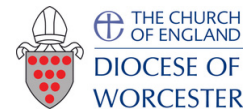


Worcester Diocesan Criminal Justice Affairs Group

Prayer Guide - December 2025



The Diocese of Worcester hosts a group whose focus is criminal justice and offers a faith perspective on criminal justice matters & raises awareness of the issues.

CJAG offers this bi-monthly prayer guide which we hope will be useful for personal & intercessory prayer in local parishes. Do pass it on to those who would be interested and encourage its usage. Welcome to the CJAG Prayer Guide for December.

Children affected by parental imprisonment

Children with a parent in prison are a hidden population. There is still no formal system for recording how many there are, with data scattered across government departments. Data collected in July 24 showed that between October 21/22, 108,990 prisoners or 78% of the prison population had children, & there were an estimated 192,000 children with a parent in prison, though earlier estimates have suggested it could be as high as 312,000. These children are in classrooms across the UK, unrecorded, unsupported, & often unheard. Many carry secrets they did not choose. Some have witnessed an arrest or domestic abuse. They often experience trauma & grief, but unlike bereavement, it comes without public acknowledgment. Instead of condolences, there is judgement. Instead of support, there is shame.

Some children are told that “dad is working away” or “mum is travelling”, or other untruths. Confused, angry, and withdrawn, these children often carry emotions they cannot process.

Many take on adult responsibilities too soon, face bullying or stigma, & struggle in school. Parental imprisonment is a risk factor for many adverse outcomes for children: They have double the risk of mental health issues, future offending, drug abuse, unemployment & poor educational attainment. These children simply want to be seen, understood, & supported by systems schools, social services & communities that recognise their experiences.

Heavenly Father, You see what others overlook, and you hold close those who feel hidden. We lift before you all children carrying the weight of a parent's imprisonment. Wrap them in your protection and fill their lives with trustworthy adults who listen without judgement and provide unconditional care. Strengthen families torn apart by imprisonment, comfort children who feel abandoned or afraid, and guide them into places of belonging, stability, and love. Lead us to create a community where every child is noticed, where their stories can be spoken safely, and where compassion replaces stigma. Amen.

Especially we pray for:

- Children who feel invisible & emotional, experiencing silence & shame
- Those who have witnessed an arrest, violence, or family breakdown, and who now live with fear or trauma
- Young people with adult responsibilities, caring for siblings or supporting parents under immense pressure
- Those experiencing bullying or stigma at school, withdrawing from friendships and learning
- Teachers, social workers, and youth leaders, that they may recognise their needs and offer patient, sensitive support
- Families facing sudden poverty or instability following a parent's imprisonment
- Justice & social care systems that notice these children, record their presence, and prioritise their wellbeing
- The charity YSS who provide support for children affected by parental imprisonment and their families across Worcestershire and Herefordshire [Families First | YSS](#)