

World Vision



# Advent Four

**Breaking Silences: Love and Indifference**

## Prayer followed by silence

In silence we bring before God our desire to be loved and offer it for transformation.

In silence we remember children who today will be treated with indifference and we offer them to God for saving.

We pray, we wait, and we sing; Come Lord Jesus

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### **Hymn:** *Sacred The Body*

Congregational hymn. A rare hymn addressing issues of the body from a biblical perspective.

**Artist:** Ruth C. Duck

[https://hymnary.org/text/sacred\\_the\\_body\\_god\\_has\\_created](https://hymnary.org/text/sacred_the_body_god_has_created)

### **Song:** *Hitting You*

A song about a father hitting his son.

**Artist:** Rufus Wainwright III

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## Seated Response

Give each person a ¼ sheet of newspaper and ask them to find (circle or underline) words, images, phrases, or headings that convey situations of indifference and lack of love. After one minute ask them to use what they have found to guide silent prayer.

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## Christmas Anxiety Prayer

When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem  
They found there was no room.

We confess that in the midst of all our indifference  
We have not made room in our hearts for others.

We confess that, paralyzed by fear, prejudice or apathy  
We have not made room in our homes for the stranger.

We confess that, forgetting the welcome we have been shown,  
We have not made room in your church for those who are different from us.

We confess that in the busyness of Christmas time  
We have not made room in our lives for you.  
(Silence)

Gracious God, forgive us and renew us.  
Use this advent time to break open our hearts,  
throw open the doors, open our eyes to your presence around us  
and open our arms wide to welcome you.

God is good! God is faithful! God is merciful!  
And God comes to us, in vulnerability, again and again,  
to show us how much we are loved.  
We are forgiven; we are freed,

We are beloved; we are blessed,  
Thanks be to God!  
Amen.

**Author:** Adapted from work by Cara Heavey, UK

**Source:** <http://worshipwords.co.uk/adventchristmas-prayer-of-confession-and-assurance-of-grace-cara-heavey-uk/>

## Advent Wreath Candle Lighting

As we light the candles of the Advent Wreath we seek to join with the Global Campaign to End Violence Against Children and to shine light into the darkness of **displaced children**.

Nearly 50 million children, across the globe, have migrated across or within borders, or been forcibly displaced. More than half that number – 28 million – are boys and girls who have fled violence and persecution and whose insecurity particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking for forced labour, prostitution and forced marriage.

As we light the candles of our Advent wreath in anticipation of the coming of our Messiah in a refugee child we pray for the children of Syria and listen to their hopes and dreams.

*(The children named in the prayers and still images are from the Fear and Dreams project of World Vision, comparing experiences of children across the world. You could simple use the slide images below as the Advent wreath is lit or you could play the 1-2 minute videos that give further details of the experience of the Syrian children mentioned either before or after the prayers.)* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLEPxm8XE>

As Christians at Advent we believe that it takes more than a world.

It takes faith in a God who comes to join with us in the work.

We gather this Advent to express our faith in God who knows what it is to become a child.

Who is willing to identify with the victims; offer forgiveness to perpetrators and through his life, death and resurrection has the power to transform the devastating control of violence over us all.

May our worship and service this day be work together (personal and public), to end violence in the lives of children.

May it help us to confess the worst and rise to the best in ourselves as we help children reach their full potential, and promote a kingdom future of peace and dignity for the next generation.

## Lament and confession

I choose to turn this wall into a bridge, a connection between those who are suffering and myself, I invite you to join me by adding your brick toward bridge building for it takes people of faith to stop violence against children. *Worship leader breaks up the wall and starts rearranging the bricks to make a bridge, allow time for congregation to participate. It would be important to have information about how people might respond to this available for people to access.*

**Alternative:** A single person holds all the blocks, or they are piled up on the table.

Globally about 1 in 10 girls have been subjected to forced sexual acts before age 20.

There are things in our world that are an affront to what is good and right: the sexual exploitation of children is such a thing.

When faced with this, I can find myself impotent and inadequate, and push thoughts of this dreadful thing away and seek to ignore its existence.

I can't un-see what I have seen,  
- so I look away.

I can't un-hear what I have heard,  
- so I refuse to listen.

I can't un-know what I know,  
- so I refuse to acknowledge.

And in doing so I build a wall of indifference between myself and the intolerable,  
I separate myself from the discomfort and disquiet that I would be forced to feel if I stood face to face with the facts.

But the facts remain... 1 in 10 girls in our world will be subjected to forced sexual acts before age 20, and 50% of the images in pornography show violence perpetrated against women. (UNICEF 2014, Hidden in Plain Sight [https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Hidden\\_in\\_plain\\_sight\\_statistical\\_analysis\\_Summary\\_EN\\_2\\_Sept\\_2014.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Hidden_in_plain_sight_statistical_analysis_Summary_EN_2_Sept_2014.pdf) )

When faced with these facts, will I build a wall? Or will I join the One who came to break down the walls and speak and act against this violence against children whenever I can?

Worship leader stands in front of the wall block poised above it as if asking the question 'will I build the wall' in this movement. Hold that position for several moments. Place the brick aside before offering this prayer:

Brush as aside my indifference, God,  
unlock my heart,  
lift my eyes,  
attune my ears  
open my mind,  
not so I might escape my feelings of guilt,  
but that guilt might motivate me to being more fully human,  
and point me toward the path of justice.  
Let compassion and wisdom be what guides me,  
Strengthens me and emboldens me  
to process what I see ,  
comprehend what I hear,  
and know how to act with loving kindness  
toward those who are cruelly harmed  
and grievously hurting.

I choose to turn this wall into a bridge, a connection between those who are suffering and myself, I invite you to join me by adding your brick toward bridge building for it takes people of faith to stop violence against children.

*Worship leader breaks up the wall and starts rearranging the bricks to make a bridge, allow time for congregation to participate.*

*It would be important to have information about how people might respond to this available for people to access.*

Here are links to some resources <http://www.wvi.org/ittakesaworld>

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## **Blessing**

**Traditional Irish Blessing** ( <http://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/prayers/irish-blessings-and-prayers-beautiful-words-of-faith.html> )

May the road rise to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm on your face,  
The rains fall soft upon your fields.

And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.  
May God be with you and bless you,  
May you see your children's children.  
May you be poor in misfortune,  
Rich in blessings,  
May you know nothing but happiness  
From this day forward.

May the road rise to meet you  
May the wind always be at your back,  
May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home,  
And may the hand of a friend always be near.

May green be the grass you walk on,  
May blue be the sky above you,  
May pure be the joys that surround you,  
May true be the hearts that love you.

**Together: And may this be our prayer this Christmas for every child we know. Amen**

*(A spoken word video of this can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tqXeqQgQEI> )*