

Intro to God

Anita Longhini Oak Park

Materials needed: a small votive or tealite candle, a bowl that is not glass/see through, but one that light will glow through (e.g. ceramic or corel). Matches. (All for demonstration activity.)

***Opening Prayer:**

Dear Mother/Father God, we thank you for this time to meet together to further our spiritual growth. We open ourselves up to you and recognize that your presence is everywhere and only doing good.

***Affirmation:**

I am open and receptive to God's power working in, through, and around me. (Repeat Together....)

***Discussion:**

Ask each question and let everyone respond as they like. Stress that everyone has a unique relationship (or perhaps lack of a relationship) with God and so everyone will have different opinions. There are no right or wrong answers.

What is God?

- 1.) What is God? (If you can, make the point that God is not a person necessarily, but a presence/power...)
- 2.) What does God do?

God in your life:

- 1.) How do you find/see God around you? (Nature, environment, etc.)
- 2.) How do you find/see God in other people?
- 3.) How do you find/see God in yourself?

***Demonstration:**

You may want to try this demonstration on your own first ahead of time to figure out what will work best to get the message across. Going to or creating a darker space is beneficial but not necessary for this activity.

-Light the candle, and let it stand by itself.

-Say to the group "This candle represents the spark/flame/light of God's divinity in every single person, including yourself. Notice that this flame is unlimited, brightening the room despite its small size, expressing its full potential. This is how you are when you are in touch with God and do not limit yourself. Also, each light is as divine and has the same potential as everyone else's. No one has a light that shines brighter; just like no one single candle is able to emit more light than another."

-Now place the bowl over the candle. (You may want to put some things around the bowl underneath it to raise it above the table top in order to keep the candle from going out, but leave as little opening at the base as possible.)

-Say to the group "The bowl represents the doubts and limitations that we place on ourselves. When we doubt that this light is there, when we tell ourselves that it is not good enough, or when we ignore its power and intention to do only good, we limit how brightly our light is able to shine. We limit what or who it is able to reach out and impact."

"Notice though, that even though you have severely limited the candle's potential by placing the bowl over it, the candle still makes it's presence known. The bowl glows, the light peeks out from underneath the bowl, and the bowl gets hot. You may deny your divinity, doubt that it is there, and limit it, but your divinity will still express itself somehow."

"Even though we have covered the candle with the bowl, the candle is still there. Even if we cover up our light, it doesn't change the fact that it is there waiting for its chance to illuminate the world. It is still there, just as divine and bright just as if it were uncovered."

“Remember the same thing in other people. No matter how many ‘bowls’, or limitations, they seem to have covering their light, they have just as much divine potential underneath it all.”

-Lift up the bowl, and cover it again. Compare how much light is actually let into the room by the two situations. Notice how much more light is let into the room when it is uncovered. Say to the group, “I encourage you to let your light shine at its full capacity. This light is in you and it shines no matter what, so you might as well not deny its power and show it to the world. After all this is why God gave you this light.”

***Short Meditation:**

“Please close your eyes and take a few deep breaths... .. Instead of going outside this room to find God, we will stay here. You do not need to go far to find God, for God is everywhere... .. Feel the chair supporting you. That is God... .. The air you breathe in... and out... that is God... .. Do not ignore the outside noises that you hear. Notice and embrace them... they are God... .. Whatever emotions you feel now, whether they are good or bad, embrace them... really *feel* them... they are God... .. Picture yourself in your mind... You are God... .. Open your eyes... and look, really *look* at the people sitting around you... .. see the God in them... .. Finding God doesn’t necessarily mean you have to go into your mind in a quiet place-- God is everywhere present and only doing good.”

*If there is more time left:

Ask if there are any reflections or thoughts that the group would like to share.

***Closing Prayer:**

From a poem called “In Me the Light” by James Dillet Freeman:

I went about looking everywhere for the light.
I pored over books,
thinking there I would find it;
I sat at the feet of teachers,
thinking they would show me where it is;
I followed scientific methods,
I practiced mystic rites,
thinking surely it would shine forth somewhere.
And at last it did.
I quit seeking.
I became still.
I turned within.
And there
in me
the light began to shine.
Since then,
how many light-filled books I have opened
and how many shining persons I have met.

*** Of course you can elaborate on any of the points to make them more effective for the group. Again, I stress that you try the bowl/candle activity at home first, so that you will know the best way to do things that will get the message of the activity across in the most effective way possible.

I would **love** if you could let me know how the lesson went with your group! Email:

anitalonghini@ameritech.net Enjoy!! I love you!!