

## Prayers for Children in Detention and Asylum Seekers

Holy God, strong and generous,  
you call us to welcome the stranger,  
and yet we have closed our doors, ending any conversation.

Jesus Christ, leader and guide,  
you invited children to come to you,  
and yet we have closed our arms, refusing any embrace.

Spirit, ever moving,  
you call us to hear the voices of the vulnerable,  
and yet we have refused to hear children's cries.

Forgive us, O God.

Remind us of your generosity to us, O God,  
that we may offer generosity to others.

Remind us of your path, Jesus Christ,  
that we may be made vulnerable with you.

Remind us of your faithfulness, Holy Spirit,  
that we may open our hearts and our doors this day.

Amen.

Written for Kids Don't Belong in Detention, July 30- 2014

Wise and compassionate God,  
help us to be willing to respond to the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers  
and not simply seek to shift the burden of care onto others.  
Call our leaders to justice, generosity and compassion.  
Help them create and implement strategies that are fair and just  
and treat refugees and asylum-seekers with dignity and care.  
O God, our comforter,  
we ask you to comfort the broken-hearted and protect the vulnerable.  
We pray for those who live in fear of detention and removal,  
for those who are in detention at this time  
and for those who face removal to an uncertain future.  
We ask you to assure them of your great love,  
surround them with your presence and fill them with your peace.

God bless our eyes so that we will recognise injustices.  
God bless our ears so that we will hear the cry of the stranger.  
God bless our mouths so that we will speak words of welcome to newcomers.  
God bless our shoulders so we will be able to bear the weight of struggling for justice.  
God bless our hands so that we can work together with all people to establish peace.

Merciful God,  
You continue to call us to work for peace.  
Our world is broken and wounded by injustice, violence and indifference.  
Alone, we would be overwhelmed by the challenges that face us.  
But together, supported by your Spirit,  
we can do more than anyone of us could dream or imagine.

*Deborah Cassidi (ed), Favourite Prayers (1990) London: Continuum*

Gracious God,  
thank you for our nation, Australia.  
Thank you for the way it has developed over the years.  
Thank you for the diverse cultures that make up Australia that we can experience and enjoy.  
Thank you God.

Forgive us as a nation when we fall short of what you want for us.  
Forgive us when we subject others to injustice, racism and oppression.  
Forgive us when we don't extend our hospitality  
And when we make others feel unwelcome.  
Forgive us God.

We pray for our Government and all decision makers,  
Guide them and guide us all.  
We pray for unity for our nation and for your continuing presence among us.  
Lead your people, enable us to accept each others' differences.  
Reshape us and as we celebrate the new life you bring.  
Hear our prayer Lord. Amen

*Karen Guiao, Mission Prayer Handbook 2002, Uniting Church in Australia Assembly, p. 11, adapted*

God of Abraham. Sarah and Hagar,  
God of travellers, migrants and refugees.  
Thank you for the beauty and uniqueness of this southern land which we share.  
Grant your protection and grace to all who shelter here.  
Forgive the racism and destruction that have been part of our history,  
and our disregard for the pain and oppression within the Australian community today.  
Help us shed our provincial expectations. Take away our cultural tunnel vision.  
Open our hearts to be caring neighbours to each other.  
Direct our lives to just and peaceful action.  
God of a thousand faces, help us also to acknowledge you are worshipped in many  
languages, in different songs and rhythms of life from our own.  
May we respect these religious insights in each other and  
assist each faithful expression of you.  
We rejoice in you, God, in whose image we are brothers and sisters.  
and by whose example in Jesus Christ we know the breadth and depth  
of your universal love. Amen

*Mission Prayer Handbook 1991, Uniting Church in Australia Assembly, p. 7*