

A Prayer of Responsibility for Children **by Ina J. Hughes**

We pray for children who put chocolate fingers everywhere, who like to be tickled, who stomp in puddles, who sneak popsicles before supper, who erase holes in math books, who can never find their shoes . . .

And we pray for those who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire, who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers, who are born in places we would never be caught dead, who never go to the circus, who live in an x-rated world.

We pray for children who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions, who sleep with the dog and bury goldfish, who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money, who cover themselves with band-aids and sing off key, who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink, who slurp their soup.

And we pray for those who never get dessert, who have no safe blanket to drag behind them, who watch their parents watch them die, who can't find any bread to steal, who don't have any rooms to clean up, whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser, whose monsters are real . . .

We pray for children who spend their allowance before Tuesday, who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick their food, who shove dirty clothes under the bed and never rinse out the tub, who love visits from the tooth fairy, who don't like to be kissed in front of the school bus.

And we pray for those whose nightmares come in the daytime, who will eat anything, who have never seen a dentist, who aren't spoiled by anybody, who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep.

We pray for children who want to be carried, and for those who must, for those who we never give up on and for those who grab the hand of anyone kind enough to offer it.

On this Children's Sabbath Weekend, hear our cries, Adonai, and listen to our prayers.

Amen

for National Children's Sabbath Weekend