

Taking action for children



Welcome to our Legacy Month 2026 – a time to celebrate the difference legacy gifts can make to the lives of vulnerable children across the UK. We'd love you to use these prayer reflections on your own or in a group, to think about how important it is to advocate for the rights of vulnerable children and young people. And how, through your faith and the action you take, you can make a difference.

Week two

Speak out

Read: Proverbs 31:8-9

Reflect

"Speak out for those who cannot speak"

Proverbs 31:8 (NIV)

We might be surprised that the Bible refers to rights. Human rights are often thought of as a modern concept, set down in international charters and institutions after the horrors of the Second World War. But we shouldn't be surprised, because the story told in scripture is that God made humans in the image of God, each worthy of equal value and dignity. The enduring wisdom of Proverbs is that whatever label we give to it, when that inherent worth – that image of God – comes under threat, it needs to be defended.

And it's important that where possible, change should be done with rather than for those whose rights are being denied. As the social change expert Rosabeth Moss-Kanter observes, "When we do change to people they experience it as violence. When people do change for themselves, they experience it as liberation."

In recent years, through its participation work, Action for Children has embraced this concept as part of everything they do and intentionally supported young ambassadors – experts by experience – equipping them to advocate for children and young people's rights, and to speak up for justice.

When child poverty in the UK reached record levels last year, Action for Children brought the voices of children affected to the forefront of political debates about social policies. At the launch of the Paying the Price campaign outside parliament, Louise, a young mum, testified to the lasting impact of growing up in poverty. She reflected, "Poverty is a wound that festers and it casts a long shadow over a lifetime. We as a society have a chance to end this cycle."

This powerful call to action joined those coming from many individuals, charities, churches and other faith groups. Today we can celebrate that this call was heard, in part at least, with the government's Child Poverty Strategy announced in the autumn, and the two-child limit on benefits being scrapped. This means 500,000 children lifted out of poverty this year.

So, as we follow the Biblical injunction to be seekers of justice, let's pay attention to those who bring lived experience of the issues – and then speak up with them to champion their needs and rights.

Simeon Mitchell
Team Leader, Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches

Pray

God of all dignity,
You created every person in Your image.
Help us to recognise that worth in each other
and to stand against all that diminishes it.

Teach us to listen well,
to stand alongside those whose voices are unheard,
and to speak up for justice together.

Guide our actions and our leaders,
that every child may flourish in hope and security.
Make us faithful seekers of Your justice.

Amen.

Visit actionforchildren.org.uk/our-work-and-impact/youth-voice/ to learn how Action for Children helps young people feel involved in the decisions that affect them, and to have the chance for their voices to be heard.