

Light for the Journey

Introduction

Guide your young people in a meditation about where they find God alive. Meditation helps them surface people and memories that rest in their unconscious. The meditation ends with journaling so that the young people can reflect on their experience of God and make it a more permanent part of their animating spirits.

Preparation

Gather paper, writing utensils, and a votive light for each participant.

Prepare the mood for the guided meditation. Dim the lights. Move chairs to the side. If you choose to use music, select soft, calm music. Nature CDs work well, as do instrumentals or chanting. Try to avoid anything too familiar or anything with recognizable words that may influence what images the teens see.

Read the guided meditation several times aloud for practice. You must read it very slowly to give teens a chance to reflect as you read. But, don't read it so slowly that they fall asleep or get bored.

Activity

Do not explain the goal of the guided meditation to your young people. Tell them to find their own place in the room away from friends or distractions. They can sit or lie down. When everyone is ready, begin the meditation.

Relax.

Release the tension in your shoulders. Let your hands fall heavy at your sides. Let your back sag. Let it rest, relax. Drop your head gently. Your fingers are heavy. They sink into the ground. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath in.

Breathe out. Feel the breath move throughout your entire body. Feel your breath as it goes through your lungs and your stomach, sweeping all your worries and troubles with it. Breathe in. Breathe out.

Relax your legs. Feel all the tension melt away. Let it all evaporate and relax. From your hips through your thighs, calm. Down to your knees, through your calves. Into your ankles and throughout your feet, down to your toes. All muscles relax. All your muscles are heavy. You are calm.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Feel the breath circulate throughout your entire body, cleans-

ing as it moves. Breathe in, breathe out. Clear your mind and concentrate on your breathing. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out.

Give the young people a minute to simply relax and breathe.

With your eyes still closed, you begin to notice your surroundings. You are in a holy place. There is something special about this place. A mood. A vibe. Something that you can't put your finger on exactly. What is this place? Have you been here before?

Walk around this holy place. Take in all your surroundings. What's below your feet? Carpet? Grass? Wood? Cement? What are the boundaries of this holy place? How far does it extend? What's in this holy place with you? Objects that human hands have made? Nature-produced wonders? You begin to move around this holy place and take in everything.

Suddenly, something catches your eye on the right. You move towards it. What is it? Have you seen it before? Is it familiar or new? This, you realize, is a center of the holiness in this area. You move towards it.

You realize that this object has an important message for you. The message relates to the holiness of this place. It's about God. You listen closer. What is this message?

Slowly, you realize the time has come to leave this place. But you know that you can come back. Comforted by this and by the message you received, you slowly start to come back to this room.

Breathe in. Breathe out. When you are ready, please open your eyes.

I invite you now to take the pen and paper beside you and write or draw about your experience. Where were you? What did you find? What was the message? How does this reflect your experience of God and the holy?

Give students 10 minutes journaling time.

Prayer Experience

Come together as a large group. Give each person a votive light. Light the leader's candle.

LEADER:

O Holy One, today we start a journey. Some of us are comfortable with our journey so far. We know where to find you and are comfortable with what we know about you. But, some of us do not have such confidence. We have questions, concerns, and anxieties. Help us, Loving God, in our journey together. Help us find you in new places and help us to hear what you speak deep within us. We will pass this light around our circle as a sign that we will all make this journey together and that we will all learn from one another. As you pass the light, say, "May you have light for the journey, holiness for your soul."

Allow time for participants to pass the light to one another, each lighting the next person's vigil light.

LEADER:

We've started a journey of many roads today. May we all embrace our messages and discover the wonder and holiness of God on our journeys. Go in peace.