

Youth & Children's Ministry Resource

How to Use this Resource

The #PictureLent Youth and Children's Ministry Resource can be used in a variety of ministry settings for either youth or children's ministry. Use the material provided as a guide to share the weekly #pictureLent scriptures, read, discuss together, and connect through experiential faith practices. You can use these resources with teens or children in small group, children's church, Sunday school, youth group or other gatherings you have with your faith community.

Ash Wednesday - Wash

Read Psalm 51:1-5

Reflection

Guilt vs. Grace: We have all dealt with the feeling of guilt. Guilt is a feeling of knowing that you have done wrong with the possibility of impending punishment. But, God always offers us grace. Grace is God's unearned and undeserved love, a gift given before we do anything good or bad. It is through God's grace that we understand the guilt is not from God, and if we turn towards God's love through grace we can move beyond our guilt and sin.

Youth Ministry Discussion

- > Have any of you ever been to a sports practice on a really hot day? Or maybe on a mission trip where the work was really grimy and dirty? Or any time when you just really, really wanted a shower? Why was it so great to take that shower and get clean?
- > How is God's forgiveness like that really great shower?

Children's Ministry Discussion

- > How do you feel knowing that God's love and forgiveness are always with you even when you have done wrong?

Connect Activity: Sand Prayer

Supplies: Sand, tray or sandbox to hold sand (could also use salt if not sand available)

Using a sand box or a small tray with a layer of sand. Take time to write the things you feel guilty for in the sand. As you are doing this, talk to God about why you feel the way that you do and ask for God's grace to wash over you. When you are ready, move your hand in the sand over your writing and watch your guilt be washed away by "God's grace."



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Week Two - Faithful

Read Matthew 4:1-11

Reflection

How many times a day do we feel tempted to do something we know not to? The nature of sin is for our hearts to be turned inward only towards self, where as a faithful life calls us to open our hearts to love God and love others. In this passage, we see evil tempting Jesus to turn his heart inward. Each time, Jesus reminds the devil that this life isn't about giving into temptation.

Youth Ministry Discussion

- > What are some ways that you find your heart turned inwards? What are some things that we are tempted to worship other than God?
- > What tools did Jesus use to protect himself from temptation?
- > What can we do to protect ourselves from temptations?

Children's Ministry Discussion

- > When is a time that you felt tempted but chose God's way instead?
- > When you feel tempted to do wrong how can you turn your heart towards God?

Connect Activity: Two Sides

Supplies: blank or notebook paper, something to write with and on

Draw a line down the middle of your page. On the left side of the line, write down the things that you often find yourself and heart being tempted by, things that turn your heart inward. Make sure to leave space between each one down the page. Now, go back and on the right side of the page write a faithful response to each temptation, maybe even find a scripture to support it.



Week Three - Believe

Read John 3:1-17

Reflection

Our passage is a story of a faith leader, Nicodemus, who had doubts and questions about his faith. He is nervous about his questions, which is why he goes to Jesus at night. We all have questions and doubts about our faith, sometimes small and sometimes huge. It is important to see that Jesus doesn't get mad at Nicodemus for his questions, but rather engages him where he is and helps him continue to grow deeper.

Youth Ministry Discussion

- > Who are the people in your life you can go to when you have questions about your faith?
- > Do you feel comfortable talking with them openly about what you struggle to believe? Why or Why not?
- > What are at least two ways you would like your beliefs to grow stronger during this season of Lent?

Children's Ministry Discussion

- > What questions would you like to ask Jesus?

Connect Activity: Doubt Box

Supplies: box with description taped on it, pens and notecards or small pieces of paper

"Doubt is not a lack of faith, but a struggle to answer the question "Why?" Doubts are real, raw, and honest questions we all have about everything ... Maybe you have always had these questions, but never knew the right time to ask them. Maybe you really struggle with an idea about God or the church. Maybe you need to hear other thoughts on an issue in school, church, life, etc. This is what the doubt box is for. Write your questions on a sheet of paper and put them in the doubt box offering them up to God." (**leaders: maybe use these questions to help guide future conversations in your group)



Week Four - Water

Read John 4:5-29

Reflection

Water is perhaps the most essential need in life besides air. No matter where you are from, how old, how much you have, or what you believe, we all need water to survive. In our passage, Jesus finds common ground with the Samaritan woman, whom Jews had nothing in common with, through water. Jesus tells her and us that he, the living water, is the way that leads to life. It is this life that we are all longing for, just as we each thirst for water.

Youth Ministry Discussion

- > How does water benefit us physically? Spiritually?
- > What kind of things do we 'thirst' for?
- > How do we fill ourselves with the living water that Jesus tells the Samaritan woman about?

Children's Ministry Discussion

- > What are some ways that we need water?
- > What are ways that we need Jesus?
- > How do you need Jesus in your life today?

Connect Activity: God's Overflowing Love

Supplies: Water, large pitcher, large bowl or basin, cup(s) (either 1 for a large group illustration or 1 per person)
Fill the pitcher with water, and hold glass and pitcher over the bowl. We all have thirsts in our lives, much like this glass is empty and ready for water. Pour a little in the glass. We find little ways to fill our cup, but these things often don't fill us up. Drink the water from the cup. Repeat several times listing things we might use to try to fill our cups (have group make suggestions). Now let me show you how God's unending love works. If your group is large simply pour into the glass until it overflows into the large bowl. If you have a smaller group, maybe have each one come up and hold the cup and feel the water overflowing. When we fill ourselves with God's unending love, we find ourselves overflowing with God's life and love to everyone around us.



Week Five - Blind

Read John 9:1-41

Reflection

Sometimes we might think we have it all figured out, that we have all the right answers. This is how the religious leaders, Pharisees, in this passage felt. They had all the right things to say and do to look like they had it all together, but really they were missing the heart of it. They proudly walked as if they saw perfectly, but were really blind. How often do we do this?

Youth Ministry Discussion

- > What have been some ways that we can be blind to how God is working in our lives or the lives of others?
- > Are we open to how God works around us even if it is different than what we envisioned?

Children's Ministry Discussion

- > How have you seen God working in your life?
- > How can you practice noticing God more this week?

Connect Activity: Blind Box Challenge

Supplies: box with small hole in top, weird feeling things: large furry object, several pipe cleaners with pieces of duct tape, etc.

Have participants come up one by one, and without looking in the box put their hand in to guess what's inside. Play it up to see who is the most confident, but then watch them quickly freak out when they try it. Reflect: how is this like Pharisees who feel like they can do it, but then when it comes down to it miss out?



Week Six - Resurrect

Read John 11:1-45

Reflection

If we look at our lives, we see that God is in the resurrection business. We can see it through seeds that turn to trees, forest that regrow from fires, relationships that re-connect from a long time. We even see how Jesus is effected by brokenness like the death of his friend. This resurrection pattern allows us to see God at work through life, in our lives.

Youth Ministry Discussion

- > Have you ever questioned God's actions in your life? In another's life? Why? Why not?
- > How does it make you feel when you read that Jesus wept over his friend's' death?
- > Where are places that you have seen or experience resurrection in your life or in those around you?

Children's Ministry Discussion

- > What are things that cause you to feel sadness?
- > How can you find hope in God when you are in times of sadness?

Connect Activity: Butterfly

Supplies: blank pages with the outline of a butterfly, different color pieces of paper, glue sticks

How often do we feel as though hope is lost? There is a famous quote that says "What a caterpillar calls death, God calls a butterfly." How true is this of our passage today? Each of you will get a butterfly page. Take your time and think through all the places in your life that feel broken, dead, or bad. As you do this tear of the different color paper in the middle into little pieces. When you are ready, talk to God and ask to see resurrection in your life, relationships, and broken places. As you do this, glue the torn up color pieces into the middle of the butterfly shape to make a beautiful butterfly resurrected from your broken pieces.



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Holy Week- HOSANNA

Read: Matthew 21:1-11

Reflection

Hosanna means “help or save us.” When we find the people shouting “hosanna!” they are hoping that Jesus is heading to the holy city to overthrow the oppressive Roman rule. They rally around the one who has come in the name of the Lord to set the captives free. But as we know, while Jesus does come to set the captives free, what how it happens is drastically different than expected.

Youth Ministry Discussion

- > When are times that we expect God to be someone God is not? (Ex: Like a wish giving genie.)
- > The crowd in the passage is sincere with their cry out to God to save them. What do you need to cry out to God to save or redeem?

Children’s Ministry Discussion

- > How do you need God’s help today?

Connect Activity: Shouts of Palms

Supplies: Green paper, scissors, something to write with

Give each person a sheet of green paper and have them cut out the shape of a palm branch. Then write on their palm branches the things they want to cry out to God to help heal. Once everyone is finished either have them lay them at a cross or have them re-enact the scripture scene shouting HOSANNA and laying down their palms.



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EASTER - GO

Read: Matthew 28:1-10

Reflection

Can you imagine how surprised you would be if you went with the women in our passage to find the stone rolled away? Such stock and awe, such a surprise. God does surprising things in our lives if we pay attention.

Youth Ministry Discussion

- > After an experience with Jesus (an answer to prayer, a great week at camp, an awesome worship service) what is one of our first instincts?
- > Do we share our Jesus experiences with the same passion as Mary and the other women must have done on that Sunday?

Children's Ministry Discussion

- > What is an amazing thing that Jesus has done in your life?
- > How might you share Jesus with others much like the women did on Easter morning?

Connect: Easter Surprise

Supplies: depends on the surprise, provide supplies to do or create a variety of things: cookie dough and icing, note-cards, craft supplies, or create your own depending on needs in your church or community

Continue the surprise of Easter by creating Easter surprises. Find little or big things that you can do to create surprise in other's lives. Maybe baking cookies for a neighbor for no other reason than Easter Surprise. Maybe give flowers to a person who is hurting or missing a loved one this Easter. Maybe write a note thanking people for being in your life, whatever you or your group comes up with, label it, "Easter is full of surprises."



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