

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN'S SUNDAY WITH RESPECT TO PALESTINIAN CHILDREN



CALL TO WORSHIP based on hymn by Linnea Good

A light is gleaming

Spreading its arms throughout the night

Come share its gladness

God's radiant love

burns bright

Jesus shows us a path to walk

Uncovering things we haven't seen

Casting light into dark corners

As Spirit helps us to diminish

The shadow of injustice in our world.

Prayer for Illumination

God who calls us and challenges us: be present to us as we listen to your word. We wonder about your meaning for our lives and your intention for our world. Help us to hear with new ears the way in which you would have us live with our neighbours in every part of this wonderful world.

One possible reflection based on 2 scripture passages

Reading 1: Samuel 3: 1-10

Reading 2: John 6:8-11 (Loaves and fishes)

Reflection :

The story of God calling the child Samuel is well known.

A child whose mother had prayed for his existence and when he is weaned she takes him to the temple and dedicates him to God's work under the authority of the priest Eli.

Today we would be horrified that a mother would do such a thing but this was her way of thanking God for giving her this child.

He's a bit older now and in the night he hears his name being called. "Samuel, Samuel". Who could it be other than the priest? 3 times he gets up and runs to the priest. But it is not the priest calling – it is the voice of God with a message for Samuel.

Today our focus is on children and how God is calling us through them.

Let's start with this child. Who can tell me his name or something about him?



(Photo of Alan Kurdy)

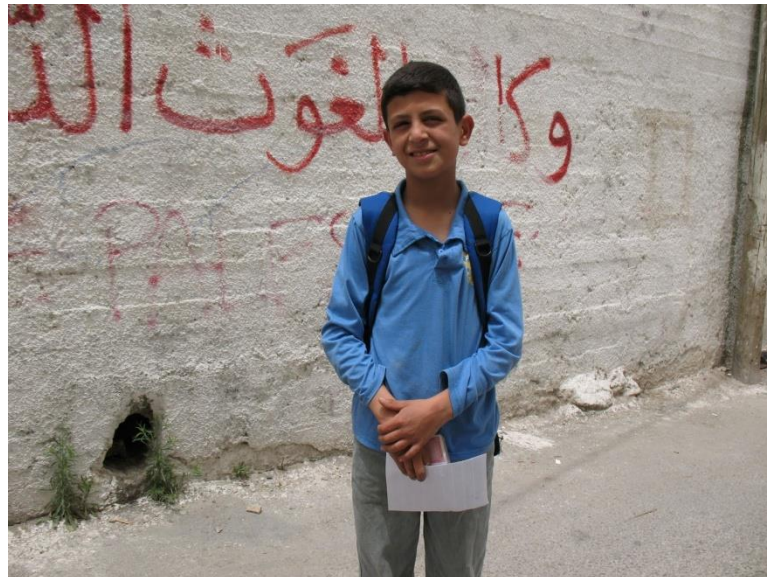
Remember how it went viral and Canadians were moved to respond. Since 2015 more than 750 United Church congregations have sponsored Syrian refugees.

Here is a child throwing a stone at a tank.



Imagine the imbalance here – the futility of the child’s act, the imbalance of power between the Israeli military and school children.

And here is a boy who lives in the Aida Refugee Camp in Bethlehem.



All these children are vehicles of God’s call to us. Might God be saying: “Canada, you can make a difference. People of Canada, speak to your government.”

Outsiders can have an influence on the actions of the government of Israel. For the past several months many groups across Canada have supported and signed a Parliamentary e-petition

asking the government to appoint a special envoy to investigate what is happening to Palestinian children and to report back to the Canadian Parliament.

On November 27, 2020 M.P. Paul Manly will present this petition to Parliament. People across Canada can support this request by urging their own member of Parliament to join and support this call for action for Palestinian children's rights.

One more story from our sacred scriptures – John 6: 8-11. First the context. Jesus is out in the wilderness with a large crowd. He knows the people need something to eat. He asks his disciples "Where can we buy enough food to feed all these people". Well, Philip was the practical type and he knew that was an impossibility - more than could be done.

Andrew – though – had an idea. "There is a boy here who has five loaves of barley bread and two fish. But they will certainly not be enough for all these people."

And – I imagine you know the results – the meager offering multiplied and all were fed.

In Palestine, the occupying Israeli military is arresting Palestinian children. Against international law the children are interrogated without a lawyer or parent present and taken out of Palestine and held in custody in Israel. They are also tried in military courts without the minimum safeguards required for a fair trial.

Imagine being the parent of a child taken away in the middle of the night. Imagine the sense of helplessness of the family. Imagine how the child loses faith in the parents' ability to protect them. Imagine the soldiers threatening the child that their parents will be harmed if the child doesn't confess to whatever crime they are being charged with.

The children of Palestine are looking to us, calling us. We too wonder what you and I can do to give these children the best chance at enjoying their childhood and growing to contribute to the well-being of the world.

Follow with John Lennon's Imagine

Share/read aloud "The Witness of an Ecumenical Accompanier who served the United Church in Palestine for 3 months" (See separate document)

Hymn Suggestion:

VU 359 He Came Singing Love

Poem/Call to Action: Small Things Count (see below) – could be used in conjunction with the hymn *Small Things Count* - VU 361

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Much is uncertain in this world yet we can rely on God's love. In those situations where we have failed to be the people we want to be, God works for good.

Again

And again

God calls us

To participate

In the transformation

Of our world.

PRAYER FOR GOD'S GRACE

God of Mystery, we are puzzled about many things. The injustice of our world baffles us. The contrast between the privileges our children enjoy and the difficulties the children in Palestine face troubles us. Open our hearts to understand what you are calling us to do. And open our wills to act. Amen.

Small things count

Small things count

Small things matter

Small chipmunks nibbling on a small peanut

Looking gratefully at the one who has thrown the peanut their way.

Small acts – turning off lights

So as not to waste electricity and to make a tiny dint in the climate crisis.

A small child giving you a hug

Squeezing your hand to offset your fear.

A small child in Palestine

Watching her brother talk about being beaten by Israeli soldiers

What is going on in her small head

As she learns first hand about the ability of the powerful

To control those who they believe are in their way?

And there is your small letter

Asking the Canadian government

To take a small action

To investigate the actions of Israel

Against the children of Palestine.

(Sample Text for email/letter can be found [HERE](#).)