**Assembly Prayer – Children’s Day 2012**

**Song: Led by Choir – My Plans For You**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: Welcome/Introduction**

This week we celebrate Universal Children’s Day. It is a day which is celebrated all over the world to honour children globally. It was established by the United Nations in 1954 to protect children working long hours in dangerous places and to allow all children to have access to an education. As we begin this prayer, we ask that you would think of the children that you know in your own life. We thank God for all the children teach us: simplicity, purity, the ability to not take life too seriously and an eagerness to learn. We also think of the children who are not as fortunate and pray that all children would have access to education, clean water and a safe place to live.

**Lighting of the Candles**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**: reader

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** to light candles

We light the college candle as we acknowledge all in our community.

We light our Indigenous candle as we acknowledge the people who walked this land before us.

We light the Year of Grace candle to acknowledge the grace and blessings in our lives.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: Opening Prayer (powerpoint slides to accompany prayer)**

We begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We pray for children

Who bring us fistfuls of dandelions

Who teach us to enjoy the simple things in life,

Who make us smile,

And we pray, for those

who face and overcome challenges

who like to go on picnics in summer,

who love the beach,

who cherish their time with their family

who have cheeky smiles!

We pray for children

who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick at their food,

who shove dirty clothes under the bed,

who get visits from the tooth fairy,

who don't like to be kissed at school drop-off.

We pray for children

who want to be carried and for those who must

for those we never give up on

and for those who will grab the hand of anybody kind enough to offer it.

We pray for children. Amen

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: Reader: Luke 18:15-17**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: student to hold Gospel**

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

**Gospel reflection**

Jesus taught us how to make the world more compassionate and just for children;

he taught about a social world in part defined by children.

In his words and actions Jesus turned the first-century view of children as the property of adults, upside down.

By blessing and laying his hands on children Jesus received children as people in their own right;

he gave them dignity, status and respect.

**Prayers of the Faithful**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: We offer up prayers to God, asking Him to bless everyone in our society, especially the children in our lives.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: Heavenly Father, we pray for children, that the hearts of all people will cherish, value and protect them. Lord hear us.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: Loving God, we pray today children: that they may be a source of blessings to their parents. Lord hear us.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: We pray for families in our world. May our families grow stronger in their love for one another and may all children be raised in safe and nurturing environments.

Lord hear us.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: Closing Prayer**

Loving God

You have called us to work for true justice in our communities

and to be messengers of freedom

for all who are not treated as your children.

We pray that you will give us grace to put our faith into action

to end the violence and cruelty that overshadows many children’s lives.

Jesus taught us to welcome children and learn from them.

May we use our imagination to put ourselves in children’s shoes

and learn to teach and guide them with wisdom, gentleness and understanding.

Let us treat each child as we would treat the Christ child.

Amen

**Song –**