



prayer service

international day of peace

Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on September 21. The United Nations General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples.

The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 and the first Peace Day was observed in September 1982. In 2001, the General Assembly established September 21 as an annual day of nonviolence and cease-fire.

The United Nations invites all nations and people to honor a cessation of hostilities during the day, and to otherwise commemorate the day through education and public awareness on issues related to peace.

Suggested symbols: *Cloths in appropriate colors for different countries, cross, flowers, candle*

Opening song *Choose an appropriate song, if desired*

Opening prayer

Leader: We gather here as a community of believers to celebrate the International Day of Peace. We are reminded that we are all part of one global human family living together in a world that remains broken and divided. We join in prayer in hopes that the universal desire for peace may be realized.

Loving God, help us to recognize that you call each one of us to commit ourselves to the effort for peace in the world.

All: Amen.

Reading

Jesus heard the cries...

Jesus heard the cries of all the women he met and hears the cries of all women who weep now. He acknowledged the context of personal and structural pain in which they were immersed. Jesus gathers the tears of women and leads each one into a renewed and transformed life.

If we were to gather the tears already shed and as yet unshed by women around the world, I believe we could transform the world into a life of solidarity and resolute action.

— Adapted from Of Rolling Waters and Roaring Wind: A Celebration of the Woman Song, edited by Lynda Katsumo-Ishii and Edna J. Ortega; World Council of Churches Publishing, Geneva, 2000; p. 88

Reflection and sharing

During a few moments of silence, pray for the life of the world. Call to mind nations around the world where violence and war terrorize lives and demands tears to be shed.

After a few moments, each person names a country or place that is longing for peace. All respond with silent prayer for peace.

Intercessions

Leader: Hear our voices, for they are the voices of the victims of violence.

Response: We call to you, O God of peace.

Leader: Hear our voices, for they are the voices of all who suffer when even one person acts in hate.

Response: We call to you, O God of peace.

Leader: Hear our voices, for we acknowledge the brokenness of community, the separation within the human family, that allow hatred to flourish.

Response: We call to you, O God of peace.

Leader: Hear our voices when we beg you, God, to instill in all human hearts the wisdom of peace and the presence of solidarity.

Response: We call to you, O God of peace.

Leader: Hear our voices, for we speak for the multitudes in every community, in every corner of the world, who do not want violence but are ready to walk the road of peace.

Response: We call to you, O God of peace.

Leader: Hear our voices, and grant us insight and courage so we may always respond to hatred with love, to alienation with drawing into community and to violence with peace.

Response: We call to you, O God of peace.

Leader: Hear our voices...(add any personal prayers here)

Response: We call to you, O God of peace.

- Inspired by a prayer for peace by Pope John Paul II, "Education for Justice"

Leader: We give thanks for places of simplicity and peace. Let us find such a place within ourselves.
We give thanks for places of refuge and beauty. Let us find such a place within ourselves.
We give thanks for places of nature's truth and freedom, of joy, inspiration and renewal, places where all creatures may find acceptance and peace.
Let us search for these places in the world, in ourselves and in others.
Let us restore them.
Let us strengthen and protect them and let us create them.
May we mend this outer world according to the truth of our inner life and may our souls be shaped and nourished by nature's eternal wisdom.

From *When I talk to you* Michael Leunig

Closing prayer

Recite together

Dear God of peace, justice and compassion: We pray for peace in your world today.

May there be no senseless killings of innocent people; May there be an end to torture and the abuse of prisoners; And may there be a cessation of tribal warfare.

We pray for justice in your world today.

We remember the poor and powerless who cannot defend themselves. We pray for immigrants, minorities and all who are unjustly condemned.

We pray for your love and compassion in the world today. We pray for the victims of natural disasters;
For the sick of mind and body; for the homeless, hungry and destitute.
We pray for our fellow Christians and all those who are persecuted for their faith. Finally, dear God, we ask that all who pray these prayers
May have a love of peace, a commitment to justice, And deep compassion for those in any kind of need. We pray in Jesus' name.
Amen.

— *Lifting Women's Voices: Prayers to Change the World*, edited by Margaret Rose, Jenny TePaa, Jeanne Person, Abigail Nelson; Morehouse Publishing, New York, 2009, p. 275

Closing song Choose an appropriate song, if desired.

Prayer adapted from the Sisters of the Holy Cross