

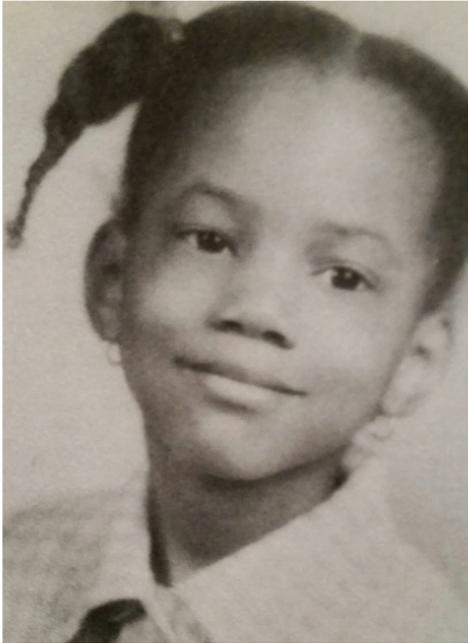
International Orphan Month Liturgies and Prayers for Home and Church



There are
153 MILLION
orphaned children
in the world.

Rev. Dr. Denise Kingdom Grier

Dedication



For Moses

Mandela

Malachi

and Me.

Twice adopted into the Kingdom

Preface

I hope this prayer book will be a companion for you during International Orphan Awareness Month in November and all year long.

As you pray, please remember Setshabelo Family and Child Services and the children of Botshabelo, South Africa. I serve as a missionary through RCA Global Mission to this ministry that places orphaned children in loving families in their own community.

If you want to learn more about my work in South Africa, please visit: www.rca.org/grier.

-Rev. Dr. Denise Kingdom Grier

How Children Become Orphans

There are many factors that contribute to the on-going orphan crisis in the world, including:

Abuse and Neglect:

Read Ishmael's story in Genesis 16 and 21:8-21

War and Conflict:

Read Mephibosheth's story in 2 Samuel 9

Death of a Parent:

Read Benjamin's story in Genesis 35:16-20

Genocide and Infanticide:

Read Moses's story in Exodus 1-2:10

Christ reigns where children are without loving families.

What is a Jesus follower to do?

- A. Rush out and get a home study to adopt.
- B. Let shame wash over you for not being able to do anything.
- C. Declare this as an issue outside of your gifting.
- D. Pray to see how God is inviting you to respond.

SURPRISE!!!

The answer is D. Our first response is to pray.

Everybody can pray.

Prayer of Hope

For 153 million orphans in the world.

Lord, our hope is in you.

For 443,000 children with no families in the U.S.

Lord, our hope is in you.

From the state of Mississippi, which has the highest number of waiting children, and Virginia, which has the least.

Lord, our hope is in you.

For 13,000 waiting children in the state of Michigan alone.

Lord, our hope is in you.

For one child, one loving family, and until no one orphan remains.

Oh Lord, our hope is in you.

Prayer of Lament

How long, oh Lord? How long will children go to sleep with no one to tuck them in? How long will the motherless and fatherless ones drink tears of sadness? How long will they leap from one home to another, lead to a bed, a last name change, a forever family, a loving home? How long, O Lord? Come quickly, Lord Jesus.

Prayer Before Meals

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for this food and for my family. Please remember those who long for a table, a gathering of loved ones, and a family that loves them like we love each other. Show us what to do and we will do it. For the sake of orphaned children and for the glory of God. Amen.

An Adopted Child's Prayer Before Bed

Holy Spirit,

As I kneel by my comfy bed, I lift up to you those who move from bed to bed and foster home to foster home. May they find rest in you.

As I hear my family move around the house, I lift up those who hear sounds that are unfamiliar as they sleep in temporary places.

As I lay my head down, I lift up those children whose heads are full of lies that they are too unlovable for a forever family.

God, because you know them and you love them, open the hearts and homes of your people to adoption. You did it for me, I know you can do it for them, too. Thank you, God. Amen.

Prayer of an Adopted Child Searching for Their Biological Family

Oh God,

I need your help.

Somewhere in the world there is a family who has the same face, the same eyes, the same blood running through their veins as me. You made no mistake when you gave me life through that family. I long to know where they are.

God, you know what is best for me. You hold time in your hands.

Please, in your time, open the doors for me to be with them in whatever way you know is best for me and for them, too.

In Jesus's name, Amen.

Prayer for Biological Families

Holy Parent,

When you sent your Son, Jesus, from heaven to Earth, it must have made your heart ache. I pray into that special place in your holiness where the yearning of a parent lives.

For parents who made brave choices to give their children up for adoption, will you send mercy

For parents who aged out of foster care, who were never truly parented or taught to be a parent, and now have their own children in foster care or up for adoption.

Grant them your comfort.

For persons fooled by drugs and addictions, who chase something, or someone, while leaving their children to take care of themselves.

Lord, grant them deliverance.

For biological parents for whom mental illness clouds their vision so they can't see the good in themselves or in the children you have given them.

Lord, grant them healing.

For the careless, reckless tormentors of young souls and bodies.

Father, transform their minds and renew their hearts.

May they all get a glimpse of themselves as the apple of your eye, that they can see themselves fully as your children, our holy parent.

In the name of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

Prayer for a Biological Family Searching for Adopted Children

Holy God, who knows us better than we know ourselves,

You are attentive to the hole in our heart since the day our child[ren] was released from our arms.

Lord, time has passed but the yearning to see them has not.

In your grace, would you make a way for us to be reunited if only for a moment?

By your hand, they are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

Mend what is torn, soothe what is wounded, and make us whole by the power of your Spirit.

For your glory. Amen.

Prayer for Foster Families

God,

You created special people when you made foster families. They say, “hi” knowing “goodbye” might be coming soon. They open their door to perfect strangers who sometimes kick and scream and break things.

Thank you for foster parents who give love while biological parents are getting the help they need to bring their child back home.

Please heal them from the hard things they see and from the mean things they sometimes hear.

Help them forgive themselves when they make mistakes and hold them when they are pushed away. Let them know their work is not in vain.

Thank you God for hearing our prayers. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

One: Merciful God, will you please forgive us for the times we thought of our own children but not of orphaned children?

Many: For when we prayed for our children and forgot to pray for children in orphanages, foster care, and living on the streets without a loving family of their own?

One: We have looked the other way.

Many: Forgive us, God.

One: We have closed our ears to their cries.

Many: Forgive us, God.

One: We have let it be someone else's problem.

Many: Forgive us, God.

One: We are called to care for orphans and we have not.

Many: Forgive us, God.

One: God, in your mercy, invigorate your church to see, to hear, and to respond to the needs of orphaned children in our city, country, and in your world.

May our future actions reflect our repentance and gratitude for your forgiveness. By the power of your Spirit through Christ. Amen.

Prayer of Siblings Placed Apart

Lord and Holy Sibling Jesus,

There is pain in my heart because my sibling[s] were placed in a home apart from me.

Please protect them from any harm. Hold them when they cry. Comfort them when they are scared. Let them know that I love them. That you love them.

Please allow us to be together again very soon. Let us not get discouraged if we have to wait longer than we want to. Give us big, strong faith to know you are working for us and will do what is best for us.

Thanks, Jesus, for holding us together even though we are apart. Amen.

Prayer After Baptism of an Adopted Child

Gracious God,

You have adopted this beloved child into your family twice. Once, when you placed her/him/them in the family of your faithful disciples. Second, now, when through the waters of baptism s/he/they are welcomed into the family of God, the church.

May their lives be a witness to your faithfulness to children waiting to be adopted by a family.

May their testimony be of your generosity to the end that all will know that you are faithful to your beloved ones.

May they always declare your goodness and the blessedness of adoption.

In the name of the Living Water, Jesus our Lord, in whose name we do pray. Amen.

Prayer for Professionals

God of all power and might, hear our prayers for them and their work:

For caseworkers whose jobs sometimes seem thankless, grant refreshment by your Spirit and the rich gift of encouragement.

For judges, lawyers, and guardian ad litem, grant the conviction of the Spirit to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly in your ways. May their compassion be evident, their knowledge grant favor, and their singular concern be to find favor in your sight.

For legislators and policy makers, grant them insight and non-partisan conviction to vote and act in the best interest of orphaned children, according to your will and ways.

For placing agencies, grant them the integrity to provide for the whole family as image bearers of yourself, worthy to be treated with dignity. May their mission to those they serve always be prioritized over the bottom line.

For all others who participate with you as you work at "setting the lonely in families" according to Psalm 68:6. Fortify them by the truth that as much as they have done for the least, they do it to you. May it be so in the name of the Word made flesh, Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Biological Parents Discerning Whether to Choose Adoption

Loving God, we need your wisdom as we long to do what is best for ourselves and for our unborn child.

We know this child is precious in your sight. Make known to us whether we should parent this child or place them in a loving adoptive family.

Will you give us a sign?

Will you strengthen our faith to see beyond what our eyes can see?

If you are pointing us towards adoption, let the right family be obvious to us.

Let us know if we are to have an open adoption or a closed one.

You know what is best for us and for this child. Please make it known. Increase our faith.

For your glory. Amen.

Prayers for a Family Discerning Whether to Adopt

Oh Lord, our God. You have adopted us into your family through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

We were once far away from you and now we are near. We were once strangers and now are your beloved children.

We are filled with gratitude.

With open hands, we ask for your direction as we discern whether you are asking us to adopt children.

Will you make your will clear? Will you speak through the council of wise people? Will you strengthen our faith to do what you tell us to do?

We need your direction and can't move forward without it.

Thank you in advance.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

James 1:27

The crimes of your sister Sodom were pride and gluttony; she and her daughters were careless and complacent, so that they did nothing to help the poor and needy.

Ezekiel 16:49

