



Creative Worship Experiences

Balloon Worship

Pass out balloons and small slips of paper as the group assembles. As a *call to worship* ask everyone to write on the slip the nicest thing they can say to someone else: “I love you”, “I think you’re great” etc. Then ask that they roll up the slips, place them inside the balloons, blow the balloons up and tie them. Hold them as the service progresses, and as an *offering*, have everyone bat the balloons forward over each others heads to the altar. The messages become our offering to God. At the end of the service, ask the group to come to the front and grab a balloon, any balloon and POP IT. The message they receive from the balloon is the *benediction* to the service, a message to us from God. NOTE: Sometimes balloons may be accidentally broken so it is a good idea to make sure that you have two or three extra.

Candlelight service

At the end of a youth group evening or service give each one present a small candle (votive candles are practical). From the light of a central candle (the leader may be holding it) or from the altar, let each person light their candle. As candles are being lighted you might sing, have instruments playing or complete silence.

When all candles are lit, slowly leave the building to a designated place outside. At the vacant spot, you should have formed a cross on the ground with masking tape. Explain to the group that the candles they are holding represent their lives. Have them place their candles on the cross. The group then forms a circle around the cross and sings ie Taize. A short scripture or devotion may be spoken and should be ended with prayer. The group should leave quietly, allowing others to remain as long as they wish.

Creative Meditation

This is particularly good for those who have never tried meditation. As people sit on the floor in a circle. Place a cup of soil and a cup of water before each participant. As them to note where the water and soil have been placed and then close their eyes and relax. Explain that you will be reading selected verses from Genesis and that you want them to use their imagination in giving thanks for God’s creation.

Leader:

Read: Gen 1:1,3 and say : Thank you for light. What if you lived in the darkness? Picture the face of someone you dearly love – a friend, a parent, a boyfriend or girlfriend. Now let that face melt away into darkness. What if you lived in darkness? Thank God for light?” (Keep your eyes closed).

Read Gen 1:6 and say: “Do you take water for granted? What if we should run out of it? Taste a few drops. Keep it in your mouth. Appreciate it for a moment. All life depends upon it. Thank God for water.”

Read Gen 1:9 and say: “Do you take soil for granted? Reach out now and touch it. Rub it between your fingers. Smell it. What if we should pollute all of it? Could we exist? Thank God for soil!”

Read Gen 1:14 and say: “What if the seasons never changed? What if it were always winter? Picture your yard at home with no flowers, no leaves on trees, no green bushes – not just for a few months but all year long. Thank God for the seasons.”

Say: “Lie back now and completely relax while we continue to give thanks for God’s creation.” (It is good to change positions for the sake of comfort and relaxation).

Read Gen 1:20 and say: “Thank God for birds. They teach us to soar. Picture yourself as a gliding seagull. You are flying over the ocean. You approach the shoreline and see the water lapping the shore. Now fly as high or as far as you would like. Come back to land now. You are again walking upon the shore. Thank God for birds.”

Read Gen 1:24 and say: “Now picture yourself as some kind of animal. Any kind. What kind of animal are you? Where do you live? What is it like there today? What are you doing? Thank God for animals.”

Read Gen 1:26-27 and say: “Thank God for you. Do you appreciate yourself? Keep your eyes closed. Run your hand through your hair. Is it fine or coarse? Now touch your ear. Run your finger along its edge. Feel its shape. Now without opening your eyes, put your hand in front of your face. Try to remember what it looks like. Try to picture how many lines across your palm. Try to feel how the veins run across the back of your hand. Now open your eyes and look closely at your hand, and thank God for you.”

Let us pray: “Dear God, we thank you for all your creation. Help us never to take it for granted. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

NOTE: All questions above are rhetorical. Each section should be read slowly and quietly, with pauses after each question.

Nailing our sins to the cross

As a symbolic representation of how Christ took our sins with him to the cross, have people write their sins down on pieces of paper and one at a time nail them to a wooden cross. After a time of individual silent prayer, the sins can be removed from the cross and destroyed, symbolising how our sins have been erased forever.

Prayer Bag

Supply the youth with magazines, brown paper bags and scissors. Ask each young person to search through the magazines for pictures or words that they have or want to pray about. They can include things that they have been thankful for as well as items they have asked to want to ask for. After everyone has finished, divide into small groups and have each person share something from his or her prayer bag. End the sharing by having the groups pray for each other.

Group Collage

This is a great exercise when you want to make a youth group mission statement or focus. You will need a strip of paper for each person (25x100cm). Ask each person to draw or paint a theme depending on what you want the collage to achieve: For example, for a theme of a mission statement, you might ask people to draw what they expect or see the mission of the youth group to be, or as a focus, you might ask people to draw something that represents them or their relationship with God. Remind them to cover as much of the piece of paper as possible. When finished, place each piece of the wall 10-15cm apart from each other. When all pieces are up stand back from the collage and see the whole picture. The mural could also be expanded when a new member joins the group, creating a history picture of your youth group.