

# THE BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK'S LENT CALL 2025



*Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me,  
and do not stop them; for it is to such as these  
that the kingdom of heaven belongs.'*

*Matthew 19:14*

## Week 1: Childhood trauma in all parts of the world



**Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.'** (Matthew 19:14)

As we head into Lent, we are called to reflect as we prepare to celebrate our risen Lord on Easter Day. The journey through Lent is one of prayer and contemplation. It is also a time for us to pray for our own lives and for our loved ones and communities – particularly for people most in need. As we pray throughout this season, we remember children and young people all over the world whose lives are affected by war, civil unrest or natural disaster – causing them to feel traumatised. As we pray for the peace of the world and peace in their lives, let us take some time to think of and pray for those who are affected by such childhood trauma.

Wherever you get your news from, it is clear that children and young people all over the world are affected by

trauma. For some, it is the violence experienced in their towns and cities or the challenging impact of difficult family relationships. In some parts of the world children feel displaced because of the effects of war, food insecurity, lack of employment or domestic abuse.

This year, Bishop Christopher would like parishes and schools in our diocese to pray and consider what we can do to support the work of those who are working with children whose lives are affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE). These projects are here in Southwark and our Link Dioceses in Zimbabwe and Jerusalem and the Middle East.

UNICEF and the UNHCR estimated that at the end of 2023 there were approximately 47.2 million children displaced due to conflict and violence worldwide. This accounts for about 40% of the total 117.3 million forcibly displaced people.

**Raising money to support projects that help children and young people recover from trauma and which encourage their mental wellbeing.**

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There are displaced children in various regions around the world – often in countries experiencing conflict, violence or natural disasters. These children and young people face significant challenges which may have an impact on their development, mental health and wellbeing – for example lack of access to education, healthcare and basic necessities. There are many interventions which can help them, including making sure that the children have access to education and support that can help them to deal with their emotions and to learn more about forming healthy relationships. The UK is now a place to call home for many displaced children and their families seeking refuge as a result of devastation in their home countries.

The distress that children and young people experience around the world has different causes – but their needs are, in many ways, remarkably similar. You will see from these project sheets that whether they have been orphaned in Zimbabwe, injured and traumatised by the conflict in Israel and Gaza or affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in this country, all children need help and support to grow into healthy and balanced adults.

Funding for projects such as those featured in this Lent Call is crucial – and we hope that through the Lent Call you will feel able to help

some of the children and young people these projects are supporting, through prayer and financial giving. During this time, we hope that you will feel encouraged to pray for children living with ACEs and think about what you might be able to do to help to improve their lives. You could get together a group of people to meet and pray regularly for those living with ACEs or perhaps become involved in the Area and Cathedral Link Groups for Zimbabwe, Jerusalem and the Middle East. You can find details of these on our diocesan website. Look out for the work of Welcare and the diocesan Mission and Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) teams, which focuses on social justice and combatting the violence affecting young people.

**Please use this week of Lent to consider what you might do to support children's mental health through prayer and giving.**