



YOUTH GROUP ACTIVITIES

How do you
#PictureAdvent?

Week 1 - November 29 - December 5, 2015

HOPE

Daily Texts

Luke 21:25-28, Jeremiah 33:14-16,
John 1:1-2, Psalm 25:5,
Luke 1:26-33, Isaiah 52:7-9,
1 Thessalonians 3:13

Supplies: Black construction or scrapbook paper, black markers, scotch tape, toothpicks, tea candles (or the LED equivalent)

Reflection: Luke 21:25-28 tells us that many people will be filled with “distress” and “fear” at the coming of the Son of Man, though we to look forward to this moment of God’s glory and our redemption. Are there other things in life that seem frightening or intimidating, not because they are bad, but because they are big, powerful events? How do you think God will use these moments to strengthen, redeem, and transform you?

Encourage students to discuss and then write in marker on their individual piece of black paper the coming changes and events that intimidate them, not because they are bad news but because of their magnitude. With each word or phrase they write, invite students to puncture their paper a few times to illustrate the way that God’s presence shines in even scary moments, like stars in a dark night sky. Guide students to bend their completed paper into the shape of a cylinder by bringing the long edges of the page together, with words facing outward, and then taping them on the inside of the seam. Then, place a candle in the center of the paper lamp, symbolizing God’s presence in their times of fear.

Week 2 - December 6-12, 2015

PEACE

Daily Texts

Luke 1:77-79, Malachi 3:2-3,
Luke 3:3-6, Philippians 1:9-11,
Psalm 96:1-3, Hebrews 1:1-3,
John 1:4-5

Supplies: Pre-prepared instructions at each of three prayer stations in a quiet, meditative space: **Prayer Station 1:** existing or make-shift labyrinth or pathway; **Prayer Station 2:** small pieces of scrap paper, large fire safe bowl, candles, pens; **Prayer station 3:** world map fixed to a wall or easel, sticky notes, markers.

Reflection: How do we prepare to become peacemakers? What do we have to set aside to help to bring about God’s peace? What can we open ourselves up to and learn about in order to build peace?

Invite students to begin the prayer station rotation with space between individuals or small groups. **Prayer station 1:** Beginning with a silent reading of Luke 1:77-79, students may walk a short meditative pathway, prayerfully inviting God to guide our feet in the ways of peace. **Prayer station 2:** After a silent reading of Malachi 3:2-3, students can write a quality, habit, or bias that they believe keeps them from more perfectly loving and peacefully living in the world. They may prayerfully offer what they have written up for God’s purification, and then, light their paper confession with the candle and let it smolder in the bowl. **Prayer station 3:** Students are invited to consider, in this season of waiting, what peoples and places are waiting for God’s peace to be revealed. They may write and post notes representing those that touch their hearts, creating a prayer list that the youth group can revisit in prayer in future.

Week 3 - December 13-19, 2015

LOVE

Daily Texts

Zephaniah 3:14-17, Luke 3:8-14,
Philippians 4:4-6, Luke 3:8-14,
Psalm 98:3, Titus 2:11-14,
Luke 6:38-39

Supplies: Card stock/craft paper and envelopes, scissors, glue sticks, felt tipped markers, and decorative items such as old magazines, scrapbook paper, stickers, or photos

Reflection: If God could write you a love letter, what do you think God would write? How does that differ from the way you treat yourself? What are some ways that you communicate to others that you care about them?

Help students think through the ways God's love is depicted in scripture, in their experiences, and in sacrament; then, compare with some of the ways in which we tend to degrade ourselves in our minds and words. Invite students to write a self-affirming card to themselves to be opened during Advent next year. Students may decorate cards with words and images that speak to them of God's abiding love and may want to write a challenge to themselves about the ways they want to grow, bear fruit, and become more generous in the coming year.

Week 4 - December 20-23, 2015

Joy

Daily Texts

Luke 1:39-45, Micah 5:2-5a,
Hebrews 10:5-10, Luke 1:46-49

Supplies: Printed copies of 2-4 photos per student, felt tipped markers, twine, and small clothes pins

Reflection: This week's scripture readings testify to many aspects of who Jesus is: the coming miracle, the good shepherd, the prince of peace, the ultimate offering, the bearer of good news. Which parts of Jesus' story speak to you most as you anticipate his birth and makes you leap for joy - in other words, what good news have you been carrying this advent season? How has taking daily photos for #pictureadvent helped you connect with the story of Jesus?

Ask students in advance to forward a few of the #pictureadvent photos from their family that brought them the most joy over the past three weeks and print them. Display the photos on tables with a few markers next to each photo. Invite students to take a reflective moment with each photo and write on the back of the photo a daily theme word from #pictureadvent or short phrase that expresses what they see in this image. After each student has had the opportunity to reflect on every photo, students may share the photos they took with the group and explain their meaning and significance, connecting if they wish with the written reflections of others. Afterward, students may hang their photos on display in youth or worship areas for the upcoming holidays.

 LEC Family