

World Vision

A photograph of a man with a joyful expression, carrying several stalks of sugarcane on his shoulders. He is wearing an orange patterned shirt. The background shows a lush green field with hills in the distance under a soft sky.

Advent Two

Breaking Silences: Peace and Violence

Call to Worship

As Christians at Advent we believe that it takes more than a world to end violence against children.

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

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

A God 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

There could be one or more people leading this prayer. If one person is leading, dress in a cotton shirt or T-shirt, wear sneakers or sport shoes, have a café-style table set with a mug or cup to sit at. If different people are leading have each dress or sit in the setting appropriate to the section they are leading.

The cotton shirt on my back accuses me, it bears the fingerprints of children whose small fingers should be holding a pencil as they calculate mathematical equations or write a poem, instead the fingerprints are from the children who picked out pests in cotton fields and worked from dawn to dusk every day in textile factories. I stand here, wearing an accusation.

This coffee I hold shames me, the beans that have been so delicately roasted to my favourite flavour have been plucked by the hands of children, and the sprinkle of chocolate on the top that I spoon unthinkingly into my mouth, may well be the produce of wielding 10-year-olds enslaved in the cocoa trade. I sit here, sipping my shame.

The shoes on my feet condemn me, I can walk and jog and run for miles in comfort, but I can't outrun the odour of rubber plantations and sweatshops crowded with kids whose families survive only because of their pitiful income. I jog away on the bowed backs of children.

My shiny hair, my jewellery, my mobile phone, my laptop, if these things could speak and tell me the story of their production, how often would that story start with children being exploited?

When Jesus said 'suffer the little children' I don't think this is what he meant. It takes people of faith to end violence against children, we have not been faithful to your call – forgive us God.

Close this time of confession with the following song:

Song: 'How Long?'

Artist: Robin Mann

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIOIKHlbyqY&feature=share>

Hymn: *For all the children*

A gathering hymn

Artist: David Lohman

Prayers of Intercession

Every five minutes, somewhere in our world, a child dies as a result of violence. An estimated 120 million girls and 73 million boys have been victims of sexual violence, and almost one billion children are subjected to physical punishment on a regular basis.

As part of Agenda 2030, the world's governments have set ambitious targets to end violence by 2030, in order to deliver the vision of a world where all children – girls and boys alike – grow up free from violence and exploitation.

World Vision's campaign to end violence against children will support the efforts of those seeking to prevent violence, protect childhood, and help make societies safe for children.

On the second Sunday of Advent, the second purple candle is lit. This candle typically represents peace. Some traditions call this the "Bethlehem Candle," symbolising Christ's manger:

As we light the candle of PEACE we seek to join with the movement to end violence against children and to shine light into the darkness of...**child labour**.

We pray PEACE for the estimated 168 million child labourers worldwide with more than half of these (85 million children) involved in hazardous work.

Blessing

May the peace that exceeds all understanding;

The peace that comes not from a logical working out of circumstances;

But the peace that comes only from knowing the God of peace,

The peace that has a depth of comfort and transformative power like no other,

Be your experience and that of every child who knows no peace;

Today, tomorrow and forever more.

Amen