

Prayer for the United Nations International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking



Preparation:

- Leader:
 - Print EFJ Fact Sheet on the U.N. International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
 - Recruits and assigns readers prior to the prayer service.
 - Invites a participant to lead the song phrase: “Spirit of the Living God.”
 - Invites three participants to light and extinguish a candle.
- Materials Needed:
Bible, three candles, matches.

Call to Prayer

Opening Prayer:

We light the first candle in the name of the Maker who lit the world and breathed the breath of life.

We light the second candle in the name of the Son, who saved the world and stretched out his hand to us.

We light the third candle in the name of the Spirit, who embraces the broken and divided of our world.

Reader 1: As we gather to reflect on this day, let us welcome truth into our midst. Truth opens a window that enables us see the connection between current world events and our faith—to see our wounded sisters and brothers. For many, this view of reality can be too much to endure. For reasons unique to each of us, we choose not to get involved in matters that do not affect us directly.

We are quick to condemn those who are dependent on drugs. We are quick to judge a desperate young mother who believes her only option to feed her children or to pay the rent is to sell drugs. We are quick to judge local farmers in tropical regions like Peru and Bolivia, whose coca crops are regarded as the root causes for drug problems, crime and violence. Yet their livelihood depends on coca plants. Drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking are global phenomena. They affect almost every country. Drug abuse cuts across age, gender, economic class, and ethnic lines.

Reader 1: The first reading is taken from the Education for Justice Fact Sheet: “U.N. International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.” (Read text aloud to participants.)

All: Leader leads the group in singing or reciting the refrain, “Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us”

Reader 3: We call upon the Spirit of Truth to tame our hearts—to be attentive to the vices of greed and oppression that inhibit our sisters and brothers from developing their full potential.

All: Sing or recite the refrain, “Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us”



PRAYER SERVICE

Reader 2: We call upon the Spirit of Truth to inspire within us a listening, daring and compassionate heart that will allow us to understand the gravity of the drug crisis that poisons bodies and minds, as well as families and communities in nearly every country around the world.

All: Sing or recite the refrain, “Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us”

Reader 3: We call upon the Spirit of Truth to help us recognize that drug use, at its core, is a health issue. Research has shown that more people are abusing drugs today than in any other period in history, and many are our youth. Drug abuse must be seen within the wider context of other social ills that face communities. Drug dependence is a disease, not a crime.



All: Sing or recite the refrain, “Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us”

Reader 2: We call upon the Spirit of Truth to protect those afflicted by addiction from contaminated intravenous needles or other drug paraphernalia that will inflict diseases upon them including the HIV/AIDS virus.

All: Sing or recite the refrain, “Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us”

Reader 3: We call upon the Spirit of Truth to show us ways to become involved in and to urge increased public support for drug treatment programs, the elimination of the importing of illicit drugs, and all efforts to eliminate the causes of addiction in communities, especially addiction among the poor.

All: Sing or recite the refrain, “Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us”

Reader 2: We call upon the Spirit of Truth to embrace the belief of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon that while governments must play an important role in counteracting both drug trafficking and drug abuse, “...communities can also make a major contribution. Families, schools, civil society and religious organizations can do their part to rid their communities of drugs. Businesses can help provide legitimate livelihoods. The media can raise awareness about the dangers of narcotics.”

All: Sing or recite the refrain, “Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us”

Reader 3: We call upon the Spirit of Truth to grant us the courage and wisdom to respond to the signs of our times. As we commemorate this International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, may international policies reflect the importance of controlling the illicit drug trade, the centrality of curbing corruption at every level of national life, and the need to curtail the arms trade, weapons and human trafficking, as well as the resultant violence that accompanies these illicit activities.

All: Sing or recite the refrain, “Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us”

Reader 4: 1 Corinthians 12:12-21, 26

The body is one, even though it has many parts; all the parts—many though they are—comprise a single body. And so it is with Christ. It was by one Spirit that all of us, whether we are Jews or Greeks, slaves or citizens, were baptized into one body. All of us have been given to drink of the one Spirit. And that Body is not one part; it is many.

If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” does that make it any less a part of the body? If the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body?” If it were all ear, what would happen to our sense of smell? Instead of that, God put all the different parts into one body on purpose. If all the parts were alike, where would the body be? They are indeed, many different members but one body.

- The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation, 2007

[Pause for silent or group reflection]

Reflection Questions:

- How does the scripture reading fit the United Nations effort to create an international society free of drug abuse?
- From a biblical point of view, what is the root cause of illicit drug trafficking and abuse?
- How does poverty play a role in the global drug crisis that we are facing?
- Reflect on three ways that you can become engaged in illegal substance abstinence.
- Reflect on our Christian response to the drug crisis. How can you help someone who is addicted to drugs?
- What would you say to someone who grows crops that are used in the production of illicit drugs?
- What would you say to a desperate young mother who says, “The only way to feed my children is to sell drugs?”
- Who do you think Jesus would most prefer to dine with: a Wall Street financier, a drug kingpin, a millionaire professional football player, a member of Congress, or a woman selling drugs on the street corner to feed her children? Who is welcomed at your table?
- It is believed that governments, including the U.S. government, may have facilitated drug trafficking in the past and perhaps continue to do so. What evidence can you find that would support this contention?
- How can a strong international system of justice play a role in creating a drug-free world? Is it possible to have a drug-free world? Why or why not? How would you reduce the use of illicit drugs in your community?

Closing Prayer:

We extinguish the first candle in the name of the Maker who in darkness or light shows us the way.

We extinguish the second candle in the name of the Son, whose life shows us that all are welcome at the table.

We extinguish the third candle in the name of the Spirit, who guides us to read and respond to the signs of our times.

Amen

