

## UPF International: Families as the First School of Peace

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May 15, 2026



On the occasion of the United Nations [International Day of Families](#), the Universal Peace Federation reaffirms the enduring truth that the family is the first school of peace. It is within the home that human beings first learn dignity, conscience, compassion, responsibility, cooperation, and care for others. Strong and healthy families cultivate the moral and social foundations upon which peaceful societies and nations are built.

The United Nations has long recognized the family as "the natural and fundamental group unit of society," a principle enshrined in the [Universal Declaration of Human](#)

[Rights](#). The 2026 International Day of Families, observed under the theme "Families, Inequalities and Child Wellbeing," brings renewed urgency to addressing the social and economic conditions that shape family stability and children's futures.

Across the world, millions of families face compounding challenges: economic insecurity, unequal access to education and healthcare, insufficient caregiving support, and widening social disparities that narrow the horizons of children before they ever have a chance to grow. These are not abstract policy concerns, they are lived realities that determine whether a child thrives or struggles.

At the same time, a robust body of research points to the stabilizing role of mature, committed parents. Children raised by a mother and father who are devoted to their upbringing consistently show stronger developmental outcomes and are better positioned to escape cycles of poverty and inequality. This evidence deserves a place alongside broader conversations about structural reform, not as a substitute, but as a complement to the social investments families need to flourish.

Founded by [Dr. Hak Ja Han](#) and the late [Rev. Sun Myung Moon](#), UPF advances the vision of humanity as One Family under God. This vision affirms that peace begins not only through political agreements or institutional reforms, but through the cultivation of loving, responsible and ethical relationships within families themselves. In family life, the universal principle of living for the sake of others becomes a lived reality, shaping character and inspiring service to society.

This message carries special significance in May 2026, which UPF has designated as the [Month of the Family](#) within its global initiative, "[100 Days of Serving Community](#)," leading toward the United Nations Global Day of Parents on June 1. This observance also resonates with the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing ([2021 - 2030](#)), recognizing that respect for parents, the protection and nurturing of children, and the dignity and inclusion of older persons form an unbroken moral chain linking generations together. Healthy intergenerational relationships strengthen communities and contribute to long-term peacebuilding.

UPF believes that the challenges facing families today require cooperation across all sectors of society. Governments, civil society organizations, faith communities, educators, cultural leaders and families themselves each have an important role in creating environments where families can thrive. Through family dialogue, interfaith cooperation, youth service initiatives, caregiver support, marriage and parenting education, and intergenerational community programs, UPF seeks to translate values into meaningful action that uplifts both individuals and society.

In the spirit of the 2026 United Nations theme, UPF calls upon its chapters, ambassadors for peace, and partners around the world to strengthen efforts that support family wellbeing, reduce inequality, honor older generations, protect children, and foster a culture of mutual responsibility and care. By investing in families, we invest in the future of peace itself.

As we commemorate the International Day of Families, may renewed attention to the sacred value of family inspire communities and nations alike to work together for a more compassionate, just and peaceful world.



Apr 30 · 4 min read

## CELEBRATING MAY AS THE MONTH OF FAMILY



As May 2026 begins, the [Universal Peace Federation](#) enters the third and final full month of its [100 Days of Serving Community](#) campaign, running from February 20 to June 1, 2026. March emphasized partnerships to strengthen local impact. April emphasized volunteer service that communities could recognize and welcome. May brings this public work to its center: the family and values-based education. This leads directly to the [Global Day of Parents](#), and raises a practical question. If communities are to become more peaceful, more stable, and more humane, what must be strengthened first?

The answer begins in the daily environment where children form conscience, where burdens are shared, where values are transmitted, and where dignity is either protected or neglected. May is an opportunity to place family life where it belongs, at the center of serious reflection on peace, education, and social development.

The [International Day of Families](#) will be observed on May 15, 2026 at United Nations Headquarters in New York under the theme "Families, Inequalities and Child Wellbeing." It highlights family-friendly policies, such as child benefits, parental leave, affordable early childhood education, and community-based family support. Such measures help ensure stable families where children can receive a fair start in life.

This observance also builds on the role of the family in implementing commitments from the World Summit for Social Development and its Doha Declaration, aligning family-oriented policies with efforts to reduce inequalities and promote child wellbeing.\*

Across the globe and over the years, UPF has promoted family-centered peacebuilding through a multitude of programs. To give just a few examples:

- At the United Nations in [New York](#), UPF serves as an executive member of the NGO Committee on the Family. On January 22, 2026, UPF co-organized a virtual program titled, "Empowering the Family through National Policies: Insights from Burundi and Italy."
- In [London](#) on May 31, 2025, UPF-UK held a colorful family event featuring reflections on intercultural marriage, an interfaith peace blessing, music, poetry, and Exemplary Family Awards.
- In [Vienna](#) on May 17, 2025, UPF-Austria convened a conference on family-oriented policies for sustainable development, linking family dignity, character education, cultural diversity and the public good.
- In [Bangkok](#) on May 27, 2025, more than 500 participants joined a webinar with family specialists, medical professionals, and government-related representatives.
- In [Auckland, New Zealand](#) on May 24, 2025, UPF highlighted youth empowerment and family-oriented policies, linking family stability with the perspectives of young people.
- In [Burkina Faso](#), UPF organized a public conference on Family and Social Cohesion in the capital city of Ouagadougou on February 14, 2026, integrating peace strategies with traditional family culture.
- In [Argentina](#), UPF-Argentina and the Pacis Nuntii Movement co-sponsored a program on the theme, "We Are Siblings, We Are Family" on October 9, 2025, in Paraná City, stressing the link between family ties and community.

UPF has also offered practical assistance to vulnerable families:

- In [Conakry, Guinea](#), UPF supported families with premature infants by distributing sanitary and nutritional kits to hospitals and clinics in January, 2026.
- In [Mullaitivu, Sri Lanka](#) on December 28, 2024, UPF and partner networks distributed food aid to flood-affected families.
- In [Madrid](#), UPF-Spain organized a charity event from February 28 to March 1, 2026, to raise funds for impoverished families in Cameroon, to support their children's education.

Going forward, UPF encourages its local chapters, partners, and Ambassadors for Peace to celebrate May with meaningful Month of Family events. These may include a parenting workshop, an intergenerational service day, a school partnership on values-based education, a family health awareness event, a youth mentoring initiative, or a public forum on family resilience under pressures such as inequality, child wellbeing, addiction, migration, or loneliness. A program can be educational, celebratory, preventive, or compassionate, always keeping the dignity of family life at the center.

For UPF, the family is the first school of love, responsibility, and civic virtue. Dr. Hak Ja Han and the late Rev. Sun Myung Moon consistently taught that lasting peace cannot be separated from strong families and a culture of living for the sake of others. Our slogan "One Family under God" complements the United Nations vision of "a human family." This ethical perspective encourages cooperation that honors both spiritual convictions and universal human rights.

As we move toward June 1, the Global Day of Parents, let's remember that the foundation for peace is built long

before diplomacy, legislation or institutional reform. It is built where children first learn love, discipline, truthfulness and respect – in the family.

#### Family-based holidays in May

- May 5 [Children's Day](#) in Japan and South Korea
- May 8 [Parents' Day](#) in South Korea
- May 10 (2026) [Mother's Day](#) in the United States, Canada, Australia, Germany, Mexico, Guatemala, India, China, Japan, and many others
- May 26 [Mother's Day](#) in Poland

#### UN Day Observances

- May 8-9 [Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during the Second World War](#) offers comfort to families who carry the wounds of war through grief, displacement, trauma and silence.
- May 16 [International Day of Living Together in Peace](#) calls societies to reconciliation, inclusion, and solidarity, virtues that are learned first in the family.
- May 21 [World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development](#). Culture is first transmitted in families – in language, stories, food, music and celebrations. Homes can become places where prejudice hardens, or where dignity across difference is learned.
- May 18-23 [Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly](#) in Geneva will impact global health policies that affect families through access to care, prevention, affordability, maternal and child health, and the burden placed on parents when systems fail.
- May 31 [World No Tobacco Day](#) focuses on "Unmasking the appeal: countering nicotine and tobacco addiction." Safeguarding children and adolescents from nicotine dependence and preventable harm must be a focus of families, schools and public policy.

#### Policy and Civil Society Forums

- May 4-8 [Second International Migration Review Forum](#) begins with a multi-stakeholder hearing on May 4. Migration governance impacts family unity, child protection, safe pathways, and the human cost of separation.
- May 18-21 [Family and Relationship Services Australia](#) convenes its national conference in Brisbane.
- May 28-30 [International Commission on Couple and Family Relations](#) holds its annual conference in Brussels, Belgium.

\* Many of the issues raised in this Month of Family are directly linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular [SDG 1](#), [SDG 3](#), [SDG 4](#), [SDG 5](#), [SDG 10](#), and [SDG 16](#).

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