

Blessing for the Children (and the Grown Ups)

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Source: Adapted from <http://uuja.org/holidays/lit/OrangesandOlivesHaggadah.pdf>

Blessing one's children originates in the Bible. On Shabbat, the Sabbath, and on holidays, parents lay their hands on the heads of each child and bless them. In the absence of a parent, children can be blessed by any loving adult who is with them. Let us bless all of the children in our midst - in our homes, in our lives, and in the world. As we bless them, we commit ourselves to the dream of a world where all children are free to go to school, are safe from violence, have loving adults in their lives, are free to express themselves and be who they are, and have the basic necessities they need in order to grow up to be their best selves.

For those adults with children with them right now, with the child's permission, please place your hands on the heads of a child. For the children with us - if you do not want someone touching your head - that's okay! They can place a hand on your shoulder, or on the air above your head, like a halo. Tell the grown-ups where you would like their hand to be for this blessing.

Next, grown ups, envision the world you want to create for future of children in your life and in the world.. Children, think about the world you would like to live in. As the grown ups consider what we want for the children's future, let us also reflect on the present and who this child is today in the world - their needs and interests and feelings. Let our children help ground us in the present. And let us be guided by the words of wisdom by Stacia Tausche who said: "We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today."

Now, grown ups let us read together and to the children: "May you be blessed and kept. May the light shine upon you and grant you peace."

Children, now it's your turn. Check in with a grown up about where they would like you to place your hands on them - their head, shoulder, or over their head. Then, with your hand placed, think about what type of world you wish for the grown ups in your life. And say aloud together and to the grownups "May you be blessed and kept. May the light shine upon you and grant you peace."

And together, let us all - grown ups and children - close this blessing by saying the Hebrew word for peace: Shalom.

All: Shalom.