



Children's Defense Fund

Join in the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths on October 14-16, 2005!

The National Observance of Children's Sabbaths unites thousands of religious congregations of many faiths in speaking out and acting faithfully for justice for children and families on the third weekend of each October. The Children's Sabbaths celebration is guided by an Advisory Board of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Baha'i, and other faith leaders and is endorsed by more than 200 denominations and religious organizations.

An Inspiring Weekend! During the Children's Sabbaths weekend, religious congregations hold special worship services, conduct religious education programs, and host other congregational activities to help people of faith learn more about the serious problems facing children and families in our nation and to inspire congregations to respond to children's needs and commit to seeking justice and care for all of our nation's children. Children's Sabbaths are held in individual congregations with many communities organizing interfaith services and activities.

- **St. Jerome Catholic Church** in Newport News, Virginia, invited a speaker from CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children) to address the congregation on their Children's Sabbath. They also prepared a bulletin board focusing on children's needs to raise awareness.
- **Temple Solel** in Annapolis, Maryland, celebrated their Children's Shabbat during the Friday evening services. The Junior Youth Group participated in the service, and the congregation donated school supplies to be given to children in need.
- **Highlands United Methodist Church** in Highlands, North Carolina, began preparing for their Children's Sabbath with a Kids' Night Out that included dinner, games, and activities to learn more about poor children adapted from the Lesson Plans in the Children's Sabbaths Manual. The church invited people who serve children in the community to attend the Children's Sabbath service and be honored. The Children's Sabbath service opened with a procession of children carrying objects that reminded the congregation of the love and protection all children need and deserve. A pediatrician and child advocate spoke at the service.
- **St. Margaret's Episcopal Church** in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, distributed the Daily Devotional Guide (from the Children's Sabbaths Manual) the week before their Children's Sabbath. On the Sabbath, they featured children's artwork on the bulletin covers, special prayers focusing on children's needs, and a sermon that was developed using sermon resources provided in the Children's Sabbaths Manual. The church school teachers used the Lesson Plans from the Manual.

A Yearlong Commitment! The Children's Sabbaths encourage a *long-term* commitment to help children and families through prayer, education, service, and advocacy, with a special emphasis this year on putting our faith into action to make our nation more just for children and poor families.

- During their Children's Sabbath service, **Trinity United Methodist Church** in Gainesville, Florida, collected money and supplies such as diapers, baby food, and books to donate to several agencies and programs serving children. The congregation will continue to support these programs throughout the year. In addition, Trinity followed up their Children's Sabbath by hosting the fifth annual Child Advocacy Center Conference and by encouraging the church's children to "trick or treat for UNICEF."
- **Edinburg Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)** in Edinburg, Virginia, continued its emphasis on children by including bulletin inserts on Oct. 31st that underscored the importance to children of voting on Nov. 2; preparing school bags and Christmas baskets for children in the community; and beginning a Parents' Night Out program.
- **St. Alban's Episcopal Church** in Sinking Spring, Pennsylvania, is building on its Children's Sabbath by collecting school supplies and participating in Pennsylvania's "Good Schools" movement to improve equity in the public school system. The Children's Sabbath coordinator is surveying adult parishioners about their current volunteer activities on behalf of children and will identify and develop additional activities to serve children as well as opportunities for legislative advocacy.

**Putting Our Faith into Action to Seek Justice for Children:
The 2005 National Observance of Children's Sabbaths®**

**Multi-Faith Resource Manual
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Learn how to plan and promote your Children's Sabbath with this easy-to-use, single-volume manual due out in May 2005. Includes practical activities for adults and children, worship resources for Protestant, Catholic, Episcopal, Jewish, Muslim, Baha'i, and Unitarian Universalist places of worship, materials for interfaith community-wide celebrations, and follow-up activities for every faith community. Many of the materials can be used "as is" while others are designed to be adapted to the needs, interests, and resources of your congregation. Highlights include:

- Welcome letter from Marian Wright Edelman
- Letters from Children's Sabbath Advisory Board Members
- Planning tips
- Promotion ideas, including sample press releases
- Bulletin inserts and clip art
- Christian worship resources and lesson plans for all ages (including Catholic, Protestant, and Episcopal sermon notes);
- Jewish resources for the service and youth group
- Muslim resources
- Baha'i resources and lesson plans
- Unitarian Universalist worship and education resources
- An interfaith service and planning tips, along with Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, and other faith resources
- Ideas for hands-on service and advocacy activities for the Children's Sabbaths weekend
- Suggestions and resources for developing long-term programs to improve the lives of America's children

Children's Sabbaths Manual Pricing Information	
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