

CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATION REPORT 2025

Good Shepherd Campus, Nochipatty, Salem District
Celebrated on 16 November 2025

1. Introduction

The *Sisters of the Good Shepherd* have been serving the people of Salem District for over 26 years, inspired by the spirituality of the *Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd*, founded by St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier. The Congregation's core mission is rooted in compassion, reconciliation, and unconditional love, especially towards those most vulnerable—children, women, and families experiencing hardship.

Children occupy a sacred place in Good Shepherd spirituality. The commitment to fostering their dignity, safety, growth, and holistic well-being aligns with the Congregation's mission to help every person live life in fullness.

To ensure maximum participation of rural children, *Children's Day 2025* was joyfully celebrated on 16 November—a date chosen in place of 14 November for logistical convenience. The event was held at the Good Shepherd Campus, Nochipatty, a centre for learning, empowerment, and community transformation.

2. Participation and Mobilisation

This year's celebration gathered more than 300 adolescents—boys and girls aged 13 to 19—from 12 neighbouring villages in and around Ayyoithiyapattinam Block. Many of these villages lack regular transportation facilities.

The organisers extend heartfelt thanks to the Brothers of Holy Cross, who generously provided their school buses to transport children safely from remote interior hamlets to the Campus. Their benevolent contribution ensured that every child—regardless of location or circumstance—had the opportunity to participate fully. The Sisters and Partners-in-Mission gratefully acknowledge their collaboration.

3. Significance of the Day

Children's Day was celebrated with the central theme: "Ensuring Every Child's Right to Life, Development, Protection, and Participation." This theme served as a powerful reminder of the collective responsibility to safeguard the dignity, safety, and well-being of every child, especially those from vulnerable communities.

The program sought not only to raise awareness about child rights but also to create an empowering space where adolescents could openly share their experiences, aspirations, and concerns. It encouraged children to recognise their own strengths and to voice their perspectives on issues that shape their lives. Through creative activities, performances, and interactive sessions, the event provided a nurturing platform for children to express their talents, ideas, and emotions.

A diverse and distinguished group of participants enriched the celebration. Government officials, child rights specialists, civil society activists, educationists, and representatives of various NGOs offered their guidance, insights, and inspiring messages. Their presence underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in protecting children's rights and ensuring their holistic development. The day ultimately reaffirmed the belief that every child deserves love, opportunities, safety, and a meaningful role in building a brighter future.

4. Special Guests and Speakers

Government and Child Rights Officials

- Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Salem District, Mrs. Ezhil, Chairperson,
- District Child Protection Officer (DCPO), Mr. Simon,
- Mr Aruljeyanathan, Block Development Officer (BDO),
- Protection Officer under the PO, Mr. Prabhu,
- Mr Ramesh, Sub-Inspector of Police.

Civil Society and Activist Representatives

- Social Activist – Mr Senthil (Elavammal)
- Child Rights Project leaders – Sr, Arockiamary,
- Mentor & Documentation Specialist – Mr. A. John Aruldass

5. Key Messages from the Speakers

5.1 Mrs. Ezhil, Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee (CWC)

Mrs. Ezhil, Chairperson, emphasised that every child must be protected from physical, emotional, and social harm. Parents and communities were reminded of their fundamental responsibility to safeguard children from exploitation and to support their education and well-being.

5.2 Mr. Simon, the District Child Protection Officer (DCPO)

Mr. Simon, the District Child Protection Officer, delivered a strong and insightful message on the legal safeguards provided under child protection laws. He emphasised the community's collective duty to uphold these protections and highlighted that:

- No child should ever be engaged in any form of labour, as it robs them of their childhood, education, and well-being.
- Child marriage must be prevented at all costs, as it endangers a child's health, safety, and future opportunities.

- Any instance of abuse, neglect, or emergency should be reported immediately through Childline 1098, ensuring timely rescue and support.

He underscored that community vigilance, timely reporting, and awareness are essential to creating safer, more child-friendly villages. His message urged all community members to remain alert, responsible, and proactive in protecting every child's rights and dignity.

5.3 Mr Arokianathan, Block Development Officer

The BDO emphasised that education is one of the most powerful tools for transforming lives, particularly for girls who often face barriers to achieving their full potential. He highlighted that when girls are educated, entire families and communities progress—creating a brighter and more secure future for everyone. He appealed to parents to continue supporting, encouraging, and taking an active interest in their children's dreams and aspirations, ensuring that no child is deprived of opportunities due to a lack of guidance. He also advised the adolescent students to stay focused on their goals, keep themselves away from harmful influences, and embrace discipline, dedication, and strong moral values as the foundation of their success.

5.4 Mr Ramesh, Sub-Inspector of Police

Speaking from a law enforcement perspective, Mr Ramesh, Sub-Inspector of Police, stressed:

- Immediate reporting of unsafe situations
- Zero tolerance towards abuse, violence, or trafficking
- The importance of respecting rules, elders, and community values

He assured that the police would take strict action against offenders.

5.5 Social Activist – Sr. Arockiamary

Sr. Arockiamary, Director of Community Development Initiatives of the Good Shepherd Convent (Nochipatty), initiated a reflection session, encouraging the children to share their feedback and key learnings, which she compiled and highlighted.

Here are some of the learnings the children could said to have gained from the celebration:

- Understanding their basic rights and responsibilities as children.
- Realising the importance of education for a better future.
- Becoming aware of issues like child marriage, child labour, and safety.
- Developing confidence to express their thoughts and talents.

- Learning the value of teamwork through group performances and activities.
- Appreciating cultural diversity through songs, dances, and plays.
- Understanding how government officials and activists work to protect children.

5.6 Social Activist – Mr Senthil Raja, Vaanmigil Society

Mr Senthil Raja, a child rights activist, delivered a powerful and heartfelt address, drawing urgent attention to the pressing issues of child marriage, child labour, and the rising number of school dropouts. He explained how these harmful practices rob children of their childhood, limit their potential, and trap families in cycles of poverty and vulnerability. With inspiring conviction, he urged every child to remain committed to their education, to dream boldly about a brighter and more dignified future, and to believe that they have the strength to shape their own lives. He also encouraged them to become responsible young citizens who speak up against injustice and take small steps within their families and neighbourhoods to ensure safer, happier, and more empowered communities for all children.

5.7 Mentor & Documentation Specialist – Mr. A. John Aruldass

Mr. A. John Aruldass, Mentor cum Documentation Specialist for the Good Shepherd Mission, delivered an inspiring and deeply reflective message to the children. He highlighted several profound values essential for personal growth and character formation:

- The importance of gratitude, reminding the children that life itself is a precious and divine gift.
- The need to nurture a strong sense of purpose and inner strength in every situation.
- The significance of allowing godliness to guide one's thoughts, actions, and relationships, enabling a life rooted in goodness.
- The call to use one's talents and abilities not only for personal advancement but also for the well-being and upliftment of others.

His address motivated the children to embrace positive attitudes, uphold moral values, and cultivate a compassionate and thoughtful approach to life.

6. Cultural Presentations by Children

Children from all 12 villages confidently presented a range of performances that combined creativity with social awareness. These included:

- Skits and street plays on child marriage, alcoholism, domestic violence, and gender inequality
- Folk dances expressing cultural pride and community harmony
- Mimes and thematic presentations on child rights
- Songs and poems celebrating hope, dreams, and courage

These performances were deeply moving and highlighted the lived realities of rural adolescents, as well as their aspirations for a brighter future.

7. Spirit of Partnership and Commitment

The celebration symbolised the strong collaboration between the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, their Partners-in-Mission, government departments, and civil society organisations. Their collective presence was a reaffirmation of their commitment to the welfare and empowerment of rural children.

The Good Shepherd mission continues to prioritise:

- Child protection activities
- Life skills education
- Prevention of child labour and child marriage
- Youth leadership development
- Community awareness and empowerment

8. Conclusion and Reflection

Children's Day 2025 at the Good Shepherd Campus stood as a vibrant celebration of unity, empowerment, and hope. It brought together children, government officials, child rights advocates, educators, and community leaders in a shared commitment to uphold every child's right to safety, dignity, and opportunity. The day reaffirmed the collective belief that when children are nurtured with compassion and justice, they flourish into confident and capable young citizens. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd extend their heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to the success of this meaningful event. Special appreciation is offered to the **Brothers of Holy Cross** for providing vital transportation support, enabling children from distant villages to participate. Equal thanks are due to the community leaders and volunteers whose efforts ensured the enthusiastic involvement of children from remote areas.

This celebration also served as a moment of reflection. Each child who participated reminded us of the dreams they carry and the future they deserve—one shaped by protection, encouragement, love, and respect. The day called everyone present to reflect deeply on their personal role in safeguarding children's rights and nurturing their growth. It underscored a powerful truth: when a community stands together for its children, it builds not only their future but the moral strength and hope of society itself. The Good Shepherd Mission moves forward with renewed dedication—to stand with children, advocate for their rights, and accompany them as they grow into compassionate, empowered, and hopeful young leaders.

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PHOTOGRAPHS OF CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATION



Children enthusiastically beat the drums with rhythmic energy, joyfully inviting the special guests to the celebration



Children performed 'Silambattam' to warmly welcome the Chief Guests of the Children's Day celebration.



Mr. Sam, the Project Coordinator of Inclusive Community Development Initiatives (ICDS), welcomed the participants and briefed them on the day's events.



Mrs. Shobha, Community Organiser, invites all the participants, especially children, to join in the celebrations with enthusiasm and take part in the fun-filled activities planned for the day.



The resource persons, special invitees, and representatives of the children light the lamp to officially mark the celebration.



The Child Rights Officials light the lamp to mark the joyful beginning of the celebration of Children's Day.



Honouring the Child Protection Officials serves as a meaningful encouragement, motivating them to continue their committed efforts in ensuring the safety and well-being of children



The Child Rights-related Government Officials and activists were honoured with a shawl and a memento as a gesture of appreciation, encouraging them to continue their dedicated efforts in safeguarding children's rights.



Mr. Prabhu explained the Thayumanavar Scheme supporting society's most vulnerable such as destitute, elderly persons living alone, single parent families, orphaned children.



Mrs. Ezhil, Member of child Welfare Committee, says "Every child deserves safety, protection, and care."



Mr. Senthil Raja, a child rights activist, insisted that every child must stay in school, resist harm, and help build safer, brighter communities.



Children showcased their talents and childhood experiences through vibrant performances of plays and dances.



Mr. Ramesh urged children to report danger, reject abuse, and respect rules.



Mr. John said that gratitude and living with godliness lead to a better life.

