

Valuing God's Presence in Our Lives

Introduction

In this activity teens share their experiences relating to God through physically moving rather than through speaking. Teens step in and out of a circle to respond to statements about God. This allows them to recognize others in the group have experiences of God both similar and different from their own.

Preparation

- Read over the *Activity* questions. Omit any questions that you judge inappropriate for your group. Add questions, if you wish.
- Gather paper and a pencil for each group of four students.

Activity

Ask everyone to stand in a circle. Explain that you will read a statement. All who agree with the statement or feel that the statement applies to them will step into the center of the circle. After a few seconds, everyone steps back into place. No one talks except the leader who is reading the statements.

I have thought about God.

I thank God when I see beauty in the world or just for being alive.

Sometimes I think about God outside of church.

I have questions about who God is.

I have discussed God with my friends or family.

My thoughts about who God is are changing.

My family has different ideas about God than I do.

Sometimes I feel I'm the only one who wants to be close to God.

Sometimes I have difficulty feeling God's presence.

I feel conflict between my daily activities and my spiritual activities.

I have issues with what I have been taught about God.

I have had a life-changing experience relating to God.

I often forget about God.

I believe too many people use God's name for their own selfish good.

I think God's place in our society needs to change.

I am uncomfortable with how God is portrayed at church.

I am interested in what others have to say about God.

I sometimes feel like I can't relate to others' experiences of God.

I want to talk about God, but I don't know how.

Break students into fours. Encourage your young people to discuss their impressions of group members' responses to the statements about God. What surprised them? Why did they step forward on a particular question? What confused them? Allow 10 minutes for discussion. Then ask your young people to write at least two statements for round two. Statements can start "I believe...", "I have...", "I want..." or "I feel..."

Collect the papers. The leader should read over the statements to make sure nothing is inappropriate. Follow the same procedure of reading the statements and having young people step into the center of the circle. Conclude round two with reflection in fours. Talk about what statements had the most people in the center, which had least, and what that indicates they should talk about more in their group.

Closing Prayer Experience

LEADER:

We are exploring the meaning of God in our lives and the issues we have. We have named amazing wonders, difficult situations, steadfast convictions, nervous uncertainties, and vague concepts that surround the various ways our group experiences God.

But, experiencing God is not only about my own experience as an individual. It is also about us as a community. Why do we worship? Who do we serve in our parish, neighborhood, city, state, country, and world? Pause for reflection.

LEADER:

Glorious Being, we experience you as One God with many names. We experience ourselves as individuals and as a community. Help us to continue to stretch our boundaries beyond ourselves as we search for you, Source of all that is. Go in peace.