

(Please copy and distribute to your teachers.)

PRAYER SERVICE: WHERE IS OUR HOME?

TABLE OR ALTAR PREPARATION: African cloth if available with Scripture, Globe, shoes or footprints, some symbol of food

Leader: +In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: AMEN.

Leader: OPENING PRAYER

Dear God, we thank you for our home. We call You our True Home, the place where one day we will live forever. You also give us a home here on earth where we can live with family - the place that gives us love, and shelter from heat, cold, and danger. Today we come to pray in thanks for these gifts and to pray for children who have no home to shelter them.

Song Suggestion: "All Are Welcome" Marty Haugen

Reader: Scripture Reading (Luke 2: alt. Verses 4-7) *In this reading of Jesus' birth, we remember that Jesus did not have a home in which to be born.*

Joseph went up from Galilee to Bethlehem, to be enrolled with Mary, his wife, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son, Jesus. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (The Word of the Lord)

Respond: THANKS BE TO GOD

Reader 2: This Advent, as children of the Holy Childhood Association, we are asked to help our world become a better place by making a difference in the lives of refugee children who need a home-just as Mary and Joseph needed a home for Jesus to be born. We share our gifts of prayer, sacrifice and love so that these children will have a better life. PLEASE STAND

Leader: Do you promise to pray each day for your sisters and brothers who suffer from hunger, disease, homelessness, and the effects of war and violence in our world?

Response: I DO PROMISE.

Leader: Do you promise to study and learn about the lives of children in other countries and are you willing to let them touch your hearts?

Response: I DO PROMISE.

Leader: Do you promise to make sacrifices of your time, talent, and treasure, so that children in need may have better lives?

Response: I DO PROMISE.

Leader: (Closing Prayer)

Dear Jesus, we know that when you lived here on earth you and your parents were refugees and had to live in a foreign country. We thank you today for the gifts of shelter and family that You give to us. We ask your blessing on our brothers and sisters in Angola and other parts of the world who are living in the streets because they no longer have a home. We pray for an end to fighting and wars in all countries that are the cause of suffering. We promise to all we can through prayer and sacrifice to help your children. AMEN.

Advent Prayer Celebration
Mission Awareness

Preparation: 1) Discuss how it feels to wait for something. When, and for what, have we waited? What kinds of feelings accompanied the waiting? 2) Recall that Advent is a time of anticipation, a time of waiting to celebrate the coming of Jesus. 3) (As a focus for this prayer, have an Advent wreath with the 4 candles that symbolize the time of waiting. Have a globe or map, and some pictures of children of distant cultures.)

Gathering song: (One of your choosing that recalls the theme of waiting for the coming of Jesus.)

Reader 1: Advent is a time of wonderful waiting, a time of waiting for something wonderful.

Reader 2: (Isaiah 7:14, adapted) A virgin shall have a son, and he shall be called Emmanuel – God with us!

All: God is with us and our hope is for days of joy.

Reader 3: (Isaiah 35 & 61, adapted) The blind will see again. The deaf will hear and the lame will dance. The hungry will eat and the prisoners will be set free.

All: God is with us and our hope is for days of joy.

Reader 4: (Isaiah 2 & 35, adapted) Streams will run in the desert, and it shall bloom with flowers. The nations will change their swords into plows; they will not train for war again.

All: God is with us and our hope is for days of joy.

Reader 1: These are God's proclamations to us. This is what we wait for – and others wait, too. These wonderful things are for all people, everywhere. All nations shall live in these promises, says the prophet Isaiah.

But right now, many members of God's family the world over are waiting.

People wait for a home, a safe place to live. They dwell now in tents or crowded camps as refugees. They wait for peace to come and for war or violence to stop so they can go home. Others wait on a land, hot and dry.

Nothing grows. They worry about food; often they

wait in long lines hoping for some offering of relief.

All: God is with us and our hope is for days of joy.

Many people are poor. There are no jobs, or wages are low. Even children work to try and help their family. The young wait for a time when they can go to school and play and not worry about just surviving.

People are sick in places where there is little medical help. They wait for medicine and care for their bodies and hope in their hearts.

All: God is with us and our hope is for days of joy.

Reader 2: God, we wait with our brothers and sisters around the world who want to live in peace and with enough in their lives to be full of gratitude for the blessings of the earth.

Reader 3: What can we do as we wait for the prophet's words to come true? What can we do when my brothers and sisters need simple things to survive? What light can I bring to such darkness?

Reflection: What prayer, charitable action or contribution can I make during Advent ?

Activity: Color and cut out the Advent Candle. Use the back of it to note your Advent intentions.

Reader 4: (Isaiah 9, adapted) The people who walk in darkness will see a great light.

Reader 1: May our candles remind us of God's intention for us as proclaimed in the words of the prophet, and of our generous intentions for God's people.

All: God is with us and our hope is for days of joy. Help us, O God, to wait in patience and hope. Make us grow in care and generosity and strength so we can serve others who wait for the fullness of blessings. Amen

Closing song or refrain: (of your choosing)