

Tell of the Hope within You

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ISAIAH 9:2, 6-7; JEREMIAH 32:6-15; 1 PETER 3:15



GOAL

After exploring messages of hope, youth develop narratives of hope to share with others.

- A Art
- AM Active/Movement
- AT Abstract Thinking
- C Conversation
- CT Concrete Thinking
- D Drama
- G Game
- M Music
- QC Quiet/Contemplative
- S Service
- T Technology
- X Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Holy God, our hope is in no other but you. Ground my hope as I journey with the youth you have entrusted to my care. Amen.

THIS SESSION

“Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). The practice of sharing the good news comes down to a personal level. We have hope for ourselves, our creation, and the future because we trust in God’s love, mercy, and power. Every Christian, in conversations at home, at work, among friends, must be ready to tell others about these things. The task is not to explain the doctrine of the Trinity or to unwind the intricacies of atonement theology but simply and humbly to say why we are people of hope.

THE BIBLE STORY

In Jeremiah 32:6–15, the prophet Jeremiah is imprisoned in the courtyard of Jerusalem under the watchful eye of King Zedekiah. Most Israelites were forced to leave their home city of Jerusalem because the Babylonians had taken over the city. Jeremiah recognizes the Israelites’ uncertainty and sadness over possibly never returning to Jerusalem; however, God speaks to him, giving him opportunity to buy a field from a family member. Following God’s guidance, Jeremiah buys the field, demonstrating his hope and faith in a God who will restore the Israelites to their home someday.

Isaiah 9:2, 6–7 is a similarly prophetic passage that gives the ancient Israelites hope in a time of displacement. Israel is promised a child who will lead them to their former glory and abundance. In speaking as if the child has been born, God’s realm is envisioned and God’s people’s hope is restored.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Some youth perceive that they have little control over their circumstances, which can leave them feeling hopeless. God’s good news is hopeful assurance amid the complexities and frustrations that young people face. Youth are encouraged to trust in God in the present as they imagine and shape their futures. Further, they are invited to recognize where they find hope in their lives and to consider how and with whom they might share their stories of hope.

SESSION PREPARATION

Depending on the activities you choose:

- “Talk Show” (p. 33): Invite two or three leaders from your congregation’s council or session to speak with your group. Provide them with sample questions in advance.
- “Defining Hope” (p. 35): Prepare newsprint with sentence prompts.

GETTING STARTED

FINDING HOPE C

As youth enter, greet each person with a statement that articulates a hope you have in them. Be silly about your requests. Examples include:

- “I hope you have a good joke to tell us.”
- “I hope you had a great soccer match.”

After everyone has arrived, ask what common word they heard in your greeting. If they cannot guess, tell them that you shared a hope with each of them. Explain that they are exploring and sharing God’s hope today.

INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

TELLING THE GOOD NEWS CT

Lead a responsive reading. The leader begins with the first line of the refrain of the song “Go Tell It on the Mountain.” Youth respond with “over the hills and everywhere.” You repeat “Go tell . . .” They ask, “Wait, go tell what?” Finally, you say a line of good news, which they repeat.

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.

Go tell it on the mountain . . .

Wait, go tell what?

The world will be transformed.

The world will be transformed.

-
- ☐ Paper
 - ☐ Pens



Teaching Tip: Some youth may prefer to keep their wish lists private. Consider inviting volunteers to share their lists with you and read only those that have been freely shared.

MAKING A (CHRISTMAS) LIST G CT

Have youth imagine that Christmas or their birthday is coming soon. Distribute paper and pens. On one side of their paper, have them list five things that they hope to receive. Encourage youth not to tell others their answers. Have them turn over their paper and write five things that your community might hope for. Collect the responses.

Without letting others see whose paper you are reading, read random items from the personal lists, one by one. After reading a list, have youth guess who wrote it. Continue until the volunteered personal lists are read aloud. Flip the papers over and do the same for the lists of community hopes. Point out themes that emerge from the community hope lists. Ask youth to describe and discuss the purpose of hope in our world.

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- ☐ Internet-connected device

A MESSAGE OF HOPE T C

Show the YouTube video “COVID-19 Film: A Message of Hope from the CDC about COVID-19 (Inspirational Video)” (bit.ly/FMC19Hope, 4:07). Lead a conversation with the youth using some of these questions:

- ➔ Why do you think the CDC created this video?
- ➔ What important things in life do we sometimes overlook?
- ➔ What difficult challenges do youth face today?
- ➔ Where do youth find hope to face difficult challenges?
- ➔ Why is it important to share with others where we see our world “paved with hope”?



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

ACTING OUT THE STORY

D C

☐ Copies of Resource Page 1

Explain that Jeremiah 32:6–15 is a story of hope for the ancient Israelites. As their land was being destroyed and the people were being sent away to live in Babylon, God encouraged Jeremiah to purchase land; a sign that one day the Israelites will return to the land that they once owned. Distribute copies of Resource Page 1 and invite volunteers to read parts. After acting out the story, ask these questions:

- ➔ How would it be for you to follow God's instructions in this situation? Why?
- ➔ Who demonstrates hope in this story? What do they have hope in?
- ➔ What do you currently have hope in? How do you show this hope?

CREATING POETRY

AT

☐ Bibles
☐ Copies of Resource Page 2
☐ Paper and pens

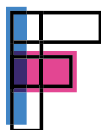
Before reading aloud Isaiah 9:2, 6–7, explain that these verses were written to give hope to the Israelites after the Assyrian military chased them out of their country. Read the Scripture passage and invite youth to identify words or phrases that point to hope. Wonder together what it may have felt like to hear hopeful words while being exiled from home.

Form pairs and give each pair a copy of Resource Page 2 and a piece of paper and a pen. Challenge them to work with their partner to create a brief poem about God and hope, using as many words from Isaiah 9:2, 6–7 and the Resource Page as they can. They can use each word up to the number of times it appears on the Resource Page; they cannot repeat a sequence of more than three words from the text. They do not have to use all the provided words in their poetry.

Invite the youth to share their poetry and describe the hope communicated in their work. As a large group, discuss similarities between the poetry they created and the Scripture verses read.



Teaching Tip: During Advent, ask questions about how Jesus brings and promises hope to God's people.



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or both options.

TALK SHOW

C X

☐ Invited guests
☐ Embellishments to simulate a talk show (optional)

Welcome your guests and have them sit at the front of the room, facing the youth. Invite the youth to act as a studio audience for this talk show. You serve as host. Have each guest introduce themselves. Pose the sample questions to each guest. Allow questions from the audience. You may embellish this activity with theme music, microphones, commercial breaks, and prize giveaways (optional).

Sample questions:

- ➔ Where do you find hope in this world?
- ➔ How does hope shape your relationship with God?
- ➔ How do other people know that you have hope?

- ☐ Newsprint and markers
- ☐ Internet-connected device

FINDING YOUR WHY

AT T

Ask the youth to name activities they do every day. Record these on newsprint. Next, ask them why they do these things. Make a second list of things the church routinely does (such as worship, choir practice, church school, and so on.). Ask the youth why they think the church does these activities.

Explain that they are going to look for a deeper *why* that motivates their actions and the actions of the church. Michael Jr., a stand-up comedian, tries to make his audience laugh and inspires them to find deeper meaning in their lives, to find their *why*. Show the YouTube video “Know Your Why/ Michael Jr.” (bit.ly/FMYourWhy, 3:49).

Following the video, invite discussion using these or similar questions:

- ➔ What is the *why* behind the things you do?
- ➔ What is the deeper *why* for activities of the church?
- ➔ How does hope in Christ reflect a deeper *why*?
- ➔ What hope do we have in Jesus? In God?
- ➔ What actions show others this hope?



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pens



Teaching Tip: This exercise may be emotionally challenging if a young person has recently experienced a transition in their life, especially if that transition involved a loss.

WRITING ABOUT HOPE

QC

Distribute paper and pens. Encourage youth to find a comfortable place in the room where they can work privately. Invite them to respond in writing to your prompts using words, images, or phrases. Read the prompts slowly, pausing for people to write.

- ➔ How/where do you see God in your daily life?
- ➔ Think of a time in your life when you felt hopeless. Describe your feelings. Why did you feel this way?
- ➔ In your hopelessness, where did you find light and hope? What did it look like? Who provided it?
- ➔ What stories or experiences of God help(ed) you find hope in your hopeless times or in your daily life?
- ➔ What part of God or Jesus specifically inspires you to hope?
- ➔ Conclude your writing with two or three sentences about how you let others know of the hope within you.

Discuss the young people's experience with this activity or invite volunteers to read aloud their concluding sentences about sharing the hope that is within them.

- ☐ Sidewalk chalk

DRAWING HOPE

A S

Weather permitting, go outside and have youth draw pictures and write messages of hope on sidewalks or sides of the church building. These may be simple pictures that bring others hope. Images may be related to events or movements that communicate hope, or they may be Advent-related.

DEFINING HOPE

AT C

- ☐ Prepared newsprint
- ☐ Markers

Before the session, write prompts on newsprint and display them around the room.

- Hope is ...
- Hope is not ...
- I feel hopeful when ...
- Who needs hope? ...
- Hope is difficult when ...

Give each youth a marker. Have them move around the room and respond to the prompts on the displayed newsprint. Gather the youth and reflect on their responses, noting similarities and differences in their answers. Ask for clarification on responses as needed. Challenge the group to write a definition of *hope* that encapsulates their statements and that each person can agree on.

Take the activity further and have the youth develop a paragraph-long statement about hope. Use these statement-starters:

- Hope is ...
- We celebrate the power of hope in ...
- Hope does not ...
- All of God's children need hope, especially ...
- We commit ourselves to demonstrate hope by ...

Write the definition or hope statement on newsprint and display in your space. If possible, find a way to use this definition of hope in a future worship service.



FOLLOWING JESUS

REVIEWING GO TELL

Have youth respond to these questions to review the practice *Go Tell*.

- ➡ What is God's good news?
- ➡ Why is this "breaking news"? What has happened, and what has changed because of it?
- ➡ How will you let others know about this news?
- ➡ What is the hope you will share?
- ➡ What are ways you can help one another to *Go Tell*?

JESUS SAYS "GO!"

CT

Gather in a circle. Have youth send each other out using Jesus' words from Matthew 28:18-20.

- Turn to the person on your right and say, "Jesus said, 'Go!'" Have each person do the same, one by one.
- Turn to the person on your left and say, "Jesus says, 'Tell!'" Have each person do the same, one by one.
- Each person looks to the center and says, in unison, "Jesus says, 'I am with you.'"
- Let everyone say together, "Amen!"

Jeremiah 32:6–15 Skit

Parts for Volunteers: Narrator, Expert Historian, God, Jeremiah, Hanamel, Baruch. Additional youth may serve as Jeremiah's witnesses.

Narrator: A long time ago, the prophet Jeremiah and King Zedekiah had an argument. King Zedekiah thought Jeremiah was foolish to have hope in God, but Zedekiah didn't dismiss Jeremiah entirely. Instead, Zedekiah confined Jeremiah to the courtyard by the palace.

Expert Historian: King Zedekiah clearly buys into the whole "keep-your-friends-close-but-your-enemies-closer" philosophy.

Narrator: It was in the palace courtyard that the word of God came to Jeremiah.

God: Hey, Jeremiah. Do you remember your cousin, Hanamel? He's trying to sell your uncle's land at Anathoth. I'm thinking you should buy it and keep it in the family.

Jeremiah: Uhm . . . isn't Anathoth currently behind Babylonian lines? Aren't they the enemy? Is this the best place and the best time to buy land?

Expert Historian: Indeed, Babylon is the enemy. Chances are that the Babylonians are misusing the uncle's land. That's probably why he wants to sell it. Because of Israelite laws, Jeremiah's uncle has to offer to sell it to his family members before allowing non-family members to buy it. Jeremiah is his nephew, so he qualifies as family!

Hanamel: Hey! Cousin, Jeremiah. This is just a formality, and I don't expect you to say yes, because you'd be crazy to say yes, but would you like to buy my dad's land at Anathoth? He already tried to sell it to me, but I said, "No way." Who would want land there?

Jeremiah: Sure. I think I'll buy the land at Anathoth. (I knew that God wanted me to buy that land.)

Narrator: And so, to everyone's amazement, Jeremiah prepared to buy the land. He gathered witnesses and prepared the deed to sign. With everyone watching, Jeremiah made a big production of weighing out 17 shekels of silver. He signed the deed and sealed it in the presence of Hanamel.

Expert Historian: In those days, 17 shekels of silver was quite a bit of money. The crowd would have been shocked at Jeremiah's action. They would remember this land sale for a long time.

Narrator: Then Jeremiah called upon his lawyer, Baruch.

Baruch: It is done. You have signed the deed and Hanamel has signed the deed.

Jeremiah: Take these deeds and put them in a jar so they will last for a long time. For thus says the Lord of Israel:

God: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.

Narrator: And that is how Jeremiah came to buy his uncle's land at Anathoth.

Creating Poetry

a	father	light	the
a	for	light	the
a	for	lived	the
a	for	Lord	them
and	forevermore	mighty	there
and	from	named	this
and	given	of	this
and	God	of	time
and	great	of	those
and	grow	of	throne
authority	has	of	to
authority	has	on	uphold
be	have	onward	upon
been	he	peace	us
born	he	peace	walked
child	his	people	who
continually	his	prince	who
counselor	his	rests	with
darkness	hosts	righteousness	with
darkness	in	seen	will
David	in	shall	will
deep	is	shall	wonderful
do	it	shined	zeal
endless	justice	shoulders	
establish	kingdom	son	
everlasting	land	the	

