

A Resource for Churches to Acknowledge National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day



This resource has been designed for use in worship on Sunday August 2 or 9, 2020. We hope it encourages and enables congregations and faith communities to acknowledge National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day which is held on August 4 each year. This resource includes a Welcome to worship, Acknowledgement of Country, Prayer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and Links to resources, including an activity pack to share with an Aboriginal community or UAICC community that you have connection with. Please note images and videos that could be used in worship can be downloaded from here:

- ▶ www.aboriginalchildrensday.com.au/images-and-videos/

This resource has been developed by Tarlee Leondaris (Covenanting Officer) and Melissa Neumann (Intergenerational Discipleship) from the Mission Resourcing team, Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of South Australia in partnership with Chris Barnett (Intergenerational Ministry – Children & Families), Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. This resource is available to download from:

- ▶ www.victas.uca.org.au/ministry-mission/children-families-resources/ (see the *Special Days and Seasons* section)

Welcome to Worship

Welcome to worship at _____

Today as part of our worship we are acknowledging National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day. This year's theme is: We are the Elders of tomorrow, hear our voice. This day is held every year on August 4 with the aim of celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

children. The date August 4 was historically used to communally celebrate the birthdays of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were taken from their families at a young age, without knowing their birthday – the Stolen Generations. In 1988, the first National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day was established to celebrate, give confidence to and make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children feel special and included. We acknowledge this day as a church in covenant with Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC). The covenant expresses the commitment from Uniting Churches and UAICC *"to developing more just, inclusive and equal relationships in the Church that recognise the place of First Peoples, the difficult history of this nation since invasion, and the particular responsibility of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress for ministry with and among Aboriginal and Islander peoples."*

- ▶ www.unitingjustice.org.au/justice-for-indigenous-australians/uca-statements/item/486-revised-preamble-to-the-uniting-church-constitution

Acknowledgment of Country

Use the [AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia](#) to find the Nation where you are gathering. As we gather in this special place, we acknowledge the _____ People as the traditional custodians of this land. We give thanks for their commitment to nurturing this land over many generations. We honour the sacred stories that belong to this land. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and for those emerging who will lead their communities into the future. We commit ourselves to empowering children to continue the journey of reconciliation on this land.



Prayer

Gracious God,

Today we acknowledge the deep hurt experienced by the children and the families of the Stolen Generation. We pray for those who as children suffered terribly from forcible removal from their family and community. We pray for those children who grew up away from their own culture, contributing to the loss of their own sense of self-identity. We recognise that these sufferings cause intergenerational trauma. May Your healing presence be felt by all impacted by this trauma.

Lord, please help our governments and policy makers to learn from past mistakes. We pray for cooperative decision making between governments and First Peoples.

Thank you for the contributions our Aboriginal brothers and sisters make to our shared faith and the direction of the Uniting Church in Australia. Lord, help us to hear the voices of First Peoples and to learn from each other and stand alongside each other.

Help us to celebrate the lives of children as you taught us in scripture "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." Lord, please hear our prayers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

We pray these children learn their culture from Elders. We pray these children grow to be strong leaders in their communities. We pray they grow to feel empowered. We pray they grow to know their voice counts. We pray they always encounter Your grace.

Amen.

Links to further resources

Online event

Aboriginal Children Speak: Criminal responsibility and the rights of the child

Tuesday August 4, 6pm-7.15pm, ACST / 6.30pm-7.45pm, AEST [Register here](#)

Victorian Inclusion Agency – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resources for Educators:

► www.viac.com.au/resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-resources

Documentary

In my Blood It Runs available free on [ABC iView](#) until 10:49pm on August 4 2020. *In my Blood It Runs* is a powerful portrayal of life as an Aboriginal child. The documentary follows 10 year old Dajuan as he faces the challenges of he encounters at school and within his own community. It is an eye opening experience learning some of the difficulties Aboriginal children experience face reconciling their culture with 'westernised' expectations. Educational resources to support the themes of the film are available here:

► www.inmyblooditrans.com/education/#classroom

Activity pack

To help children engage with this day, the Mission Resourcing team from the Synod of SA are connecting with local UAICC congregations to distribute activity packs. Others are encouraged to do similar initiatives to enable children to learn about and celebrate the day. If you are connected with UAICC congregations or other Aboriginal communities you might like to share this idea and discuss what would be helpful for their children to celebrate this day. For example, you could include crayons, pencils or textas along with a variety of printed activity sheets found here:

► www.aboriginalchildrensday.com.au/activities/

Websites

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day:

► www.aboriginalchildrensday.com.au/what-is-childrens-day/

Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

► UAICC www.assembly.uca.org.au/uaicc

► Covenanting www.resources.uca.org.au/resources/covenanting

Uniting Church in Australia Synod of South Australia Covenanting resources:

► www.sa.uca.org.au/covenanting/