



Church of South India –SEVA Girl Child Campaign: Focus 9/99 Phase II



National Girl Child Day 24 January 2018

LITURGICAL RESOURCES FOR SUNDAY CLOSER TO NATIONAL GIRL CHILD DAY (JANUARY 21 OR JANUARY 28)

Notes for Biblical Reflections

Compare Gen 22:1-14 and Judges 11:34-40 to talk about why God stayed one sacrifice (of Isaac) but not another (Jephthah's daughter). Discuss about how adult vows and violence affect the right of children to life; how cultural attitudes influence our view about the value of a girl child today; Uplift the example of Jesus' attitude to children and women to counter the negative texts related to value of girl/women in the bible.

Matthew 15: 21-28: Faith of a Canaanite woman who fought for the right of her girl child to life and health and in the process gently challenged Jesus to change his attitude towards gentiles and Matthew 8:5-13: Faith of the Centurion who appealed to Jesus to heal his slave/servant (most likely a male child slave) and showcase these two texts as ways in which we, as congregations are called to advocate for the right of children (especially girl children in our context) to life, healing and fullness of life.

Mark 5:22-43 Jesus raises a girl child to life and advises the family to feed the hungry child; discuss the story of the 'woman with a flow' in this text; Emphasise how Jesus tears down the notion of purity of a woman based on her natural monthly period and uplifts the value of the woman whom society had marginalized. Jesus' instruction to feed the child is significant in our context where priority in food too is given to the male child. Point out that Jesus' instruction to the little girl to get up is a call for us as congregations to also raise up the girl children in and around us.

Intercessory Prayers

God of hope and God of justice, we thank you for your intervention in this creation in the presence of your son, our Lord Jesus Christ who loved children during his earthly abode. We pray that children who are victims of inequality and oppression due to human irresponsibility receive a new hope of life with your tender touch, in particular we pray for the girls that they find justice, dignity and love in the community, that their lives may bring fragrance in your creation.

Response: Amen

We pray for the unborn girl child, the innocent infant daughters who are dying due to feticide and infanticide in large numbers despite numerous attempts that are made to bring awareness to the common people. O Lord, strengthen the parents and families to dispute this injustice and protect their daughters from being destroyed due to social and family pressure. Enable us to value life and to realize that life is a gift from God and we are called to protect and cherish life.

Response: Giver of life, hear our prayer.

We know that girls are considered inferior and a burden to the family. We are also aware of the fact that the girl child is often denied equal opportunities, discriminated against and made to feel that they are worthless. Parents many a time fail to understand the feelings of their girl children and thus become insensitive to their emotional needs. God enable us to be loving, caring parents accepting our girl children as intelligent, capable and creative individuals who can be an asset to the family if given equal opportunities to develop themselves. Help us to create a world where our girl children will feel safe and enjoy the freedom.

Response: Giver of life, hear our prayer.

Poverty particularly has reduced many girl children to being unpaid domestic helpers thus denying them opportunities to be educated. Many a time, they are forced to leave schools to take care of younger children at home. If there is a financial problem in the family, the girl child becomes the first victim who is made to sacrifice her education for the sake of her brother. The lack of education, secondary status and limited choices have made our girl children helpless. They become victims of the social system that suppresses them in the name of social, cultural and religious traditions. Lord, help us to become conscious of these discriminations and injustices and enable us to empower our girls with education, self-confidence and opportunities to prove themselves.

Response: Giver of life, hear our prayers.

Age old practices like child marriages and Devadasi system have reduced the girl children to sex objects and denied them the right to education, right to enjoy their childhood and enjoying a normal life. Lord help us to be conscious of the sufferings these children undergo and give us the mind to provide the place where the children can get an opportunity to grow as normal children enjoying a carefree life of a child. We pray for all the organisations who are struggling to help these children, to give them dignity.

Response: Giver of life, hear our prayer.

We pray for the children who are victims of rape and incest, forced into sex trade, unwed mothers and victims of communal and religious violence. Help us to understand the emotional and psychological trauma these children undergo and make us sensitive and caring so that we can help these children to regain their faith in God and human beings.

Response: Giver of life, hear our prayer.

We pray for children who need special care. We pray for slow learners, physically and intellectually challenged children. Help us to realize that these children also need recognition and acceptance and form an integral part of our society. We pray for all the organizations that are trying to enable these special children to develop confidence, be independent and contribute to society.

Response: Giver of life, hear our prayer.

We pray for the parents, foster homes, child protection units, child welfare organizations, child help lines, Governmental and non-governmental organizations that are making efforts to help children and other child workers who are committed to make the life of children pleasant and useful. May all their efforts bear fruit so these children may find opportunities to regain their dignity and self-respect. Make us your instruments of change so that we will be able to do something to the least of these dear ones.

Response: Giver of life, hear our prayer.

Benediction:

Loving God, who cares and nurtures the children like a mother, Precious son Jesus Christ, who treats both male and female children alike, and the holy Spirit who guided like a shadow, the suffering, oppressed and orphan children – be with us especially with the suffering children, for ever and ever. Amen