone of similar size or shape

Preparation: Unfold napkin to cover inside of basket. Place dinner rolls on top of napkin along with the stone so that the stone is seen easily. Fold napkin over to cover if large enough or place a second napkin to cover items.

Children’s Message Time: Invite children and youth to come forward to participate in the message. This is an interactive message so as much as possible encourage the children to participate and affirm their responses.

Children what do I have in my hand? Yes, it is a basket.

Is our basket empty? You are right it is not empty. (Let’s pass the basket)

(If age appropriate children are present start passing the basket.)

Have you seen a basket like this before what was it used for?

(affirm any responses)

What do you think is inside?

(after a couple responses or a form of bread is said ask the one holding the basket to uncover it)

What do you see? What is in with the bread? It is a stone.

In Matthew 7:9 Jesus was talking to the people about how much God loved them. He asked a question so the people could understand just how important that love is.

He said, “Is there anyone among you who if a child asks for bread will give a stone?”

How many of us would want to get the stone in this basket to eat? We wouldn’t in fact we know that would be wrong. The stone does not belong in the basket does?

In the same way, God loves us and expects us to ask for the things we need. Jesus says a little later on that God will provide good things to those who ask.

So the next time someone passes you the breadbasket or gives you bread to eat, remember that God loves you and all children. God is waiting to hear from you anytime whenever you need help. Let’s pray.

(Say a brief closing prayer in your own words to conclude children’s message)