

PRAYER FOR DREAMERS

EVANGELICAL
IMMIGRATION *table.*

VOICES *of*
CHRISTIAN
DREAMERS



FIVE DAYS OF PRAYER

Dear brothers and sisters,

In Luke 18, Jesus tells the parable of a widow who persistently seeks justice from her town's judge. Though the judge is described as unjust, neither fearing God nor caring about people, he eventually relents and grants justice to the widow because she would not give up.

In our democratic form of government, we too can—and should—persistently advocate before those in positions of governmental authority, urging them to pass just and compassionate policies. We believe that includes a permanent, inclusive solution for the hundreds of thousands of young people we know as “Dreamers,” who came to the U.S. as children and now, as the result of uncertainty surrounding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, could ultimately lose their work authorization and be put at risk of deportation—unless Congress takes action. In fact, if you haven't already done so (or, in the spirit of the persistent widow, even if you have), we encourage you to make a simple phone call to your Members of Congress at [PowerToAct.org](https://www.PowerToAct.org) and to challenge others to do the same.

The point of Jesus' parable, though, was not to be good political advocates: it was to teach His disciples “that they should always pray and not give up” (Luke 18:1 NIV). The Bible is replete with God's promises that He hears our prayers and that He has power and authority even over governments. We are invited to bring our requests before God with boldness and persistence.

As Dreamers—including many within local churches throughout the U.S.—face rumors that DACA may once again be rescinded, we want to invite you to commit to persistent prayer. This guide offers specific prayer suggestions for five days' of focused prayer for Dreamers and their situation, along with the personal testimonies of Christian Dreamers and with Bible passages that remind us of why we pray.

In light of the June 2020 Supreme Court decision that, for the moment, has continued to allow DACA recipients to renew, we praise God for His faithfulness and mercy. However, DACA is still in danger without a permanent legislative solution. Thus, we invite you to pray with us—whether in the solitude of your home, together with a small group, or corporately with your church community. If we are persistent in prayer, “will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly” (Luke 18:7-8).

In Christ,

The Evangelical Immigration Table
www.evangelicalimmigrationtable.com

Voices of Christian Dreamers
www.ChristianDreamers.us

DAY 1: PRAYING FOR DREAMERS

TESTIMONY: FIA VONJIMALALA

I came to the U.S. from Madagascar when I was fifteen years old on a visa that allowed me to live and study here legally. When it came time to renew my visa, however, I was unable to find the funds and the sponsor necessary. Gratefully, just around that time, the Department of Homeland Security announced the opportunity to apply for employment authorization through the DACA program. With that work permission, I could work my way through college.

In May 2016, I graduated from Moody Bible Institute as a communications major. I worked for a season as the director of children's ministries for a ministry where most of my students were children from refugee families. In this position, I led a staff team to operate an after school program, take our students to church, take them to camp in the summer, and minister holistically to their needs.

Currently, I work as a contractor in the private sector as a bilingual agent. While I fill a key need for my company, they cannot hire me into a permanent position unless I can obtain a permanent immigration status. A permanent status would ensure my future in this job that I love, which is teaching me many skills.

If DACA is cancelled, I would potentially lose my job and be a wreck emotionally. I would also struggle financially, as I currently help to support my whole family through my employment. My heart is in sharing the love of God to children and youth who do not feel loved, and in counseling parents who feel out of place in the community because of their minority or immigrant background, and I pray for the opportunity to continue to remain in this country and pursue what I believe God has called me to.

I am thankful to this country for the opportunity it provides, and I am thankful for your prayers.



DAY 1: PRAYING FOR DREAMERS

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 31:1-5, 19-24 (NIV)

In you, Lord, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.

Turn your ear to me,
come quickly to my rescue;
be my rock of refuge,
a strong fortress to save me.

Since you are my rock and my fortress,
for the sake of your name lead and guide me.
Keep me free from the trap that is set for me,
for you are my refuge.

Into your hands I commit my spirit;
deliver me, Lord, my faithful God...

How abundant are the good things
that you have stored up for those who fear you,
that you bestow in the sight of all,
on those who take refuge in you.
In the shelter of your presence you hide them
from all human intrigues;
you keep them safe in your dwelling
from accusing tongues.

Praise be to the Lord,
for he showed me the wonders of his love
when I was in a city under siege.
In my alarm I said,
"I am cut off from your sight!"
Yet you heard my cry for mercy
when I called to you for help.

Love the Lord, all his faithful people!
The Lord preserves those who are true to him,
but the proud he pays back in full.
Be strong and take heart,
all you who hope in the Lord.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that those facing anxiety and fears about the future would find comfort and hope as they face uncertainty, so that they would be able to continue to work, study and serve their churches and communities despite the looming uncertainty.
- Pray that God would provide for the tangible needs of Dreamers, many of whom are paying college or graduate school tuition (without being eligible for federal financial aid), helping to support their families, paying a mortgage or car payment, and facing other financial obligations that would be affected if they lose their work authorization and thus lose their jobs.
- Pray that Dreamers who are already are followers of Christ would be reminded daily of God's love for them, trusting in the biblical promises that God in His grace has adopted them into His family as sons and daughters and made them citizens of His kingdom.
- Pray that those Dreamers who have not yet put their trust in Christ would, in the midst of the vulnerability of the current situation, find the truly permanent hope that only Jesus can offer, though His death and resurrection.
- Pray that God would guide those who feel compelled to share their personal stories, that they would be able to do so with courage and tact.

DAY 2: PRAYING FOR FAMILIES

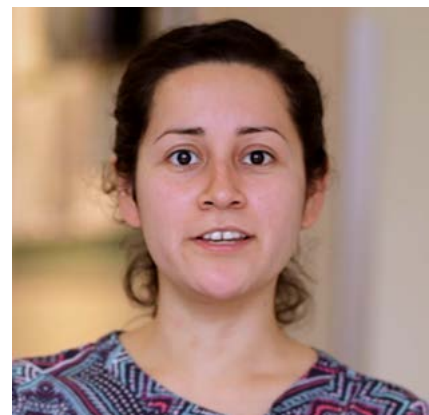
TESTIMONY: YURIANA AGUILAR

I was born in Michoacán, Mexico. My parents brought me to California's Central Valley as a five-year-old, wanting to spare me from the drug-cartel-perpetrated violence that is sadly very common in the place where I was born. My mom and dad worked incredibly hard as farmworkers, spending themselves so that my siblings and I could pursue education.

Pursuing education is not without roadblocks for those who are undocumented, though—a reality I began to understand only as a high school student and beginning to think about applying to colleges. I did not qualify for federal financial aid, so I searched far and wide for private scholarships. I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to earn my Ph.D. from the University of California-Merced in 2016. Because of the employment authorization of the DACA program, I am now living my dream of working as a research scientist, studying the human heart at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

God has proven his faithfulness to me over and over again, despite the various challenges. He provided me with parents who loved me, instilled in me a value of hard work, and pushed me to study. He has now blessed me with a loving and supporting husband and a precious daughter, Victoria, who is now two years old.

I am naturally very discouraged by the attempts to terminate the DACA program. I cannot help but think about what it will mean for me and my family if DACA is terminated once again and Congress does not step in: I could lose my job and my means to help support my family. It's hard to think about the risk of being deported to a country that I can barely remember, and of the incredibly difficult decisions that would entail for my family, including my U.S. citizen daughter. But I have seen God make a way when there seemed to be no way more than once, and I trust that He will continue to provide and direct as we seek Him in prayer.



DAY 2: PRAYING FOR FAMILIES

SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7 (ESV)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that God would protect immigrant families, including those of Dreamers, and keep them unified, whatever happens with immigration policy in the coming months.
- Pray that God would bless parents who have sacrificed in various ways for the wellbeing of their children, that they would have the opportunity to see their children flourish and fulfill their God-given potential.
- Pray for the roughly 200,000 U.S. citizen children who have at least one parent with DACA, whose families will share the financial impact if Dreamers lose their employment authorization and thus their jobs and sources of income.
- Pray for wisdom for Dreamers as they discuss the uncertainties of the future with their children and with younger siblings, who may be too young to fully understand immigration legal statuses and policy decisions.
- Pray that, beyond the immediate situation faced by beneficiaries of DACA, God would also make ways for just and compassionate immigration reforms that would allow other undocumented immigrants, including the parents, grandparents, and siblings of some Dreamers, to make restitution for their violation of law and earn permanent legal status and/or citizenship.



DAY 3: PRAYING FOR CONGRESS

TESTIMONY: JOSE OCAMPO

I've been reflecting on some of the many reasons that I'm thankful.

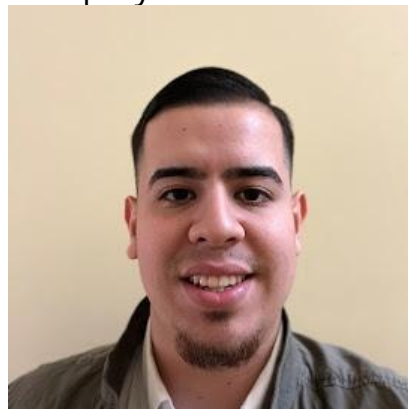
First, I'm thankful for my parents. They left behind their country and everything they knew to give me and my brother the chance at a better life. I was born in Guerrero, Mexico, but they brought me to the U.S.—to Charlotte, North Carolina, the only home I've ever known—when I was just two months old. I'm so grateful for all the opportunities that have been available to me in this wonderful country.

I'm grateful to a woman I know only as “Miss Tammy,” the children's ministry director at a small church who led me to a personal relationship with Jesus. There's been no more important decision in my life than to commit to following Jesus as a seventh-grader.

I'm also grateful that, as I finished high school, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security opened up the chance for people like me to receive work permission and protections from deportation through the DACA program. I'd presumed that I would be unable to attend college, but DACA allowed me to get a job and register for community college. I transferred to a private Christian college where I was awarded a scholarship, and I have recently graduated.

My prayer is to continue serving in a pastoral role at my local church and eventually go on to seminary. My pastor at Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Luis Tejera, has mentored and supported me as I've discerned a call to ministry, and I'm so grateful for him, his family, and my larger church family.

Finally, I'm thankful for you. I know that there are thousands of brothers and sisters in Christ throughout this country who are committed to praying for Dreamers and for the elected officials whose decisions in the coming days and months will determine if I am allowed to continue to work lawfully, to pursue the career and ministry dreams that I believe God has given me, and even to stay here in the U.S., the only country that I've ever really known. I know that God is sovereign even over the decisions of policy makers, and I trust that He is at work in the midst of this uncertain situation in response to our prayers.



DAY 3: PRAYING FOR CONGRESS

SCRIPTURE: PROVERBS 21:1 (NLT)

The king's heart is like a stream of water directed by the Lord;
he guides it wherever he pleases.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for each Member of the U.S. House of Representatives and for each U.S. Senator, including specifically those who represent your congressional district and state.
- Pray in particular for those in positions of leadership: Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer.
- Pray that God would grant them courage to do what is right and just, regardless of the political pressures that they face, and that God would impress upon them the sense of urgency.
- Pray that they would have wisdom both in discerning the details of policy and the political strategy to forge consensus around a particular bill that would be good for Dreamers, for other immigrants and for the nation.
- Pray that Members of Congress would have the humility to work together, even across the partisan lines that often divide them, to find a permanent, inclusive solution for Dreamers.



DAY 4: PRAYING FOR THE PRESIDENT AND ADMINISTRATION

TESTIMONY: LIZ DONG

I came to the U.S. from China at age ten as a dependent under my mom's temporary work visa. A couple years after arrival, though, our immigration attorney made several errors on my paperwork, and I lost my legal status and became undocumented at age twelve, even though we didn't do anything to break U.S. immigration law. My mom contacted other attorneys and appealed to our legislators, but to no avail.

My high school years were difficult. On top of wrestling with my identity as an adolescent, I struggled with the fact that I was "illegal" and did not belong to the place that had become home. Without status, I couldn't drive, work, or (at the time) enroll in a university, despite having graduated from high school with honors. I questioned my future and my worth.

But God showed His light during this dark time through His people. My mom and I come from an atheist family background but started attending a local church after I arrived in the U.S.; we would later become Christians there. My church family prayed for me and cared for me in practical ways, such as giving me rides when I couldn't drive. My youth pastor, knowing my situation, became actively involved in educating others about immigration as well as advocating on my behalf before our legislators. It was tremendously empowering to have my pastor speak up for me within the church setting and in the public sphere. I felt incredible love from God through His people.

God answered prayers and opened a door for me to earn my bachelor's degree at Northwestern University. Though I still could not work lawfully after graduating from college, the DACA program provided me with the permission to work beginning in 2012. After a season in the private sector, I worked with World Relief. Currently, I work as a financial analyst after graduating with an MBA from the University of Chicago.

Without a permanent solution, my future is uncertain. But I am praying for the Congress and for the President, as Scripture commands all of us to do, whether they are individuals whose policies we generally support or not. I pray that they will make a way for me and others to continue to stay in the U.S., to work and pay taxes, and to give back to the community that has embraced me.



DAY 4: PRAYING FOR THE PRESIDENT AND ADMINISTRATION

SCRIPTURE: 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-2 (HCSB)

First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that God would grant wisdom to President Trump, that he would, as the White House has said is his intention, “resolve the DACA issue with heart and compassion.”
- Pray that the president would sign into law a bill passed by the Congress that would allow those who have benefited from DACA and other Dreamers to stay lawfully in the United States, to maintain their jobs without disruption, to stay together with their family members, and to eventually earn citizenship in the country that they consider their home.
- Pray that those in positions of authority within the White House and the Department of Homeland Security would exercise discretion and compassion, sustaining DACA until Congress passes permanent legislation, such that families would be able to stay together.
- Pray for the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf, as the governmental agency that he leads will be charged with implementing any new program for Dreamers that is signed into law, that he would act with wisdom, urgency, and creativity.



DAY 5: PRAYING FOR THE CHURCH

TESTIMONY: AMADO LOBATOS

Having pastored for decades, including in a congregation where most people were Spanish-speaking immigrants or their children, I've known several young "Dreamers" personally. I've watch them reach a certain age and begin to reckon with what it means that they do not have legal status. As their pastor, I remind them of God's love for them, of their identity as His children, and of their citizenship in His kingdom, while also doing all that I can to help them fulfill their God-given potential. I believe that this issue is important whether your church includes Dreamers within the congregation or not, because the Bible teaches us that ultimately all Christ-followers form part of one body, that each part of the body—though different—needs every other part, and that we are to mourn with those among us facing difficulties (1 Corinthians 12:12-26).

My concern for Dreamers is also very personal: I suppose you might say I was an "original Dreamer." I was brought to the U.S. illegally—to a farm in Wyoming—as a small child in 1976. That small community in Wyoming included many Christians who loved me and my family. They ultimately led me to faith in Christ. As I felt called to pastoral ministry as a teenager, they told me about a place called Moody Bible Institute and encouraged me to apply.

Since I was in the country illegally, I had no Social Security Number to list on my application. But, unbeknownst to me, some of the farmers in my community had been talking to their Senator, Alan Simpson, imploring him to make changes to U.S. immigration laws. Senator Simpson became the lead sponsor of a bill that was signed in 1986 by President Reagan, allowing families like mine to receive legal status.

My acceptance letter from Moody Bible Institute noted that I had failed to include a Social Security Number on my application, which would be necessary before I could begin my studies. Thanks to that law signed by President Reagan, I had received my Social Security Number just two weeks earlier. That opportunity to legalize my status—and, some years later, to become a U.S. citizen—has changed the course of my life, allowing me to serve as a pastor in various contexts, including my current role as Minister of Pastoral Care at the Christian Church of Clarendon Hills, Illinois.

I know that God has put the same potential to contribute in those we today call Dreamers, who are desperate for the same opportunities that I received. My prayer is both that our elected officials would have the wisdom and courage to pass policy toward that end, and that the Church would be united in standing alongside these Dreamers.



DAY 5: PRAYING FOR THE CHURCH

SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 12:10-15 (NKJV)

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that Christ-followers would be united—across denominational, ethnic, political and geographic divisions—in prayer and in advocating boldly for Dreamers.
- Pray that pastors and ministry leaders would have wisdom to know how to best support and guide the Dreamers within their congregations, reminding them of their worth and their identity in Christ.
- Pray for churches and ministries, as well as other employers, who have beneficiaries of DACA on their staff, that they would continue to be able to lawfully employ these individuals.
- Pray that the collective witness of the Church in response to the situation of Dreamers to those who are not yet believers would be such that they would “see [our] good deeds and glorify [our] Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16 NIV), and that people would be drawn to Jesus as a result.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ON DACA AND DREAMERS

- Power to Act Challenge, an online advocacy tool to connect you with your federal representatives and encourage them to find a permanent solution for Dreamers: www.powertoact.org
- Evangelical Immigration Table letter to Congressional Leaders regarding DACA and Dreamers: <http://www.evangelicalimmigrationtable.com/dreamers>
- “Thankful”: a short video from the Voices of Christian Dreamers where various Dreamers express the reasons that they are grateful: <http://bit.ly/VCDthankful>
- “DACA and Dream Act 101” from World Relief: <https://www.worldrelief.org/blog/daca-and-dream-act-101>
- “What You Should Know about DACA and Dreamers,” from the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention: <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/what-you-should-know-about-daca-and-dreamers>
- “Evangelical Leader Statement of Principles on Dreamers,” coordinated by the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission: <https://erlc.com/resource-library/statements/evangelical-leader-statement-of-principles-on-dreamers>
- Stories of Christian Dreamers, from Voices of Christian Dreamers: <http://bit.ly/DreamerStories>

ABOUT THE EVANGELICAL IMMIGRATION TABLE

The Evangelical Immigration Table (www.evangelicalimmigrationtable.com) is a broad coalition of evangelical organizations and leaders advocating for immigration reform consistent with biblical values. It is led by various organizations including Bethany Christian Services, the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Faith and Community Empowerment, the National Association of Evangelicals, the National Latino Evangelical Coalition, the Wesleyan Church, World Relief and World Vision.

ABOUT VOICES OF CHRISTIAN DREAMERS

Voices of Christian Dreamers (www.ChristianDreamers.us, www.facebook.com/ChristianDreamers) is a grassroots, Dreamers-led movement committed to changing the conversation about undocumented immigrants in the Church and beyond, through highlighting biblical teaching, personal stories and other helpful resources.

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