



## World Day of Prayer

Prepared by the WDP Committee of Cook Islands

March 7, 2025

“I Made You Wonderful”

Psalm 139:14

Children’s Program

### INTENTION

This program invites us to recognize that God created each one of us with great attention and loving care. God knows us intimately, and we are special to God in our uniqueness. When we open the doors of our hearts to this truth, everything in our life changes. We glow from within, and we begin treating others as beloved children of God. Through this program, we hope people will be spiritually uplifted as they come to trust the great love of God.

### OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for creating us! Thank you for giving us life! Thank you for our sisters and brothers in the Cook Islands. Thank you for all the children of the world. We love you, God! Amen.

### OPENING SONG

Children in the Cook Islands love to sing! One of their favorite songs is “My God Loves Me.”

#### *Aroa mai te Atua*

Aroa mai te Atua iaku

Ki te au mea

Taku e kite nei

Te Anuanua, kua iti mai

Ki roto iaku

Aroa mai te Atua iaku.

#### *My God loves Me*

My God loves me

and all the wonders I see.

A rainbow shines through my window,

my God loves me.

## **WELCOME**

“Kia orana” everyone!

It’s wonderful to see all of you today. We have a special message brought to us by a group of women in the Cook Islands.

Does anyone know where the Cook Islands are? [give children an opportunity to share]

The Cook Islands are a group of 15 islands in the south Pacific Ocean. They are close to New Zealand and Australia.

Most people in the Cook Islands speak a language called “Maori.” Here's a phrase in the Maori language:

“Kia orana!”

Can we all say that together? [all say “Kia orana”]

Great! “Kia orana” is a phrase in Maori that Cook Islanders use to greet each other. “Kia orana” means more than just hello. It means: “May you live a long and wonderful life!”

Let’s say that one more time, but this time, look at someone in the eyes and say “Kia orana.” [all say “Kia orana” to another person].

## **SEA CREATURES - COLORING ACTIVITY**

Now we will color a picture to help us learn more about the Cook Islands.

The coloring sheet shows many different kinds of Sea Creatures. Children in the Cook Islands LOVE to go swimming. There are beaches all around their islands, where they can swim in the salty ocean water. Some children enjoy snorkeling, where they can see many beautiful Sea Creatures, like on the coloring sheet -

- Clown triggerfish are blue, yellow, green and white.
- Crabs are white, black and brown.
- The octopus has 8 tentacles, filled with buttons.
- Turtles are brown and green.
- Sea grass is green, and it is food for all the Sea Creatures.

Now we will color all the Sea Creatures, then cut them out and paste them on blue paper.

[After activity is complete, notice that all the children colored the same picture differently. We are all unique, and wonderfully made by God.]

## **THEME SONG**

Sing the theme song composed for the 2025 Cook Islands program.

*I am fearfully made, and wonderfully made.  
Marvelous are your works,  
that my soul knows very well.  
And I'll praise you all my days!*

## MESSAGE

As I mentioned, the Cook Islands have brought us a special message today. Their message comes from the book of Psalms in the Bible. Can someone read Psalm 139:14?

[invite a child to read this verse from a poster or from the Bible]

*"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well."  
-Psalm 139:14*

The psalmist is speaking to God, saying "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." What do you think it means that we are fearfully and wonderfully made by God?

[give the children a chance to answer this question – and emphasize some of these points if none of the children mentions them]

- God made all the delicate, inner parts of my body.
- God knit me together within my mother's womb.
- I was made wonderfully complex.
- God painstakingly designed me with much loving care.
- God created me with reverence and awe.
- My blueprints are similar to other human beings but they're not exactly the same.
- I am unique – and so are you.

Those are great ideas! Now, another question is: What are some of the things that God made our bodies to do?

[give the children a chance to answer this question – and emphasize some of these points if none of the children mentions them]

- Our eyes help us to see.
- Our noses allow us to smell.
- Our tongue and mouth let us eat and taste.
- Our ears enable us to hear.
- Our skin allows us to feel textures.
- Our cardiovascular system gives us energy to move.
- Our muscular system gives us the ability to lift and hold things.
- Our digestive system processes food into energy and discards waste.

- Our immune system keeps us healthy.
- Our brain allows us to think, process and create.

### **THEME SONG**

Reprise the theme song.

### **FLOWER FESTIVAL ACTIVITY**

Now it's time to use these wonderful bodies that God made to do an activity!

In November every year, the flowers are in full bloom in the Cook Islands. So, the Cook Islanders celebrate and give thanks for these beautiful flowers every year by holding a Flower Festival. This festival is a riot of color with decorated floats, singing, dancing and dazzling flower arrangements.

There is a lot of excitement during the Flower Festival, and there are activities every day for a whole week.

We are going to do one of those activities today!

[Pick one or several of these activities based on the ages of the children participating. Please find the attached instruction sheets for each activity.]

- Young children learn the names of the flora and fauna on the Cook Islands. They draw, paint or color pictures to beautify our classrooms.
- Middle grade children learn how to create neck garlands, which they call "leis."
- Older children learn how to make flower head crowns, and also plant flowers and trees.

[Some questions you can ask when the children are finished]

Did you know that God made your body to do those things? What parts of your body helped you do this activity?

### **THEME SONG**

Reprise the theme song.

### **SNACK**

One of the traditional dishes in the Cook Islands is called 'Ika Mata,' which means 'raw fish' in English. Cook Islanders eat a lot of fish because we all live close to the ocean. Many children enjoy helping to prepare this snack, but sometimes adults prepare it and the children just eat it.

[If time, the children can learn how to make this dish and then eat it. Alternatively, the dish can be already prepared and the children can just enjoy it. Please find the attached instruction sheet for how to make this dish.]

### **COCONUT TREE - COLORING ACTIVITY**

[If there is still time, the children can do one more coloring activity. Or, you can give the picture to the children to take home and color.]

The coconut tree is one of the most important trees for the Cook Islands people. They call it the "Tree of Life" because it has sustained their people for many generations. Every part of the coconut tree has uses and benefits for food, medicine, and building homes.

- Leaves – use for roofing on their houses, and for brooms, mats, baskets, hats, fans
- Coconuts juice – use to drink coconut water, filled with vitamins and minerals
- Coconut fiber – used for rope making, mattress stuffing, pot and pan brushes
- Coconut shell – used to make jewelry, musical instruments, kitchen utensils
- Coconut flesh – grated and used in cooking and baking
- Coconut oil – used for cooking, baking, salad dressing, moisturizers, hair oil
- Trunk – used for poles for houses, containers, canoes, firewood
- Roots – used for medicine, fish traps, and decoration

### **CLOSING QUESTIONS**

What did you learn about the Cook Islands today?

What did you learn about God today?

### **THEME SONG**

Reprise the theme song.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Wonderful God, thank you for creating us. Thank you for making the world so special. Thank you for making us so special. Help us to treat ourselves with love. And help us be kind to other people. Amen.

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