

Youth of Unity
International Conference
1998

Genesis

written by
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Youth of Unity

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Introduction to the Theme: Genesis

Genesis, jen' -e-sis (Gk.)—*source; origin; beginning; begetting; birth; lineage.*

The first book of the Bible; it begins with an account of creation, of the *beginning* of manifest man and the manifest universe.

Metaphysical: Genesis points to the new birth, and to the perfection of man in the regeneration.

—Charles Fillmore, *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*

“The whole Genesiac record is an allegory explaining just what takes place in the mind of each individual in his unfoldment from the idea to the manifest.”

—Charles Fillmore, *Mysteries of Genesis*

Dear Family Group Leader,

The Family Group material herein is a collaborative effort. Before beginning the process of writing, the International Officers and I communicated in-depth about the kind of experience they wanted to create for this Conference. I also asked them, “What does the theme ‘Genesis’ mean to you?” Here are just a few of their thoughts:

“‘Genesis’ to me is a reawakening to our true selves. A time to come back to center and see again the truth of our being. We are beautiful creations of God! We are marvelous minds! We are powerful! To reawaken to our divinity is ‘Genesis’ to me.” —*Megan Gruver*

“I see ‘Genesis’ as the spiritual renewal of humankind. I see it as the spiritual rebirth of man (or woman!). I see it as saying that no matter what our mistakes, our dishonesties, or our frailties, we can move past those and become enlightened. We cannot get caught up in our weaknesses—we must move forward into a greater understanding of ourselves.”

—*Nathan Miller*

“Genesis is the brilliant rebirth of the whole and perfect Christ self within each one of us. It is the joyful and practical process of awakening to our true spiritual nature, allowing it to heal us and guide us down new paths of enlightenment, and embracing it as our true identity and our birthright. It is learning to joyously live this life-affirming spiritual existence every day.” —*Stacy Moscow*

Our Genesis experience will take us day by day through our rebirth as spiritual beings. We will be re-creating ourselves. The process looks like this:

In the Beginning, the first night, as Stacy says, is “kind of like the creation story. There is this ‘as-yet unfocused energy’ of all of us coming in to Conference, and there’s no definition yet, and a mystery of what Conference will be like.” We will begin to focus our energy creatively the first night.

Awakening, the second day, is according to Nathan, "a time that allows each person to honestly assess what we think about ourselves—a time to see what we admire about ourselves, what we don't admire, what we would like to see changed, and what 'stuff' we are afraid to dig into." We will create a space where we can evaluate, take inventory, look all around and see where we are now and where we'd like to go in our lives.

Lifted from the No is a phrase from "i thank you God," a wonderful e.e. cummings poem. To us, the "no of all nothing" in the poem means what we perceive to be the opposite of God. Stacy says, "It's the stuff you no longer see as a supportive part of your life." We will have the opportunity to symbolically release these aspects of our lives, to make room for the new.

In the Silence is "a day where we can just be, be, be." We'll quiet our minds, meditate, and allow ourselves to be an empty space ready to be filled. We'll take time to listen to God so that God can help us fill that space with a new creation of Self.

Unimaginable You is a time of self-affirmation, a time to present our newly-born spiritual selves to the world, a time to "celebrate who I am, the essence of my being." We'll share the insights we've discovered during the Silence that helped us rediscover our unimaginable Divinity within, and our new, unlimited view of ourselves.

Turning Points will be a day for choosing new patterns that will support us in being our true selves in everyday life. (There will be no family group meeting on this day unless announced).

The Joyful Vow is our commitment to our newly created selves and the paths that will support us through life. Notice that this is not a stiff and solemn vow; it is a Joyful Vow! As Stacy describes it, "Being spiritual is such a JOYFUL, fun thing to be!"

THANK YOU, wonderful Family Group Leader, for facilitating this experience for others. Even as you serve your group, please experience this process of unfoldment for yourself as well. Be a part of the activities, enjoy them, learn, stretch, grow and share with your group. By allowing yourself to participate, the material will come alive for you and you will be even more in-tune with the experience of your Family Group.

YOU ARE A BLESSING!

Laurie Daven

Guidelines for Family Group Leaders

Please prepare spiritually before Conference and before each family group meeting. Take a few moments in the Silence to remember that God is working through you to guide you in what needs to be said and done. Your group will notice and respond to your loving, centered presence.

Rehearse! Practice giving directions for each activity prior to Conference to avoid reading from the material during the meetings.

Prepare the room before each meeting by putting up the day's affirmation, cleaning up, getting supplies ready, and re-reading the material. This lets the group know that the quality of their experience is important to you.

Open your heart to your Y.O.U.ers during the first meeting. Tell them you appreciate the opportunity to get to know each of them. Remind them that all of you are together in this family group by Divine Appointment, because you have agreed to be here to share your special gifts of friendship and insight with each other this week.

Please follow the written material as closely as possible. While your own activities or the suggestions of the Y.O.U.ers may be wonderful, the material provided has been carefully planned to create a particular experience by the end of the week. By substituting another activity, you might unknowingly leave out a key element designed to help the group bond, build trust, create intimacy, etc. Each meeting's activities create the foundation for the next day's experience.

Begin and end each meeting with prayer to focus the group's energy. There is always a prayer provided, or you may use your own. You may wish, at the beginning of the week, to ask for volunteers from the group to "sign up" to lead the prayers.

Start and end on time. Your example of punctuality will help create an atmosphere of respect for others and for the schedule.

Set the tone for each activity. If an activity requires a sacred, solemn tone, do not proceed until you've attained it through a few moments of quiet reflection, soft music and/or prayer. If the tone is broken during such an activity, you can gently stop the activity and suggest that the group get centered again with a few deep breaths taken in unison.

Model the desired length of responses. Even when you model a very brief answer, the responses tend to get longer as you go around the circle. If necessary, you may gently remind them to be brief. Be flexible, however, if what's being said is valuable to the group's experience.

Don't try to have all the answers. Participate honestly and openly, but do not monopolize the discussion. Remember, we adults are learning, too. When you introduce yourself, let your group know that you are not there to teach them, but to learn with them. Y.O.U.ers will respect your humble attitude!

Encourage participation, balanced with the right to pass. Say, "Does anyone else wish to participate who hasn't yet?" One such request is enough. Then support anyone who chooses to pass, reminding the group if necessary that this is the person's right. This will help create the trust the person needs to participate the next time.

Be comfortable with silence. Think of each discussion as a fire you're starting. Allow time for the kindling to light, and throw more fuel on the fire by asking questions that will "spark" discussion. Be patient!

Refrain from judging answers as "right" or "wrong." Acknowledge all responses.

Allow a chance for quiet ones to share. Say, "Perhaps we could hear from someone who hasn't yet shared?" Avoid "calling on" any one individual. You may need to firmly, but gently, communicate to an overly talkative person that it's time to allow others a chance to share.

Keep the pace of activities lively. Don't allow a lull between activities. Know what's next and move on quickly.

Be flexible with time, allowing a little more time if the group expresses a desire to continue an activity, and you feel that doing so would be valuable to the objective of the meeting. It's more important to have a quality experience than to have to hurry to "finish" everything. Read over the material before Conference and make notes about which activities you will shorten or omit if you get into a time crunch.

Process each activity by allowing a few moments for individuals to share their feedback. Taking time for processing ensures that the entire group benefits from each person's insights.

Honor individual needs (such as a very emotional response or someone who has shared a serious life challenge) by allowing the group to briefly give support through prayer and active listening. Then offer to meet with the Y.O.U.er later, perhaps during free time or a meal. And remember, there are chaplains available to support both Y.O.U.ers and sponsors.

Always have a closing circle. A simple "Yea, God!" or a group hug is all that is needed, if you are running late. You might want to take suggestions from the group on how they'd like to close.

**Be at the Family Group Leader Meeting on
Sunday, 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm in AC2 under
the Activities Center balcony.**

Supplies List

What you will need to bring from home:

*One old bed sheet which will be returned to you (Please do not plan to use a hotel sheet.)

CD or tape player **that operates on batteries**

A selection of gentle, meditative music (instrumental only)

A selection of light, happy music (instrumental only)

A flashlight for use during the first night's meeting

Several magazines for cutting pictures for the scrapbook activity.

Family Group Meeting 1: *In the Beginning...*

Sunday, 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Following: Opening

Concept: Just as it was before the Creation in Genesis, our Conference Genesis experience is a mystery yet to be defined. We are like one mass of unfocused energy, ready to join together to create a new and wonderful Life Experience for this week and beyond.

Scripture:

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

—Genesis 1:1-3

Affirmation:

Let there be Light!
With God as my partner,
I am ready to co-create my own Life Experience,
full of love, peace, abundance, and health.

Quote:

“It’s always best to start at the beginning.”

—Glinda, The Good Witch of the North in *The Wizard of Oz*

Objectives: To set the tone for the week, get to know each other, begin to bond as a group, create a safe, loving atmosphere, and introduce the Conference theme.

Activity	Purpose	Est. Time
1. Let There Be Light	to create a dramatic opening	5 minutes
2. Introductions	to learn names	10 minutes
3. Affirmation/Scripture/Prayer	to set the tone	5 minutes
4. Group Sculpture	to prepare for Group Agreements	10 minutes
5. Creating Our World	to establish Group Agreements	10 minutes
6. Genesis Discussion	to introduce the theme: Genesis	15 minutes
7. Closing Circle Back Rub	to provide closure and physical bonding	5 minutes

Supplies:

tonight’s affirmation sheet
small affirmation card
glow lights
large newsprint paper
clay in several colors
paper plate
markers
masking tape to hang affirmations and agreements

Preparation:

Make sure you have all of the above supplies ready in your bag.

Re-read the materials before each meeting so you are familiar with the instructions.

“Take five” for prayer (even if you only have five seconds!)

Activity 1: Let There Be Light

Purpose: To create a dramatic opening

5 min.

Supplies: small affirmation card, glow lights

Preparation: upon arriving in your family group space, check to be sure everyone is present and complete your tranquility slip outside the door. Remember to do this before each meeting.

Directions:

1. Ask the group to sit in a circle. Put the unlit glow lights in the center of the circle.
2. Explain: "Before we even get to know each other, we are going to salute the Christ Light within each one of us through a simple ceremony."
3. Ask someone to turn off the lights. Light your own glowstick by snapping it at one end as you read the affirmation card, inserting your own name like this: "With God as my partner, I, Susan Jones, am ready to co-create my own Life Experience, full of love, peace, abundance, and health."
4. Pass the affirmation card to the next person, and have them choose and light their glow light in turn as they repeat the affirmation aloud. Continue to the left until all the glow lights are lit.
5. Explain: "We can each give our Christ light, symbolized by our individual glow lights, to create a powerful, loving combined energy as one family group."
6. Ask everyone to place their glow lights in the center of the circle. Invite the group to affirm together, with enthusiasm for the week ahead, "LET THERE BE LIGHT!" Let them know they will be taking their glow lights with them when they leave tonight.

Activity 2: Introductions

Purpose: To learn names

10 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Go around the circle, leader first, and say your name, where you are from and how long it took you to travel to Conference, a favorite thing you wish you could have brought from home.
2. When everyone has shared, ask who is here for their first Conference, including International delegates. Welcome and honor them for being there. Take a moment to introduce yourself to the group, telling them how you feel about being a Family Group Leader and sharing this experience with them.
3. Have everyone stand for a quick name game. Explain the game:
Leader pretends they are holding a ball, any type, any size. Leader tells what kind of ball it is, and then passes the imaginary ball to someone in the circle, saying, "I'm _____ (first name) and I'm passing a _____ (kind of ball) to _____ (receiver's first name). Encourage them to act as if it's a tennis ball, "super ball," bowling ball, or whatever. The receiver can change the ball's type when they pass it to the next person. Keep playing until everyone has received the ball at least once.

Activity 3: Affirmation/Scripture/Prayer

Purpose: To set the tone

5 min.

Supplies: tonight's affirmation sheet, masking tape

Preparation: tape tonight's affirmation sheet to the wall where everyone can see it.

Directions:

1. Since you've already covered the affirmation in the first activity, begin by reading tonight's Scripture passage.
 2. Ask the group to sit, join hands and close their eyes for the opening prayer. You may use the following words, or your own: "God-Within, we open ourselves to You now, and Your unlimited Blessings pour in to our hearts and minds. Whatever we have come to receive this week at Conference, whether it be love, forgiveness, guidance, inner peace, ideas, strength, health, joy...we know that these gifts all come from You and are being created in our lives right now. As the children of a loving Parent, we know that we need only ask, and we shall receive. Thank you, God. Amen."
 3. Ask for a volunteer to read tonight's quote.
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Activity 4: Group Sculpture

Purpose: To prepare for agreements

10 min.

Supplies: clay in several colors, paper plate

Preparation: none

Directions for Part 1 (5 minutes):

1. Pass the clay around the circle, inviting everyone to take a piece of clay, any size, in their favorite color.
2. Explain that they will have about two minutes to work the clay in their hands, giving it their energy and shaping it any way they like.
3. When the time is up, ask everyone to stop working, put their clay down, and observe what they've created while you read this "eyes-open" meditation. Pause for about 5 seconds for each "...". "Take a moment to observe your sculpture...Do you like what you've created? Is there something you don't like?...Let your feelings about it be okay...Is your sculpture finished yet?...if not, let that be okay too...Maybe you would like to have more time to create what you really want the sculpture to be, and it's okay to feel that way...Take a few moments more to really look at your sculpture...Allow yourself to appreciate it for what it is... and not just for what you want it to become...Look at the color, the smoothness of the clay, the interesting shape that it is right now... Let yourself become completely accepting of the beauty of this abstract work of art...Your sculpture is a symbol that represents to you who you are right now...Look at your sculpture again, and see it as a symbol of yourself... Give yourself permission to love this work of art exactly as it is now, a work in progress."
4. Ask them to close their eyes now and SILENTLY answer these questions to themselves: "Just like our clay sculptures, when we form a new family group, each of us brings our own uniqueness—in other words, our personalities, thoughts, and feelings—to the group. In one word, what do you see as one of your unique contributions to the group? Are you friendly? Shy? Talkative? Peaceful? Funny? A good hugger?"

“Some of our sculptures weren’t finished yet. Have you ever felt, when meeting new people or trying something new, that you wanted to work on yourself a little more first?...Did you wonder whether or not you’d be accepted as you are?...Would you like to be accepted here in the Family Group as you are?...We will be creating a place of acceptance here for all of us.”

5. Invite everyone to take a deep breath together, and then open their eyes.

Directions for Part 2 (5 minutes):

1. Explain that now they will join their individual pieces into one group sculpture. Connect your clay with that of the person next to you, put it on the plate and continue passing the group sculpture around the circle until everyone has added their piece. **While this is being done**, observe your family group creating their sculpture. You will notice unique opportunities to discuss various group-building metaphors while they are passing the sculpture around. You need not ask all of the questions below—they are only provided as examples to choose from:

“How is this process of creating the sculpture similar to creating a family group? Do you notice any similarities?”

“Notice the careful way each person adds their own ‘energy’ to the sculpture, to find a place where their piece belongs. How is this like a first family group meeting?”

“What happens to the other pieces when you add yours? Is it easy or hard to join in without changing what is already there? Does this ever happen in groups?”

“Did anyone’s clay get shifted or changed by someone else, so that their piece would fit? How did that feel to you? Have you ever felt like that in a group setting?”

“Is the group sculpture balanced? Does it stay upright by itself? Why or why not? Can the balance be adjusted? Have you ever been in a family group that didn’t feel ‘balanced’? What was that like? What would be a loving way to adjust the balance in a family group?”

“How do you feel about our group sculpture? What if it was accidentally damaged? Deliberately damaged? How might that happen in a family group? How do we make sure that it doesn’t happen, or, if it does, what would be a loving way to handle it?”

2. Now explain that this group sculpture will represent the combined energy of this very unique family group. Ask the group to suggest where in the room they’d like to display the sculpture for the rest of the week.

**Activity 5:
Creating Our World**

Purpose: To establish Group Agreements 10 min.

Supplies: Large newsprint paper, markers, masking tape

Preparation: None

Directions:

1. Say: “Imagine that you and some new friends could, in just a matter of minutes, create a world of your own where everyone is treated with love, gentleness, and respect. Have you ever wished you could do that at home or at school?”

Allow for a few brief comments. Continue,

“We are now going to create such a place, by creating the Agreements for our Family Group.”

2. Invite the group to brainstorm their ideas for creating a safe, loving environment. Ask for a volunteer to write the agreements on the newsprint paper, with the words “Group Agreements” (or any other title the group would prefer) at the top.

Be sure to include:

Be on time—if one person is late, it affects the whole family group

No put-downs/criticism/sarcasm/interrupting

Give loving attention to each person sharing, eye contact, support

There are no right or wrong answers

Do not give advice unless it's asked for

Everyone has the right to pass

Confidentiality—what is said in the group stays in the group

IMPORTANT: Explain that the exception to this is that you are legally required to report abuse. You can still encourage sharing of this type, but be sure they understand that sharing information about situations that involve physical harm to themselves or others may lead to legal steps being taken to ensure their safety and best interest.)

3. Ask if everyone agrees with the agreements as written. When all agree, invite each person to sign the sheet as a symbol of their individual commitment to the group. Then ask someone to tape the agreements to the wall where everyone can see them.

Activity 6

Genesis Discussion

Purpose: To introduce the theme “Genesis”

15 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Read and explain in your own words:

“In the book *Mysteries of Genesis*, Charles Fillmore said, ‘The whole [book of Genesis] is an allegory explaining just what takes place in the mind of each individual in his unfoldment from the idea to the manifest.’ You may remember some of the stories from the book of Genesis. Unity interprets such stories in the Bible metaphysically.

2. Explain that the Bible is full of stories that are really about us and our own spiritual unfoldment. One could say they are written in code. There are countless stories like that in the Bible, but there is one in particular we found that is remarkably similar to our Conference experience this week, that shows how the Bible is really about us. Read this account of the Abraham story in Genesis, adapted from William Cameron’s *Great Dramas of the Bible*:

During this week, we are going to accompany Abraham on his original journey of faith toward the Promised Land—first through the ancient Bible lands of 4,000 years ago, and then within you, in the interior journey of your own soul growth.

Abram had been his name in the beginning. When he was 75 years old, he received a message from God that said, “Leave your country.” It was like God saying, “Look up! I have something for you to do!” Can you imagine getting such a message from God? What would you do? Abram chose

to listen to God and obey, and left with his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot, not knowing exactly where they were going yet! But he did know that he was leaving a place where God was not present, and looking for “a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” That is the Bible’s way of saying in code that he was looking for a new spiritual life based on the foundation of the idea that there is only one God, one Presence, and one Power. Just like Abraham, we will awaken to our calling from God to begin anew. Then we’ll be spending a day releasing ourselves from the old place we’ve been dwelling, in negativity and limitation, and moving to a new “city” where we can be supported in being our true Spiritual selves.

When Abram was 100 years old he was told by God that he and his wife would have a son! They named him “Isaac.” Later, God asked Abram to sacrifice his only son, as an offering to God. Abram was obedient and faithful, even though he loved his son, and took him to the altar. But at the last minute, God stopped Abram, saying that now He could tell that Abram was completely faithful and that He didn’t want Abram to harm Isaac at all. It was only a test. Now, if we were to think of this story as something that really happened just that way, we might think that God wasn’t very loving, or that Abram wasn’t a very good parent to nearly kill his own son. But if we see the story as written in code, with a deeper meaning, it shows in a very dramatic way that we are to trust God with EVERYTHING we have, and that God will not let that which we love be harmed in the process. It also says that God doesn’t want us to make sacrifices to Him, but rather, to trust and have faith in God’s guidance no matter what. This week we’ll be experiencing what it’s like to let go and trust God, and to listen to God’s guidance.

Abram received a new name from God when he chose the spiritual path, when he chose to be reborn by becoming the unlimited expression of divinity God wanted him to be. God told him that he would no longer be called Abram, but instead would be called Abraham. The new name was God’s way of “breathing the breath of Spirit” into his name. His new name would symbolize Abraham’s agreement to become “a father of nations.” Abraham went on to become a great spiritual leader. We will be “breathing the breath of spirit” into our own names this week as we celebrate our rebirth as unlimited expressions of divinity.

Abram was the first person recorded in the Bible to ever make a covenant (an agreement) with God. We will be doing that at the end of this week. Abram’s covenant with God began when he agreed to follow God’s “travel orders.” We will be making a covenant with God when we choose to follow the paths that will serve us in our rebirth as spiritual beings.

3. Read or explain in your own words:

Our Conference theme ‘Genesis’ is based on Charles Fillmore’s metaphysical definition:

‘Genesis’ points to the new birth, and to the perfection of man in the regeneration.

—Metaphysical Bible Dictionary

Ask and encourage discussion:

“What will this idea of new birth mean to you personally during this week of Conference?” (do not omit this question)

Activity 7

Closing Circle Back Rub

Purpose: To provide closure and physical bonding 5 min. (9:25 pm)

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Invite everyone to stand in a close circle, then have them turn to the right and begin to give the person

in front of them a gentle shoulder and back rub. While they're doing this, go around the circle and have each person tell in one word how they're feeling right now.

2. After a minute or two, have them turn around so they can give an appreciative back rub in return to the person who gave them one.
3. Ask the group to turn toward the center again and take a moment to feel and absorb the loving energy that's circulating through the room.
4. Close with prayer. You may use your own or the one here:
"God, we are thankful for this time to begin as partners with God to consciously co-create our new selves, our family group, our Conference, and our world. We're thankful for the new friends we're making tonight, and for the love and support of our family group. And we affirm that when we meet again tomorrow, we will be ready to Awaken as the Divine Beings we truly are. Together we say, three times, "Amen, Amen, Amen."
3. Have everyone put their glow light on the shirt collar or belt loop and let them know that they should keep them on through Fuzzies tonight. Be sure that everyone leaves with a hug from everyone else!

**Be in the Activities Center
to Meet the International Candidates at 9:45 pm.**

Family Group Meeting 2: *Awakening*

Monday, 10:30 am to 12:30 pm*

(*Odd-numbered groups will end at 12:55 pm)

Following: The Legacy—The Fillmores and The Gandhis

Concept: Today, this first day of our new life, we hear the call to awaken. We open our eyes to see where we are, where we've been, and where we're going. We ask ourselves, "Who am I? Why have I come to this place, in this life? Do I like who, what and where I am? If not, can I create a better experience for myself?"

Scripture:

And God saw the light, that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.
Genesis 1:1-5

Affirmation:

I choose today to be the first day of my new life.

I awaken, open my eyes,
and behold my place in the Oneness of Life.

Quote:

"We are one Mind that is daydreaming
that it is billions of bodies limited by time and space...
The time to wake up is near."

—Mark Anthony Collins

Objectives: To review names, introduce Appreciation Notes, build a sense of Oneness, begin a process of self-awareness, and elaborate on the theme "Genesis."

Activity	Purpose	Est. Time
1. Opening Affirmation, Scripture, Prayer	to set the tone	5 minutes
2. Whoizit?	to review names	10 minutes
3. Genesis Journals	to create a memento to take home	10 minutes
4. Rock Samba	"Fun with Oneness!"	10 minutes
5. First Day Meditation	to imagine being newborn today	20 minutes
6. Comfort Break	to use restroom, get drinks, etc.	10 minutes
7. What Shape Are You In?	self-evaluation	25 minutes
8. For Odd-Numbered Groups Only:		
8a. What's In Your Backpack?	to practice releasing	15 minutes
8b. Get Off My Back!	to help release negativity	10 minutes
9. Stones	awareness of heavy/light thoughts	25 minutes
10. Anonymous Hugs	a comforting closing circle	5 minutes

Supplies:

today's affirmation	bedsheet brought from home
CD player, meditative music	blank Genesis Journal for each person
pens	markers
paper clips	Shapes handout
glass beads and stones (gravel or rock)	small bag for each person
masking tape	

Preparation:

Remember to "take five" for your own prayer and centering, and know that God directs us while we direct our family groups!

Activity 1:
Opening Affirmation, Scripture, Prayer

Purpose: To set the tone

5 min.

Supplies: today's affirmation sheet, optional CD player or tape, with meditative music

Preparation: if desired, have meditative music playing when the group arrives. Ask a volunteer to tape today's affirmation sheet to the wall where everyone can see it.

Directions:

1. Ask for volunteers to read the affirmation and scripture for today.
2. Ask the group to join hands and close their eyes for the opening prayer. You may use the following words, or your own:
 "God, we know that through your forgiveness and acceptance, we can choose at any time to awaken to a new, unlimited vision of ourselves as Divine Beings, with unlimited potential to express love and light in our lives. We give thanks for this first evening and morning, the first day of our Genesis journey. Thank you, God. Amen."
3. Ask for a volunteer to read today's quote.

Activity 2:
Whoizit?

Purpose: To review names

10 min. (10:35 am)

Supplies: bedsheet brought from home (do not use sheets from your hotel or Unity motel room)

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Form two teams by counting off "1, 2, 1, 2," etc. Have each team line up single file and stand together on opposite sides of the center. Everyone should take off their nametags.
2. One person from each team are the Whoizit helpers. They each hold an opposite corner of the sheet up between the two teams so the teams can't see each other. The sheet should touch the floor so feet can't be seen. While hidden from view, each team quickly puts a different person at the front of their line.
3. The Whoizit helpers call "1, 2, 3...WHOIZIT?" and drop the sheet. The two people facing each other try to be the first to call the other's name: "It's Jennifer!" The one who names the other person last moves to the winner's team. Help from the rest of the group is not allowed! Take turns being Whoizit helpers so that everyone has a turn in the front of the line.
4. Keep the game fast-paced. Play continues ideally until everyone is on the same team, but you may need to call the game if it goes on too long.
 VARIATION: For a bigger challenge, form a circle and have everyone tell the group their name and one of their favorite things. When the Whoizit helpers say "WHOIZIT?" the players must then say not only the other person's name, but the person's favorite thing as well. Example: "It's Jennifer and her piano!" "It's Robert and his skateboard!"

Activity 3: Genesis Journals

Purpose: To create a memento to take home

10 min.

Supplies: blank Genesis Journal for each person, markers, paper clips

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Pass out the blank journals. Have them decorate their journal cover with their name and any other design they'd like. Explain that the front of the journal will be used throughout the week to record symbols, insights, and anything they'd like to remember about Conference. The back of the journal is for Appreciation Notes we will write each other throughout the week. Give everyone a paper clip to put on the front section. This represents the "lock" on a diary, so that they will be assured of privacy in their journal when others are writing Appreciation Notes on the other sheets.
2. Remind them to write a loving, supportive note this week for each person in the group, so that everyone will have something to take home at the end of the week to help them remember their Family Group experience. (Do not write Appreciation Notes now. Assure the group that time has been set aside during the week for this.)
3. Keep the journals together in one place in the room, so they are accessible for others to write Appreciation Notes during extra time.

Activity 4: Rock Samba

Purpose: Fun with Oneness!

10 min.

Supplies: two stones for each person

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Bring everyone into a very close circle. Have each person choose two stones from the center of the circle and place the stones directly in front of them.
2. The Rock Samba is a simple but fun group rhythm challenge with four steps that repeat on counts 1, 2, 3, and 4. Everyone counts aloud together. It's important for you to emphasize that the group should work together to keep the tempo slow, especially while everyone is learning. It is not a race to see how fast you can go, but a way to cooperate together and succeed as a group.

Count 1: Everyone reach over to the stones to your left, one hand on each.

Count 2: Everyone pick up these two stones, and "click" them together in front of you.

Count 3: Everyone put the two stones down in front of the person to your right.

Count 4: Everyone clap your hands once.

Repeat as above, reminding the group to keep the tempo slow. If the process falls through, just rearrange the stones and start again. Continue until the group succeeds in keeping the rhythm going for a few rounds. If time, you can repeat the activity, calling "Reverse!" at some point in the pattern. Or, create a more complex pattern to challenge the group. Have Fun!

Activity 5: First Day Meditation

Purpose: To imagine being spiritually “newborn”

20 min.

Supplies: CD or tape player, soft meditation music, Genesis Journals, pens, markers

Preparation: have Journals, pens and markers ready for the end of the meditation.

1. Read the following meditation, pausing about 5 seconds for each “...” in the script. Do not ask for a volunteer for this, as every Y.O.U.er should have the opportunity to experience the activity.

“Close your eyes...let your breathing be natural...with each inward breath, notice your body becoming more relaxed...with each outward breath, release any cares or concerns...allow yourself to just be...there is nothing that needs your attention now...notice your breathing becoming more gentle and slow...as you begin to allow your physical body to rest, imagine yourself in a completely safe space...surrounded by love...now, in this safe, peaceful, comfortable space, you notice there is an interesting little machine there...a tape player...it holds all of your happiest memories...There are buttons on the tape player...fast forward, reverse, play...press the ‘return’ button and ask the machine to show you the memory of when you woke up this morning, when you first remembered that today is the first full day of Conference...how did you feel in that moment?... (longer pause)...Now run the tape back even further to some other first memories: the first time you met your best friend...(pause after each to allow them to experience the memory)...the first time you really enjoyed your favorite sport or hobby...the day you learned to tie your shoes..Now allow yourself to remember your first pleasant memory as a very little child tucked comfortably in your bed...go even further back in your mind now and imagine being a newborn baby on your first day of this life...hear the sounds in the room where you were then...feel the sensation of being held for the first time...the freedom of having no cares, no responsibilities, no plans...you are a being, just being, and you are so loved and important...you are the most important being in the room...now reverse the tape even more, to a time before you became an infant, before you were even conceived, and imagine the time when your spirit was without physical form...allow yourself to feel the powerful presence of the Love of God surrounding you, supporting you...become aware of this Love taking form, becoming a beautiful Divine Being before your spiritual eyes...notice how this being appears to you...know that this is God in the form of this beautiful Being, here to support you as you begin your path of life...hear the Divine Being tell you that you can begin your life anew at any moment...you do not need to be physically born anew to begin again...notice that the Divine Being has a gift for you, a scroll, tied with a beautiful ribbon...the scroll carries a message that will help you in your new life...you are told to carry it with you...that you will know when to open the scroll...feel the Divine Being’s love for you as Its Child...in this moment, your future is as yet a blank page...full of possibility and potential, miracles and Divine surprises...now notice how immensely peaceful and relaxed you are feeling right now...hold that feeling wrapped around you...let it absorb into you, becoming a warm, glowing presence, a light...now, keeping that peaceful light glowing within you, run the tape fast-forward through your life experience to today...sensing the Divinity in every event of your life...retaining all the wisdom you have gained through each moment of this life...and still allowing yourself to continue just being that carefree newborn spirit, loved, special, important...allow the feelings of being loved to come with you as you return to today...know that you are so loved by God...and now remember the scroll...allow your mind’s eye to see a message of Love and wisdom there for you...become very still and open, and you will see the message...it may be words, a picture, a symbol...allow yourself time now to receive your message...(long pause, about 60 seconds)...now put your scrollsafely away where you can always find it...and send a message of thanks to the Divine Being...thank yourself for your willingness to expand your awareness, and now begin to notice your awareness returning slowly and gently to your physical body...feel your breath moving through you...wiggle your toes and fingers...breathe more deeply...and when you are ready...open your eyes and begin your Life.”

2. Allow a few moments for everyone to fully return their awareness to the room. Invite everyone to quietly take a few minutes to use the Scroll page in their Genesis Journals to record the message or symbol they received during the meditation.
3. After allowing Journal time, ask if anyone would like to share their scroll message or their meditation experience in general. Let them know that it is alright if they would prefer to keep the message to themselves.

Activity 6: Comfort Break

Purpose: To use restroom, get drinks, etc.

10 min.

Activity 7: What Shape Are You In?

Purpose: Self-evaluation

25 min.

Supplies: shapes handout, Shapes picture (with five shapes for reference), Genesis Journals, pens, markers, blank paper

Preparation: put the Shapes picture in the center of the circle. Hand out blank paper and pens or markers.

Directions:

1. Say: "Take a moment to draw the five shapes in any order on your paper. Choose your favorite shape, and label it '1.' Then choose your least favorite shape, and label it '5'. Label the other three shapes in the order you prefer them, with '2' being your second favorite, and so on."
2. When everyone has finished ranking the shapes, give everyone a Shapes handout. Ask for volunteers to read through the meaning of the positions and the shapes. The handout will be provided, and a copy is provided at the end of this book in the Appendix for your reference ahead of time.
3. Have everyone try to find a partner who has at least one shape in the same position as they do. If someone needs a partner and can't find a match, just do the best you can—leader sit out if necessary.
4. Now allow some time for partners to simultaneously share the meaning of the shapes in the positions they chose, using the Shapes Handout as a reference. Say: "The person with the longer hair goes first. Start with Position 1 and share which shape you chose and what you think it means to you. If you aren't sure, ask your partner to help you see what your shapes might mean." Allow about one minute (no longer) for a response, and then tell the pairs to switch so the other person can have a turn. Continue through all five positions. Keep it moving at a fast pace.
5. When finished, ask if anyone was unclear about interpreting the shapes, and invite the group to help answer any questions.
6. Allow about 5 minutes for everyone to record their shapes in their Genesis Journals, so they'll remember "what shape they were in" at Conference. They can repeat the exercise anytime in the future to see how their focus may have changed.

***Activities 8a and 8b:
For Odd-Numbered Groups Only**

Note: Each odd-numbered family group will have an extra 25 minutes today, and will alternate with the even-numbered groups each day. This plan will stagger our family group ending times, so that everyone won't be waiting in the lunch line at the same time.

***Activity 8a:
What's In Your Backpack?**

Adapted from *Teens on the Quest*, Vol. IV, pp. 309 and 393.

*For Odd-Numbered Groups Only

Purpose: To practice releasing

15 min.

Materials: Genesis Journals, pens

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. On the Backpack page in the Genesis Journals, ask the group to list everything in their backpack or purse that they need to get through a day.
2. Announce that they are taking an imaginary journey, and they must travel lightly. Have everyone cross out all but 10 items. While they are doing this, ask: "How does it feel to let some things go?" "How did you decide what to keep?"
3. Ask them to now eliminate 5 more items, and discuss again how it feels to let them go.
4. Finally, have them eliminate all but one item. Go around the circle and share what one item everyone chose to keep and why.
5. Ask: "Have you ever felt a need to 'lighten up' what you carry with you?" "Why is it hard to let go of some things?"
6. Explain that sometimes we carry heavy things in our minds, too: grudges, hurt feelings, self-pity, guilt and worries. Ask: "What kinds of 'heavy' things do you carry in your mind?" "Would you like to 'lighten up' your mind?" "Why is it hard to let go of heavy thoughts sometimes?"
7. Move directly to the next activity.

***Activity 8b:
Get Off My Back!**

*For Odd-Numbered Groups Only

Purpose: To help release negativity

10 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Ask everyone to join hands in support of each other and close their eyes, taking a few moments to reflect on something heavy they've been carrying for a long time. It may be something they haven't forgiven, something they feel guilty about, a strong fear or worry about the future, self-doubt or self-pity.

2. Say in your own words: "Just like a backpack, we carry heavy things 'on our backs' that we don't need anymore. No matter what the heavy thought you are carrying, remember that you have reawakened to the Truth of who you are, a newly reborn Child who wants only to love and be loved. Hurt feelings, worries, and guilt keep you from feeling the Love that is all around you. What we give our attention to grows. When we focus on the heavy thoughts, they become even heavier, until they sometimes seem to immobilize our hearts. Know that you can release the heavy thoughts that no longer serve you. Speak to these heavy thoughts. Say to them, "I know that I created you, and I can release you. I deserve to be free to give and receive only Love. Can you believe that? Say it to yourself until you can..."

"Open your eyes now, stand, and stretch...are you ready now to be rid of the heavy thoughts you've been carrying? It's about time, isn't it? We'll do it together. We're going to TELL them off! Bend slightly at the waist, imagining the heaviness on our backs and shoulders, really staying in touch with how the heavy thought feels and how great it will be to be free of it. As we hold our arms shoulder-high in front of us, as loud as we can we're going to shout to the heavy thoughts, 'GET—OFF—MY—BACK!'

With each word, we'll bend our arms back in a forceful "rowing" motion (leader demonstrates), as if to throw off the heaviness. We'll do it three times. Ready? 1-2-3...together: 'GET OFF MY BACK!'"

Repeat three times, louder each time, and end with everyone giving a rousing "standing ovation" for the entire group.

Activity 9: Stones

Purpose: Awareness of heavy or light thoughts

25 min.

Supplies: glass beads, stones brought to your family group space, small bags, markers

Preparation: play soft, gentle music, turn the lights low if you can

Directions:

1. Scatter the glass beads and stones in the center of the circle so everyone can reach some of them. Ask everyone to move in as closely as possible. Invite them to pick up the items and feel the energy in each one, looking at their colors and textures, and feeling the weight of the objects.

Say: "The glass beads represent our lightest, most loving Christ-centered thoughts. Notice the variety of colors, their beauty, the way the light reflects through them. The stones represent negative thoughts. Notice their heaviness, their density. See how light is absorbed into their surface, instead of being passed on by reflection." Ask if there are other ways the beads and stones remind them of loving or negative thoughts.

Say: "We're going to do a meditation where you will be choosing from these beads and stones." Make sure everyone will be able to reach the beads and stones.

2. Invite everyone to close their eyes and become very comfortable and relaxed. Read the following meditation:

"Breathe in deeply... hold for a moment... and let out a big 'sigh'... let's do that again... breathe... hold... SIGH... Know that you are in a very safe, comfortable space...As you become still, notice the thoughts that drift into your mind...Allow them to flow freely as you relax and let go...notice the kinds of thoughts at the surface of your mind...things to do, something someone said or did recently...recent memories...let all of your thoughts and feelings be okay...Let yourself become an observer of your mind's activity...notice how miraculous your mind is...that it is capable of remembering countless impressions, sensations, spoken and written words, and feelings...it is a storehouse of information...everything that your mind believes is important to remember...as the thoughts and feelings float through your consciousness, bless your own intelligent mind for serving you so well...now, become even more relaxed...let your mind rest...become still...listen deeper within...to your heart...there are thoughts and feelings stored here too...your heart knows what is important to your spirit...your deepest desires, your biggest hurts your dreams, your fears..listen to your heart...what is stored there?...as if

each thought were a solid object, reach out for one and imagine holding it before you... What is the thought you have momentarily captured?...What is the thought or feeling about?...Is it pleasant?... uncomfortable?... light?... dark?... Does it make you feel happy? ...sad?... excited?... afraid?... peaceful?... Now imagine the thought or feeling has a color...what color is it?... Thoughts are things... they have weight... notice how heavy or light the thought feels as you hold it...does it weigh you down?...or does it lift you up and support you?...Now, staying in your own space, open your eyes and reach in to the center of the circle and choose an object that represents to you the weight of this thought...choose either a bead or stone...place the object in front of you...Now let that thought rest...close your eyes and observe your thoughts again...and choose another to reach out and hold...notice what this thought is like...is it about a person?...a situation?...does it support you and feel joyful and light?...or does it feel heavy and drag you down?...Open your eyes and reach into the circle again, choosing another object to represent this thought...and once you have placed the bead or stone in front of you, let the thought rest, close your eyes, and choose another at random...take time now to continue noticing the heaviness or lightness, the color, the feeling, and choosing an object to represent each one...there are plenty of stones and beads...(Allow the meditation to continue silently for a few minutes while they collect stones and beads)...Now let any remaining waiting thoughts just rest, knowing that they can be released at any time you choose...and begin to focus your attention on the presence of yourself and others in this room...reconnect with your breathing...and when you are ready, open your eyes."

3. Invite the group to use the Stones page of their Genesis Journals to list the thoughts represented by each bead and stone, OR, if your group is more talkative, invite them to share verbally instead.
4. After everyone has had time to make their lists (or share aloud), explain that the stones are not to be considered "bad" or "negative," but rather as challenges in our lives that may have served us in our growth for a time. The heaviness is due to our holding onto them past the time that they have served us.
5. Ask if anyone would like to share **one** of their lightest or heaviest thoughts from the meditation. You might want to ask: "How does that thought support you (or bring you down)?" "What does it feel like to carry that thought with you?" "Would you rather 'increase or release' this thought in your consciousness? Why?"
6. Hand out a small bag for each person and have them put their beads and stones in the bag. Have them write their names on their bags. Tell them they will carry them around for one entire day, being mindful of them at all times. Ask them to really be aware of the feeling of carrying them, of owning them. Encourage them to hold the stones and beads individually from time to time, concentrating on putting the energy of each thought into each stone or bead. Be sure to tell them to bring them back to the next family group meeting so they can be ceremoniously released.

Activity 10: Anonymous Hugs

Purpose: A comforting closing circle

5 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Form two circles, one inside the other, facing each other. You might need to spread out a little to allow for movement. Have the outside circle close their eyes, and the inside circle rotate a few steps to the left until you say "stop," so the outside ones don't know who's in front of them.
2. Tell the inside circle to give the person they're facing a warm, comforting hug, appreciating them for being willing to risk, to share, and to really look deeply into their own selves. Ask the inside circle to rotate again until you call "stop." Repeat the hug with the new person they're facing. Do this a third time, and then repeat three times with the inside circle closing their eyes and the outside circle rotating and giving the hugs.
2. End by asking for a volunteer to lead a short closing prayer of their choice, perhaps including thanks to God for today's family group experience.

Family Group Meeting 3: *Lifted from the No* Tuesday, 10:30 am to 12:30 pm*

(*Even-numbered groups will end at 12:55 pm)

Following: International Delegates' Workshop

Concept: This is the day of releasing. We have evaluated the aspects of our lives that either uplift us or weigh us down, and we have heightened our awareness of these aspects as we carried our feathers and stones with us for one day. Now that we know what we would like to release, we are ready to let go and let God begin to guide us to our highest and best experience in life.

Scripture:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. —Matthew 11:28-30

Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven. —Matthew 18:18

Affirmation:

**Today I release any old thoughts
that are less than the highest and best.
I release, let go and trust God.**

Quotes:

“To remember can be good, but also, to remember can be not good.
We need to remember; we need to forget.

How we remember and how we forget—this is the key.”

—Martha Smock, *Turning Points*

“It doesn't matter, it's in the past.”

—Rafiki to Simba in *The Lion King*

Objectives: To process the Stones activity, introduce the poem and concepts of releasing and forgiveness, and take the risk to trust God within ourselves and others.

Activity	Purpose	Est. Time
1. Opening Affirmation, Scripture, Prayer	to set the tone	5 minutes
2. Check-In 1	to process the Stones activity	5 minutes
3. *For Even-Numbered Groups Only:		
*3a. What's in Your Backpack?	to practice releasing	15 minutes
*3b. Get Off My Back!	to release heavy thoughts	10 minutes
4. Mini-Siesta: “Lifted from the No”	to introduce today's theme	10 minutes
5. Trust Lift	to risk in a safe setting	40 minutes
6. Check-In 2	to process trust lift	5 minutes
7. Comfort Break	to use restroom, get drinks, etc.	10 minutes
8. Forgiveness Bubble	to practice forgiveness	10 minutes
9. Releasing Ceremony	to release our stones to the earth	25 minutes
10. Bead Jewelry and Closing Circle	to celebrate feeling light...	10 minutes

Supplies:

today's affirmation	Genesis Journals
masking tape	Pens
CD or tape player	ball of hemp
meditative music	scissors
bags with beads and stones (which they have brought back to the group)	

Preparation:

Take time for prayer, and know that you are helping to create a life-changing experience for your group this week. Give yourself a hug of appreciation!

**Activity 1:
Opening Affirmation, Scripture, Prayer**

Purpose: To set the tone

5 min.

Supplies: today's affirmation sheet, optional CD player or tape with meditative music

Preparation: if desired, have meditative music playing when the group arrives. Ask a volunteer to tape today's affirmation sheet to the wall where everyone can see it.

Directions:

1. Ask for volunteers to read the affirmation and scripture for today.
 2. Ask the group to join hands and close their eyes for the opening prayer. You may use the following words, or your own: "God, we are now ready to release any thoughts of heaviness that we have been carrying. We know that as Your children, we deserve only Love. We choose to see only Good. Thank you, God. Amen."
 3. Ask for a volunteer to read today's quotes.
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**Activity 2:
Check-In 1**

Purpose: To process the Stones activity

5 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Invite a few comments about what it has been like to carry the beads and stones for one day. Be patient in allowing the discussion to start. Choose **one** of these to ask: "What was this experience like for you?" "What was the most interesting thing you noticed about carrying the bag with you?" "How did it feel to be responsible for the beads and stones?" "Do you feel any attachment to the stones and beads now that you've been carrying them around for awhile?" "How does this experience feel like the way we carry heavy thoughts in our minds?"

***Activities 3a and 3b:
For Even-Numbered Groups Only**

Note: Each even-numbered family group will have an extra 25 minutes today, and will alternate with the odd-numbered groups each day. This plan will stagger our family group ending times, so that everyone won't be waiting in the lunch line at the same time.

***Activity 3a:**
What's In Your Backpack?

Adapted from *Teens on the Quest*, Vol. IV, pp. 309 and 393.

*For Even-Numbered Groups Only

Purpose: To practice releasing

15 min.

Materials: Genesis Journals, pens

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. On the Backpack page in the Genesis Journals, ask the group to list everything in their backpack or purse that they need to get through a day.
2. Announce that they are taking an imaginary journey, and they must travel lightly. Have everyone cross out all but 10 items. While they are doing this, ask: "How does it feel to let some things go?" "How did you decide what to keep?"
3. Ask them to now eliminate 5 more items, and discuss again how it feels to let them go.
4. Finally, have them eliminate all but one item. Go around the circle and share what one item everyone chose to keep and why.
5. Ask: "Have you ever felt a need to 'lighten up' what you carry with you?" "Why is it hard to let go of some things?"
6. Explain that sometimes we carry heavy things in our minds, too: grudges, hurt feelings, self-pity, guilt, and worries. Ask: "What kinds of 'heavy' things do you carry in your mind?" "Why might it be a good idea to 'lighten up' your mind?" "Why do you think it is hard to let go of heavy thoughts sometimes?"
7. Move directly to the next activity.

***Activity 3b:**
Get Off My Back!

*For Even-Numbered Groups Only

Purpose: To help release negativity

10 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Ask everyone to join hands in support of each other and close their eyes, taking a few moments to reflect on something heavy they've been carrying for a long time. It may be something they haven't forgiven, something they feel guilty about, a strong fear or worry about the future, self-doubt or self-pity.
2. Say in your own words: "Just like a backpack, we carry heavy things 'on our backs' that we don't need anymore. No matter what the heavy thought you are carrying, remember that you have re-awakened to the Truth of who you are, a newly reborn Child who wants only to love and be loved. Hurt feelings, worries, and guilt keep you from feeling the Love that is all around you. What we give our attention to grows. When we focus on the heavy thoughts, they become even heavier, until they sometimes seem to immobilize our hearts. Know that you can release the heavy thoughts that no longer serve you. Speak to these heavy thoughts. Say to them, 'I know that

I created you, and I can release you. I deserve to be free to give and receive only Love.' Can you believe that? Say it to yourself until you can... Open your eyes now, stand up, and stretch...are you ready now to be rid of the heavy thoughts you've been carrying? It's about time, isn't it? We'll do it together. We're going to TELL them off! Bend slightly at the waist, imagining the heaviness on our backs and shoulders, really staying in touch with how the heavy thought feels and how great it will be to be free of it. As we hold our arms shoulder-high in front of us, as loud as we can we're going to shout to the heavy thoughts, 'GET—OFF—MY—BACK! With each word, we'll bend our arms back in a forceful 'rowing' motion (leader demonstrates), as if to throw off the heaviness. We'll do it three times. Ready? 1-2-3...together: 'GET OFF MY BACK!'" Repeat three times, louder each time, and end with everyone giving a rousing "standing ovation" for the entire group.

Activity 4: Mini-Siesta: Lifted from the No

Purpose: To introduce today's theme

10 min.

Supplies: Genesis Journals

Preparation: None

Directions:

1. Invite everyone to get comfortable while you read the following e.e. cummings poem, "i thank you God." You might want to mention that e.e. cummings writes everything, even his signature, without using capital letters, except for when he is referring to God. Point out that they have a copy of the poem in their Conference brochure.

i thank you God for most this amazing
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes
(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and love and wings:and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any-lifted from the no
of all nothing-human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

2. Ask what they think this poem means. Honor all responses. Re-read some passages if you like, especially the second stanza "how should...doubt unimaginable You?" Since cummings is a free-form poet, you can be equally free in accepting interpretation of the poem. But be sure to keep the focus on the question: "What does 'lifted from the no of all nothing' mean to you?"

Activity 5: Trust Lift

Purpose: To risk in a safe setting

40 min.

Supplies: CD or tape player, soft, gentle music

Preparation: set the tone with soft music before beginning.

Directions:

1. Encourage sacredness for this activity by "setting up the activity" as follows, in your own words. Please take time to do this, so your group will experience the full depth of the trust activity: Remind the group that during the trust lift, we will demonstrate what it feels like to be "lifted from the no," or lifted from all negative thoughts, limitations, or fears into a higher state of consciousness, while being supported by God through the people around us who love us. Tell them that it is to be done in silence and sacredness. You might want to have someone lead a short prayer to center the group. Do not proceed until everyone is quiet and focused. Emphasize that it is very important that the people forming the circle keep their awareness centered on the person in the middle, who needs their complete support in order to trust. Remind them that the person in the center is practicing their trust in God working through the other people to support him or her.
2. The first volunteer lies on the floor, face up with eyes closed and arms crossed over the chest. The others gather around on either side. Ask the stronger ones to stand at the torso area; others can be at the head (one person) or the legs. The group should be on one knee ideally, not with both knees on the floor.
3. Invite the volunteer to be willing to relax and trust and be completely receptive to the unconditional love they will receive from the group. Ask the others to give their complete awareness to this person who needs them right now.
4. Begin with a gentle massage by the group for about 30 seconds, with everyone placing their hands safely on the person, and following your actions. At your silent signal, everyone gently places their hands under the volunteer and together lifts them up to waist height. If you like, quietly and in a sacred tone, you (leader only) may remind the person that they are being "lifted from the no of all nothing" and into the pure love of God. Then they begin to gently and slowly rock them forward and back, from head to toe. Allow them to rock at this level for about a minute...do not rush...then lift them up to chest level or even overhead, and rock gently again. Then gradually bring them down to the floor, rocking them forward and back as you go down. Allow them to lie on the floor for a few seconds with everyone's hands resting on the volunteer to give them a final blessing of support, and then gently lift hands away in unison. Emphasize that they are to remain **silent** as a new volunteer steps in to the center. When finished, thank everyone for being willing to trust and give their support to the group.

**Activity 6:
Check-In 2**

Purpose: To process the Trust Lift

5 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Form a circle for an informal sharing time. You may use these questions, or your own: "How did the trust lift feel?" "What did it feel like to receive unconditional love from the group?" "How easy or hard was it to really let go and trust?"
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**Activity 7:
Comfort Break**

Purpose: To use restroom, get drinks, etc.

10 min.

**Activity 8:
Forgiveness Bubble**

Purpose: To practice the act of forgiveness

10 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Read the following quote:

**Forgiveness is accepting that you can never have a different past
than the one you have. —Unknown**

Ask: "Can you think of something in your past that you wished had been different? Did you blame someone for what happened? Yourself? Someone else? Have you really forgiven it yet?" Encourage a few brief, personal examples.

2. Invite them to find a comfortable position for this short meditation: "Allow your body to relax and your breathing to be slow and natural...let your thoughts become still...allow your consciousness to drift deep into your heart center...it is still, quiet and peaceful...imagine yourself standing near someone you need to forgive...it could even be yourself...or anyone else...as you stand there, you see a large ball of light begin to form before your eyes...like a bubble...this ball of light seems to draw you closer...you step into the bubble, feeling completely immersed in love...nothing but Love is allowed inside the bubble...all negative thoughts, worries, lack, illness, fears are filtered out as you step inside...when you are ready...invite the other person to come in...as they come in, notice that all that is not Love is left outside...stand with the other person in pure Love...allow forgiveness to take place...the light of God that makes up the bubble purifies everything, heals everything...see yourself and the other person as the innocent children of God that you are...let the Love of God flow between you and

them...see them and yourself as free of the burden that was on you both...thank them for being there...and when you are ready, you may leave the bubble...knowing that it is there within you all the time...come back to the room...to this time and space...and join the group again by opening your eyes.”

3. Continue immediately to the next activity, maintaining the sacred tone of the meditation.

Activity 9: Releasing Ceremony

Purpose: To release our stones to the earth

25 min.

Supplies: beads and stones they have brought with them, hemp, scissors (to be brought with you for the next activity at Chapel of the Woods)

Preparation: be sure you know ahead of time where the Chapel in the Woods is located, as you will be leading your group there.

Directions

1. Keeping the quiet focus of the last activity, ask everyone to stand. Begin with prayer. Use your own or the one provided here: “God, we are ready to release our burdens to you. We know that we need not carry them anymore. We forgive the hard, unyielding memories of the past, and in doing so, we release the energy we have locked away inside them so that it can be transformed and used for our good. We are ready to walk with the lighter steps of angels. As we declare it to be, so it is. Amen.”
2. Tell the group they will now be going to a special site on the Village grounds to release their stones. Maintain a sacred focus as you explain the instructions: “Walk together in silence, letting this be a time to be alone with your own thoughts and feelings, but feeling the support of the group around you as you walk. We will stop together as a group, form a prayer circle, and then we will each go in on our own to release the stones. **Keep your glass beads in your bag.** Please release the stones only in the designated area. (Explain that they will be led to the location). Do not throw the stones; just gently release them by dropping them on the ground, or gently laying them down. Please do not distract others from their personal experience. It is important that this be a solitary activity.”
3. Begin your silent walk together. When your group arrives at the Chapel of the Woods, motion to them silently form a circle. Say in your own words: “The energy of the stones—the heavy thoughts—we have carried so long are about to be unlocked when we release them, and this energy will be instantly available to us to use for joyful purposes in our lives. As we forgive the past, we create a new memory, of a hurt that has been miraculously healed, and so where there was once heaviness, there is now new energy and light. When you are ready, go and release your stones and take a moment to reabsorb the energy of the heavy thoughts as they become transformed. You will have about five minutes. Please return to this spot as soon as you are finished.”

Activity 10:
Bead Jewelry and Closing Circle

Purpose: To celebrate being light and carefree!

10 min.

Supplies: Glass beads in each person's bag, hemp, scissors

Preparation: None

Directions:

1. Explain that the glass beads still in their bags are a reminder of the transformation of the heavy energy of the stones that were released. Ask them to imagine that the energy locked into each stone has now been reabsorbed into the glass beads to make them even more luminous. Pass the ball of hemp and the scissors around and have each person cut a piece about an arm's length. Explain that everyone can create a fun, simple way to wear their beads as a reminder of their light, uplifting thoughts. Keep the creativity simple. Just string the beads, either in one bunch or individually, and then tie the ends of the string together to make a necklace or bracelet, or they can tie one end to a piece of clothing (ideas: belt loop, shoelaces, or barrette). Suggest to them that when they get home, the beads will be a way to help them remember Conference and the thoughts that uplift them. If you are running late, you can give them the hemp and suggest that they make their bead jewelry during Free Time today.
2. Go around the circle and have each person share one light thought represented by one of the beads in their ornament. End with a group hug and fuzzies for everyone.

Family Group Meeting 4: *In the Silence*

Wednesday, 10:45 to 12:30 pm*

(*Odd-numbered groups will end at 12:55 pm)

Following: God Walk

Concept: Today is our day to “be, just be.” We’ll quiet our minds, meditate and prepare ourselves to be filled with the Christ spirit during our Silence tonight.

Scripture:

And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred... And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.
—Mark 4:20 and 4:24

Affirmation: **I listen to God within. I am open and receptive.**
I deny all thoughts of limitation and accept God’s loving direction,
knowing that it leads to my Good.

Quote: Listen, or thy tongue will keep thee deaf. —American Indian

Objectives: To process the God Walk, practice listening to God within, explore the idea that “with God all things are possible,” and prepare for the Silence.

Activity	Purpose	Est. Time
1. Creative Expression	to process the God Walk	15 minutes
2. Affirmation/Prayer/Scripture	to set the tone	5 minutes
3. Sharing Time	to share creative expression	10 minutes
4. Listening to God meditation	to practice hearing Divine Guidance	10 minutes
5. Index Card Walk-Through	to challenge our belief...	20 minutes
6. Quality Time	to each “receive” a unique spiritual quality	10 minutes
7. *For Odd-Numbered Groups Only		
*7a. Quality Sculptures	to illustrate our spiritual quality in a fun way	20 minutes
*7b. Guess Who?	to challenge our belief about who we are	5 minutes
8. Rock/Sand	to demonstrate putting time with God first	10 minutes
9. Affirmation Creation	to close in a fun, prayerful way	10 minutes

Supplies:

CD or tape player
soft music
today’s affirmation
markers
index card
scissors for each person
Genesis Journals
Labels printed with spiritual qualities

Preparation:

Return early from the God Walk so you can set up the first activity. Separate the “spiritual quality” labels by cutting them apart with scissors.

**Activity 1:
Creative Expression**

Purpose: To process the God Walk

15 min.

Supplies: CD or tape player, soft music

Preparation: have music playing, and markers and Genesis Journals available in the center of the circle.

Directions:

1. As everyone arrives, quietly instruct them use their God Walk page in their Journals to create a picture, symbol, journal writing, or poem that will help them record their God Walk experience. Encourage them to do this on their own, in silence.
-

**Activity 2:
Opening Affirmation, Scripture, Prayer**

Purpose: To get centered

5 min.

Supplies: today's affirmation sheet, masking tape, CD or tape player, soft music

Preparation: ask a volunteer to put today's affirmation on the wall.

Directions:

1. Ask for volunteers to read today's affirmation and scripture. Lead (or ask for a volunteer to lead) a prayer about being open to God's loving guidance.
-

**Activity 3:
Sharing Time**

Purpose: To share creative expression

10 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Encourage sharing of what they've recorded or any insight they received from the God Walk experience. Honor the right to pass, and create an opportunity for quieter ones to share, if they'd like.

Activity 4: Listening to God Meditation

Purpose: To learn to hear God within

15 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none (do not use music for this meditation, as they are listening to other sounds).

Directions:

1. Read the following meditation, pausing about 5 seconds for each "...” in the script: "Find a place where you can be completely in your own space, having no contact with others...find a comfortable position for your body...and go within... give your mind over to listening... listen to the sounds around you... notice every sound...acknowledge every sound...recognize the Divine Presence of God’s intelligence and wisdom in the sounds you hear...just listen and breathe...let the sounds create a symphony of life...feel the perfect order and rhythm of the sounds...allow the sounds to form images and colors in your mind’s eye...now turn your attention further within...and keep listening...let your thoughts be at rest...and go within even further...into the Silence of your soul...know that this is the most sacred part of yourself...where God speaks to you...keep listening...being receptive...let your conscious thought drift into quietness...do not try to hear...just listen...let the “sound” of this sacred space fill your heart...feel your awareness expanding, beyond your physical self...believe in the God of your being...ready to help you, to care for you, to show you the path to your Good...when you find yourself lost in thoughts, bless them and return to your sacred Silence...believe...and listen for awhile...(longer pause, about 3 minutes)...now begin to affirm that your soul will hear what it most needs to hear from the God of your being...ask if there is anything you need to know for your highest and best experience today...and just listen...(longer pause, about 3 minutes)...be in this sacred space a few more moments...and know that you can return anytime...begin now to hear the sounds of the physical world again...and let your mind follow the sounds back to the circle...breathe deeply...and when you are ready...open your eyes.”
2. Process the meditation using question(s) that you intuitively feel will serve your group. Encourage discussion. People learn best from themselves! Honor all responses. Choose **one** of the following questions or your own: "What was this meditation like for you?" "Have you practiced listening before on your own?" "Do you remember a time when you received intuitive guidance that helped you in some way, large or small? What happened?" "How can you tell when guidance is really coming from God, and not just from your own personal thoughts? Is there even a difference? What do you think?" "Why might it be important to ‘believe in the God of your Being’ when asking for guidance?"

Activity 5: Index Card Walk-Through

Purpose: To show that “with God all things are possible”

20 min.

Supplies: index card and scissors for each person, tape

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Hand out index cards to each person.
2. Say: "If I told you that you could cut a hole in this index card and walk right through it, what would you think?" Invite responses. Spark the discussion if necessary by asking: "Would you think it’s impossible? Why?"

“Would you think it’s a ‘crazy’ idea that would never work?” “Would you think the person was joking?” Then ask: “What if I then told you that I could show you how to do it—what would you think then?” Encourage discussion. Then ask everyone to think of a challenge in their life that they are facing right now—something that seems impossible to solve or release, even after our Releasing activity yesterday. It may be a relationship challenge, a school or job situation, a financial need, or any major challenge you are dealing with. Say in your own words: “If someone were to tell you that your challenge isn’t a challenge at all, and that you could easily solve it with a few simple steps, what would you think of their statement? How would you feel about what they said? How do you think you’d respond? “Have you ever prayed about this challenge? How easy or hard is it sometimes to believe that God can solve an impossible problem? “It may seem impossible now, but with help and direction, walking through the index card is very simple. We will all succeed in doing so during this family group meeting. I will now show you how to do it, and just as it is with God’s guidance, all you need to do is trust and follow the instructions.”

3. Hand out scissors to everyone. Give these instructions: Begin by folding the card in half lengthwise (demonstrate as you go). Cut through the folded edge and across the top, making a strip about 1/8” from the top edge, but do NOT cut all the way across. Stop about 1/16” or so from the open edges opposite the fold. NOTE: Narrower cuts will make a larger opening, as will stopping the cuts closer to each edge. Using 1/8” cuts will result in an opening about 20-24” in diameter. Then make a similar cut starting this time from the **opposite side** of the fold, about 1/8” down from the first one. Again, don’t cut all the way across. Keep making 1/8” strips across, stopping just before the edge, first from the folded side and then from the other side, until you reach the bottom. Now, **DO NOT cut the first and last segments**, but do cut the remaining folded edges (one end piece might appear to be “doubled”—it will work fine, but don’t cut any of it). Carefully unfold your card to a circle. If someone makes a mistake while cutting, point out that God allows “do-overs” in life. Just give them another card. If someone tears their card at the very end, it’s best just to allow them to tape it back together rather than starting over again.
4. Ask everyone to wait until the others are finished cutting before walking through the card. Set up the actual walk-through steps by reminding everyone that minutes ago, this activity seemed impossible...and that their challenge seemed impossible! Let the power of this activity really come through by inviting everyone to stand in a circle and take a few moments to get in touch with what it feels like to know that their challenge is conquerable with God’s help and guidance. On a count of three, have everyone step through, feeling the power of triumph as they do. Process this activity with open discussion before moving on.

Activity 6: Quality Time

Purpose: To each receive a unique spiritual quality

10 minutes

Supplies: Genesis Journals, CD or tape player with soft music, labels with spiritual qualities pre-printed and cut into individual pieces

Preparation: Spread the individually cut labels face down in one layer in the center of the circle. Have music cued up and ready for the meditation.

Directions:

1. Explain in your own words that each person at Conference is about to be given a printed message from God in the form of a spiritual quality that is special in them. It may be something they are not aware of yet, something that wants to be expressed. It’s like Charles Fillmore said about Genesis being our rebirth “from the idea to the manifest.” The spiritual quality they are about to receive is the idea, and they are meant to bring it into manifestation in their daily lives.
2. Play meditation music and invite everyone to close their eyes. Lead the prayer below: “Let these words be your own as you hear my voice...’Here I am, God...I am listening...I am receptive...I am ready...I accept your loving direction...knowing that it leads to my good...I accept this spiritual quality as my own, and I will lovingly bring

it into manifestation in my life...I recognize that Your Hand is on my hand as I choose the quality you want me to have...' Now please open your eyes, and very prayerfully allow God's Hand to guide your hand to the quality that is yours to claim today...you may read the card...now go within again with eyes closed and let God reveal the Truth of this quality and why it is now yours to bring forth...ask the spirit of this quality to speak to you...ask why it chose you...ask what you are to learn...what you are to do... (Allow a few moments of silent reflection)...embrace this quality in your mind and make it a part of you...know that it has always been there, waiting for you to recognize and love it with your attention...know that it IS you...and now, keeping your focus on your spiritual quality, say a silent 'Amen' and open your eyes."

3. Have everyone find a partner and sit facing them. Ask them to take turns sharing their spiritual quality and what they think it means to them. Allow about two minutes for each person to share, and remind the listener to give loving support through eye contact and facial expression.
4. Invite everyone to place their Spiritual Quality sticker in the space provided in their Genesis Journals.

***Activity 7a:**

***For Odd-Numbered Groups Only**
Quality Sculptures

Purpose: To illustrate our spiritual quality in a fun way

20 minutes

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Form pairs (if you need to have one group consisting of three, that will work.) Designate the person wearing the brightest clothes in each pair to be a piece of clay, and the other person will be the sculptor. (Improvise if you have groups of three, letting there be two artists or two pieces of clay).
2. Explain that the sculptors will have two minutes to form their clay into the spiritual quality that the sculptor received. The sculptor can gently pose the clay in any way they want that will symbolize the meaning of their quality, and it is the job of the clay person to hold that pose for them. The sculpture can be abstract or realistic.
3. At the end of the two minutes, allow all the sculptors to view the art, and give each artist one minute to explain his or her statue to the rest of the group, if they would like.
4. Have the sculptors and clay trade places, and repeat.

***Activity 7b:**

Guess Who?

Purpose: To challenge our belief about who we are

5 minutes

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Instruct everyone to put their hands over their own eyes and say to themselves aloud, "Guess Who?" This will probably evoke laughter. Tell them they are to keep holding their hands over their eyes until they can answer the question **without using their name or describing what they do**. For example, they cannot answer, "I am

a student.” or “I am a soccer player.” This is a Zen-based activity that causes us to really examine our perception of who we are.

2. After a few moments, invite brief sharing of what they discovered in this simple activity.

Activity 8: Rock & Sand

Purpose: To demonstrate putting God first

10 minutes

Supplies: plastic bag of sand, plastic bag of rocks, plastic cup, paper plate

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. This is a demonstration to be done by the leader. Make sure everyone can see what you are doing, and put the rocks into the cup. Explain that the rocks will symbolize something different this time than the heavy thoughts they represented yesterday. Ask the group to call out when the cup is full.
2. Ask, “Are you sure it’s full?” Some may begin to get the idea and say “no.”
3. Put the paper plate under the cup to catch any spilled sand, especially if you are in a carpeted room. Now get the sand out and pour it slowly into the cup. Shake the cup gently to settle the sand, and ask again, “Is it full now?” Keep pouring sand until it’s gone or the cup is completely full and won’t take any more sand.
4. Ask: “What do you think this activity represents? Honor all responses, and then say, “The rocks represent the time we spend with God, in prayer and meditation. The sand represents all the other things that fill our time. What are some of the things that fill your time and keep you from finding time to pray and meditate each day?” Allow a few responses. “What would happen if we tried to put the sand in first?” To try this, pour the rocks and sand carefully onto the plate. Remove the rocks and pour the sand in by bending the plate into a “funnel” shape. Let a volunteer try to put the rocks back into the cup on top of the sand—they won’t fit. (Leader: please hold the cup to ensure that it doesn’t spill as they do this).
5. Ask what this demonstration has taught them, and allow a few comments as time permits. Have a volunteer read the following verse, included in their Genesis Journals:

The rocks represent the time we spend with God.

The sand represents the time we spend doing other things.

If you pour the sand into the jar first and then try to insert the rocks, they won’t fit.

If you put the rocks in first, then pour the sand around it, there’s a perfect fit.

Likewise, if we spend time doing other things first, we will never find time to spend with God.

If we spend time with God first, there will always be time for other things.

Activity 9: Affirmation Creation

Purpose: To close in a fun, prayerful way

5 minutes

Supplies: Genesis Journals, pens, CD or tape player, light music

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Form a circle and explain that the group will be creating an affirmation by beginning with the words, "I AM" and adding to it as they go around the circle. Have each person add a word. For example, one affirmation might become:

Person 1: "I"

Person 2: "AM"

Person 3: "A"

Person 4: "Loving"

Person 5: "Child"

Person 6: "Of"

Person 7: "God."

Person 8 in this example can decide that the affirmation is complete, by beginning again with "I." Or they might have chosen instead to keep the affirmation going, by adding "and" or another word. Let the group repeat the affirmation several times in a circle until it forms a chant (people won't necessarily be saying the same word they did the first time). If you are ahead of schedule and the group is enthusiastic, try creating another affirmation or two before closing with a short prayer and hugs.

Family Group Meeting 5: *Unimaginable You*

Thursday, 10:15 to 12:30 pm*

(*Even-numbered groups will end at 12:55 pm)

Following: Stacy's Workshop

Concept: Today is our day of self-affirmation! We celebrate "who I am, the essence of my being," our unlimited Divine self, and we share our Truth radically and openly with the world.

Scripture:

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

—Acts 3:6-10

Affirmation:

I celebrate the Unimaginable Me!

I am free, unlimited God energy in physical manifestation.

Quote:

Luminous beings are we; not this crude matter. —*Master Yoda*

Objectives: To recognize our Divinity by understanding the true meaning of "the Christ within," and to celebrate our new Unimaginable selves!

Activity

Purpose

Est. Time

1. Affirmation/Prayer/Scripture	to set the tone	5 minutes
2. Christening	to be anointed with the Christ Spirit	10 minutes
3. New You Tattoo	to symbolize our Truth outwardly	15 minutes
4. The Radical Christ	to practice "radicalizing our Truth"	20 minutes
5. Comfort Break	to use restroom, etc.	10 minutes
6. *For Even-Numbered Groups Only		
*Appreciation Notes	to honor and support each other	25 minutes
7. Heart Talk Prep	to create a safe space for sharing	10 minutes
8. Heart Talk	to share your Unimaginable self!	60 minutes
9. Closing Circle	to lighten the energy	5 minutes

Supplies:

today's affirmation sheet, masking tape
Christening handout
Water source (fountain, sink or bottled water)
cups
makeup pencils in several colors
envelope with skit scenarios
Genesis Journals
heart pillow

Preparation:

Fill one cup with water before group arrives, for the Christening activity.

Activity 1: Opening Affirmation, Scripture, Prayer

Purpose: To set the tone

5 min.

Supplies: today's affirmation

Preparation: ask a volunteer to tape the affirmation to the wall.

Directions:

1. Ask for volunteers to read the affirmation and scripture for today.
2. Lead the group (or ask a volunteer to lead) an opening prayer acknowledging the Divinity within each of us. You may use the one provided or your own: "God, we in this moment we know ourselves to be the luminous beings you created us to be. We no longer see limitations or faults, but unlimited Divinity in human form. We are grateful for this awareness as we look forward to sharing our Christ nature with everyone we meet today. Amen."

Activity 2: Christening

Purpose: To be anointed with the Christ Spirit

10 min.

Supplies: CD or tape player, meditative music, cup, bottle of water

Preparation: create a sacred tone for this activity by playing quiet, meditative music.

Directions:

1. Read (or ask for a volunteer to read) the following Scripture passage: *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.* —Genesis 17:1-5 Explain in your own words: "In the Bible, God often gave people a new name with a special meaning when they chose the spiritual path. It is said that God gave Abram "the breath of Spirit" when he received his new name. Abram earned the new name "Abraham" when he answered God's call to become the great leader that God had planned for him to be. This week, we ourselves are choosing to become all that God has planned for us. In early Christianity, it became customary for a new baby to be formally given their first name and their introduction into the spiritual life in a church ceremony called a Christening." Ask if anyone has been Christened or Baptized as a baby. "Today we will all get to experience this as we are Christened with our given name and the spiritual quality we received yesterday. A Christening (Christ-ening) is a time to acknowledge the Divinity within us. Sometimes we can go for long periods of time without anyone speaking to or noticing that part of us. It is a very healing process for our Spirit, o u r Christ self, to be recognized and acknowledged, and for us to do the same for others." **Note:** Some may feel discomfort about the term "Christ," because of past negative associations with traditional theology. Offer this clarification: "Unity teaches that Jesus was the man, and Christ is the quality of having Divinity within. Did you know that using the term 'Christ' to mean the quality of Divinity within is considered 'radical' by many older Christian churches? Most, if not all, Y.O.U.ers already agree that each of us has Divinity within us. It is that Divinity that we call 'The Christ.' Ofcourse, Jesus had it, too, but what makes Jesus special is that He learned

to express it fully, all the time. Jesus taught us the once-radical idea that we can do the same.”

2. Ask everyone to find a partner across the circle. Have partners sit down together. Leader may need to sit out to keep it even.
3. Ask them to recall the quality they received in yesterday’s Family Group Meeting. Invite them to take turns sharing their quality with their partner, telling the quality and why they think it is important to their life right now. Instruct the listener to receive what the speaker is saying with compassion and understanding—to really be there for them. Allow about two minutes for each partner to share while the other gives loving support through eye contact and listening without responding. Then have them switch roles so the partner can share in the same way.
4. Pass the bottle of water and cups so that each pair can pour a small amount. Give each pair a copy of the Christening handout. Explain that they will support their partners by Christening them with their given name. Walk through these steps with them, which are on their handout:
“I behold the Spirit of Christ in you.”
“I Christen you as _____ Christ.” (Insert their first name, as in ‘John Christ’)
“I behold the quality of _____ in you.” (Insert their spiritual quality)
Place a drop of water on the Christened one’s forehead. Say: “This water represents the Spirit of Christ brought into your body, mind, and spirit as a symbol of your anointing” (a sacred ritual meaning the utmost respect for their Divinity).
5. Have the pairs go through these steps on their own for each other, keeping a sacred tone. When all have finished, say: “Jesus said that ‘where two or more are gathered, there am I.’ Now stand and join with your partner in a heart-centered hug, and breathe deeply three times together, knowing that together you are breathing the “breath of Spirit” into your names and your lives.”
6. End with a thank you to partners for providing this ceremony for each other.

Activity 3: New You “Tattoo”

Purpose: To symbolize our Truth outwardly

15 minutes

Supplies: makeup pencils

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Have everyone think of a simple symbol or picture for their quality. It can be anything that is meaningful to them. Have them use the pencils to make a “tattoo” of their symbol on their hand or arm. They can ask someone else to help them draw it if they want to. Explain that this can symbolize “radicalizing their Truth”—sharing their spiritual self openly with others instead of keeping it to themselves.
2. While they are drawing, start a discussion about the ways Jesus was radical in His Truth—that He was willing to give His physical life for speaking the Truth He knew, even though His teachings were radically different from other religious people of His time. Ask: “Do you ever hold back sharing your spirituality because others might criticize or ridicule your beliefs? What has stopped you in the past from radicalizing your Truth—sharing your spiritual self openly at school or work, or even at home? Who do you know personally that radicalizes their Truth on a daily basis? Think of someone you know and admire for being loving and wise and caring most of the time. This person will be your role model for the next activity.”
3. Allow a few more minutes for everyone to finish their “tattoos,” if necessary.

**Activity 4:
Radical Christ Skits**

Purpose: To practice radicalizing our Truth in daily life

20 minutes

Supplies: skit scenarios provided in envelope

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Divide into small groups of 3 people (or 4 if necessary). Have each group draw a skit scenario out of the envelope. Explain that the scenarios are situations we encounter often in daily life—times that we don't always step up and express our most loving Christ nature. It's easy to keep your halo polished when you're with your Y.O.U. friends, but harder sometimes at work, school, or home. (Leader: see the Appendix for a list of the scenarios we'll be using.)
 2. Announce that each group will have about 5 to 10 minutes to quickly come up with a short skit (about one minute long) that shows how you would express the Christ Love within if you were confronted by a friend who was trying to pull you in to one of these situations. Have them use the role models they came up with during the New You Tattoo activity to help them imagine, "What would that person do in this situation?" One or two can be the friend(s), and the other can be the one acting as the Radical Christ (being courageous enough to express your Truth in the presence of others who might not accept your views).
 3. Take turns acting out your scenes, and if there is time, encourage comments on each one.
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**Activity 5:
Comfort Break**

Purpose: To use restroom, get drinks, etc.

10 minutes

***Activity 6:
For Even-Numbered Groups Only
Appreciation Notes**

Purpose: To honor and support each other

25 minutes

Supplies: Genesis Journals, pens, CD or tape player, light music

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Have everyone sit in a circle with their Genesis Journal, pass their Journals to the person on their left, and begin writing their Appreciation Notes, passing to the left when finished with each Journal. Remind them to write things that will support and encourage them when they read them at home, and to include their address if they wish. Note: There will be one more opportunity to finish any remaining Notes on the last day.

Activity 7: Heart Talk Prep

Purpose: To create a safe space for sharing

10 minutes

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Begin by going over the Heart Talk Agreements. Be sure everyone understands them. Heart Talk Agreements are unchanging. Ask if anyone knows them. Be sure to include:
 1. Only the person with Heart talks; everyone else listens, giving complete attention and support.
 2. The Heart is passed only to the left—never thrown.
 3. You may choose not to say anything and just pass the Heart to the next person.
 4. Talk about how YOU feel, not about what someone else said.
 5. Listen without advice, criticism, judgments.
 6. Keep what is shared confidential within this group.
 7. Be considerate about how long you talk. Remember, others are waiting to share.
 8. Remain for the whole talk.
 9. The Heart continues until it goes completely around the circle with no one sharing (unless it is necessary to set a time limit beforehand). Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak.
2. Explain that this will be a Heart Talk for them to share their new Unimaginable self! Encourage them to focus on what they're excited about right now, what they've learned about themselves, their new insights, Divine surprises they've received, how they see themselves now compared to before they came to Conference. Do give them permission, though, to bring up anything else they feel a need to share. Now take some time to focus the group with a centering prayer. You may ask for a volunteer from the group to read. Invite the group to sit in a close circle, so they can hold hands without having to stretch. Say: "Close your eyes and take a deep, cleansing breath...and let it go...again, breathe in, breathing in the breath of God...and breathe out, letting go of all tension or concerns...feel the energy in the circle as it passes from your left hand to the person on your left, and as you receive the energy from the person on your right. See the love energy increasing as it circulates...God, we join together in this time and space of love and safety to share our deepest selves, and to offer our compassion and our full attention to the Christ, the Unimaginable self, in each person here. We affirm that what most needs to be spoken will be shared. And so it is, Amen."

Activity 8: Heart Talk

Purpose: To share your Unimaginable Self!

1 hour

Supplies: heart pillow

Preparation: play soft music at a very low volume if you like.

Directions:

1. Leader begins. Model the appropriate length of response and be willing to risk sharing from your innermost self. You might want to suggest a time limit of a few minutes each, so that everyone will have a chance to participate.
2. End the Heart Talk either when everyone has had a chance to share, or when there is not enough time to go around a second or third time. Try to let the heart go all the way around the circle so that everyone will have the same number of opportunities to share. Thank everyone for their willingness to share and their support of each other.

Activity 9:
Optional Energy Balancing
If time permits

Purpose: To give and receive support

5 minutes

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Form a circle, holding hands. Have everyone close their eyes. Explain that this is a time to share your energy with the group if you are feeling energized by the Heart Talk, or to receive energy from the circle if you are feeling depleted emotionally (like the "Take A Penny, Leave a Penny" tray at the check-out stand). Lead them through this prayerfully for a few minutes, inviting them to give or receive the energy of the group through their hands according to how they are feeling.

Activity 10:
Closing Circle

Purpose: To lighten the energy

5 minutes

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Go around the circle and have everyone think of a unique way to laugh: ha-ha, hee-hee, snorting sounds, etc. Say, "GO!" and have everyone laugh in their own way all at once. Keep it up until everyone is spontaneously laughing. End with a Texas Hug, "Tootsie Roll" spiral, or any other suggestion from the group. In case Family Groups do not meet tomorrow, remind everyone to bring cameras to the last Family Group Meeting if they want to take a group photo.

Family Group Meeting 6: *Turning Points*
Friday, approximately 11:30 to 12:30 pm* (time permitting)

(*Odd-numbered groups will end at 12:55 pm)

Following: International Business Meeting

Concept: Today is the day that we choose new patterns that will serve us in our spiritual path and keep us supported when we return home.

Affirmation:

I take responsibility to support myself spiritually by choosing thoughts, words and actions that bring me to my highest good.

Quote:

To change one's life:
Start immediately
Do it flamboyantly
No exceptions (no excuses)—William James

Objectives: To process the business meeting and explore ways to support ourselves on the spiritual path.

Activity	Purpose	Est. Time
1. Affirmation, Scripture, Prayer	to focus our energy	5 minutes
2. Check-In	to process the business meeting	10 minutes
3. Turning Points Mini-Siesta	to further explore the theme of the day	15 minutes
4. Life Scrapbook	to discover the paths that serve us	25 minutes
*For Odd-Numbered Groups Only:		
5. *Appreciation Notes	to honor and support each other	25 minutes
6. Closing Circle	to bring up the energy level	5 minutes

Supplies:

today's affirmation	scissors
Genesis Journals	pens
glue	markers

Preparation:

Read through the selection from Martha Smock's *Turning Points* to prepare for an informal discussion after the Mini-Siesta.

Activity 1:
Opening Affirmation, Prayer

Purpose: To focus our energy after the business meeting

5 min.

Supplies: Today's affirmation, CD or tape player, soft music.

Preparation: Have soft music playing and markers and paper available in the center of the circle.

Ask a volunteer to put today's affirmation on the wall.

Directions:

1. Ask for volunteers to read today's affirmation. Offer or ask for a volunteer to lead a prayer, perhaps focusing on our willingness to choose new patterns that support us in being our true spiritual selves.
 2. Ask for a volunteer to read the quote for the day.
-

Activity 2:
Check-In

Purpose: To briefly process the Business Meeting

10 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Ask how everyone is feeling and give them a brief opportunity to express any thoughts or feelings they may have about the meeting and elections. (Please be mindful not to let this become a Heart Talk...just a few quick comments). Thank everyone for their focus during the business meeting.
-

Activity 3:
Turning Points Mini-Siesta

Purpose: To explore the theme of the day

15 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Ask for a volunteer to read the selection below from Martha Smock's *Turning Points*. Let them know that this excerpt is printed in their Genesis Journals.

In the novel *War and Peace*, Prince Andrey had gone through a long period of grief; he thought of his life as over, of himself as dead to all that mattered. As he traveled through his land in the winter, he passed an old oak tree, bare, gnarled, dead-looking. He thought to himself, "I am like that tree."

It was in the spring when he traveled back across the same route, feeling as old, as tired, as depressed as ever, that he came to the oak tree again. It had come to life—new shoots, new leaves, new growth.

The tree, dead and hopeless, with which he had identified himself was green and growing and beautiful. It was the turning point for him!

Life is made up of many turning points. We go through many rebirths in a course of a lifetime. We turn many corners; we take many and diverse paths.

Anyone who has gone through some kind of severe illness knows how a turning point comes. He may not be fully recovered, but there comes a point when he knows that he is going to be healed. This inner conviction of healing is the turning point.

Turning points need not be (and oftentimes are not) dramatic. The man who said, "Today I walked down the street by myself without fear," had passed a turning point. The woman who said that she had been blaming others for inharmony and dissension in the home, and suddenly saw that she herself was the one who kept things stirred up, had come to a turning point.

Every time we find it in our heart to forgive and forget some past hurt or slight, it is a turning point.

Every time we come through a night of weeping and know that we cannot lose our own, that in God we are forever one with all we love, it is a turning point.

Every time we choose to be a giver rather than a taker, every time we look for something to praise rather than to blame, every time we discard old, limiting beliefs and stand tall and free, it is a turning point.

A turning point? It is always there!

And at every turning point, God is there. As we make the turn, God is there. God is with us all the way—through every turning!

2. Start a discussion about the reading by asking any of these or your own questions: "Has anyone had a turning point in their life that they'd like to share as an example? Have you had any turning points this week—realizations, insights, something that is clear to you now that wasn't before?" "We grow and learn at the pace we choose, and hold on to hurts until we are ready to release them. We decide when our turning points take place. What might be some ways we can choose to create turning points for ourselves?" "Forgiveness is a major turning point. It's been said that 'forgiveness is accepting that you can never have a past other than the one you have.' Would someone like to share a recent act of forgiveness you granted to someone else, or to yourself?"

Activity 4: Life Scrapbook

Purpose: To discover the paths that serve us

25 min.*

* This activity can be done as a shorter, improvised discussion: Lead a short centering meditation based on the words below (omit the instructions about making the scrapbook page) and ask the questions, then after the meditation invite individuals to each share one of their responses.

Supplies: paper, magazines you have brought from home, glue, scissors, pens, markers

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Say: "Pretend that you are a healthy, energetic 100-year-old. You have lived a wonderful life so far, choosing paths in life that honor and support who you are. You have become the person you always knew you could be. Your birthday party is tonight. Everyone important to you will be there.

"Make a scrapbook page of the wonderful life you have chosen to live so far. You can write, draw, use magazine cutouts, or any other way to express your ideas on paper. You might want to include the following: "What are the goals you've achieved, the pleasant surprises, the kind of places you've lived?" "What does your beloved home look like? Where is it? Who lives there with you?" "You have a very fulfilling occupation.

What is it? What do you do to provide a service or product to others?" "What does prosperity mean to you? Do you have a lot of money? friends? space? personal satisfaction? freedom? or something else?" "Who is important to you? Who are your dearest friends and loved ones? How would you describe the type of person you like to be with?" "What do you do to be so healthy? What are your longevity secrets?" "What are you most proud of?"

Announce that there will be about 15 minutes for them to create their scrapbook page, and that there will be a chance to share them with the group if they like.

2. Go around the circle and allow everyone an opportunity to show their scrapbook page and the fulfilling life they are living!
3. Close the activity by sharing the idea that the scrapbook page is like a road map of the paths that serve us spiritually, and we can redraw our road maps anytime we want to move in new directions.

**Activity 5:
For Odd-Numbered Groups Only
Appreciation Notes**

Purpose: To honor and support each other

25 min.

Supplies: Genesis Journals, pens, CD or tape player, light music

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Have everyone sit in a circle with their Genesis Journal, pass their Journals to the person on their left, and begin writing their Appreciation Notes, passing to the left when finished with each Journal. Remind them to write things that will support and encourage them when they read them at home, and to include their address if they wish. Note: There will be one more **brief** opportunity to finish any remaining Notes on the last day.
2. Remind everyone to bring cameras to the last Family Group Meeting if they want to take a group photo.

**Activity 6:
Closing Circle**

Purpose: To give closure

5 minutes

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. End the meeting with a closing circle, having each person say in one word how they're feeling right now. Finish with a closing prayer and a "Yea, God!"

Family Group Meeting 7: *The Joyful Vow* Saturday, 8:15 to 10:15 am

Following: Breakfast

Concept: We now make a joyful vow to commit ourselves to our Christ spirit within by choosing to express only the highest and best in every moment.

Scripture:

Affirmation:

I now make my Joyful Vow to express
only the highest and best in every moment,
and my Life becomes a wellspring of Joy
for myself and my world!

Quote:

Try not. Do or do not. There is no try. —Master Yoda

You cannot see God and forget about it.
You cannot feel perfection and then take refuge in halfhearted living.
When you have made the choice to see and be only Love,
you are committed to going all the way Home. —Alan Cohen

Objectives: To realize our power to create our highest and best life experience, to create our Joyful Vow, finish Appreciation Notes and give meaningful closure to the Family Group time.

Activity	Purpose	Est. Time
1. Party Set-Up	to create a joyful space	5 minutes
2. Affirmation/Scripture/Prayer	to get centered	5 minutes
3. My Life in Miniature	to focus our highest intentions	20 minutes
4. The Joyful Vow	to commit to our highest and best	20 minutes
5. The Cosmic Connection	to create an ongoing connection	5 minutes
6. Appreciation Notes	to finish up, if time is needed	15 minutes
7. Photo Op	to take group pictures	5 minutes
8. You CAN Take It With You!	to clean up, get Photo Books	15 minutes
9. Affirmation Circle	to meaningfully end our time together	10 minutes

Supplies:

today's affirmation sheet
balloons
candy
crepe paper
masking tape
Genesis Journals
Cameras
Photo Books (will be handed out by Head Sponsors)

Preparation: none

Activity 1: Party Set-Up

Purpose: To create a joyful space

5 min.

Supplies: balloons, candy, crepe paper, masking tape

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Give out the party supplies and tell everyone to create a party as fast as they can! They can pass the candy around, blow up the balloons, hang the crepe paper, even decorate each other! Let them know when the time is up, and have everyone sit and take a look at what a wonderful, joyful space they've created!

Activity 2: Affirmation, Scripture, Prayer

Purpose: To get centered

5 min.

Supplies: today's affirmation.

Preparation: ask a volunteer to put the affirmation on the wall.

Directions:

1. Ask for volunteers to read today's affirmation and scripture. Lead a prayer, using your own or the one provided:
"God, we come to our center today to celebrate our Joyful Vow. We are alive, alert and enthusiastic about the journey before us. We trust and have faith in Your plan, knowing that our Good awaits. Together we say, three times, 'Thank You, God, Thank You, God, Thank You, God.' Amen."

Activity 3: My Life in Miniature

Purpose: To focus our highest intentions

20 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: play soft, gentle meditation music

Directions:

1. (5 minutes) Read the following adaptation from *Letters of the Scattered Brotherhood*, pausing 5 seconds for each "...":
Find a comfortable position for your body...allow any tension to float away...let your mind and heart be open...begin to focus your thought on the Light of God within you...it IS you...imagine the 24 hours that are before you...new, unformed, waiting for the shape of your thought to create a form for the day...Realize that

each day is in miniature your whole life...Take it as one complete period to be lifted high...feel the sense of something already achieved...take today in your mind and lift it to the highest spiritual level you can reach...knowing that any challenge will be solved spiritually...The power given you when you awaken each morning with this thought will be tremendous...your high thought and intent is your direction for the twenty-four hours...“I am here, Lord, and I will follow thee and thy guidance and listen with an inward ear”...I am reborn this day...Though I have been here, I have never been here before...I will forget yesterday and I shall not dwell upon tomorrow...I will live my span in this miniature sample of a lifetime”...Resolve every time you are reborn to make God a reality at least once...by dissolving into the limitless space within you where there are no restrictions...where there is no poverty...no pain...but where there is peace...infinite love...and Oneness with God...visualize your day of high thought and intent...stay awhile in the peace and power of this day...(longer pause, one minute or so)...feel the power of your intention...and begin to slowly connect your awareness with your body...and return again to this time and space...here and now...and when you are ready, open your eyes.

2. (15 minutes) Have everyone find a partner across the circle and pair up. Leader sit out or pair up as needed. The person whose birthday is coming up sooner will share first. Leader, ask the first person to share their answer to this question with their partner while the other person listens and gives silent support and eye contact: “Imagine you have chosen to live your whole life in miniature today, with ‘high thought and intent.’ How will your life today be different from any other day?” Allow about two minutes for the first speaker to share, then have them switch roles so the other partner can respond. Thank your partner and give them a hug for listening and supporting you.
3. Brainstorm with the group using these questions: “What are some ways you can spiritually ‘take each day and lift it to the highest we can reach’?” “What does ‘high thought and intent’ mean to you?” “What are some ways you intend to ‘make God a reality’ at least once each day?”

Activity 4: **The Joyful Vow**

Purpose: To commit to our highest and best

20 min.

Supplies: Genesis Journals, pens

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Invite everyone to use the Joyful Vow page of their Genesis Journals (see Appendix) to guide them in writing their commitment to choosing their highest and best. Allow about 10 minutes for this.
2. Ask each person to share, if they wish, one of their responses on the sheet. Remind everyone that they will be taking the Journals home with them to help them remember their Joyful Vow.

**Activity 5:
The Cosmic Connection**

Purpose: To create an ongoing connection

5 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

Ask your group when a good time would be to “meet” again tonight for the next “Family Group Meeting”—a 15 minute, telepathic spiritual love connection and prayer support, after they’ve all arrived home. Make sure everyone knows what time it will be in their time zone. Suggest that they write the time on their hand so they won’t forget, and if the group wants to do this, choose an ongoing weekly day and time to meet for prayer time. Have them write the day and time in their Genesis Journals on the Cosmic Connection page.

**Activity 6:
Appreciation Notes**

Purpose: To finish writing our Notes, if necessary

15 min.

Supplies: Genesis Journals, pens

Preparation: play soft, gentle meditation music, if desired

Directions:

Pass the Journals around as before, reminding everyone to be sure they have written a note to everyone else.

**Activity 7:
Photo Op**

Purpose: To take group pictures

5 min.

Supplies: cameras, if they brought them

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Have everyone put their cameras in one place, and then everyone line up as quickly as possible in a group photo pose. Leader can take one picture on each camera, and then if anyone has a delayed shutter, the Leader can also get in the picture. (This plan streamlines the process and avoids the confusion of everyone trying to take their own pictures).

**Activity 8:
You CAN Take It With You!**

Purpose: To make sure nothing is left behind!

15 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Tell them you have a surprise for them once their room is clean. Now that you have their attention, ask everyone to take time to clean up the party supplies, candy, and any trash as fast as they can. Put workshop materials neatly in the bag (to be returned to AC after closing).
 2. When everything is cleaned up, give out the Photo Books and allow the remaining time for them to look through them.
-

**Activity 9:
Affirmation Circle**

Purpose: To meaningfully end our time together

10 min.

Supplies: balloon or other nearby object, such as a stone, leaf, etc.

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Form a close-knit circle, sitting down. Leader begins by holding the balloon and telling the group what you appreciate about a certain person in the group, without saying the person's name. Focus on spiritual qualities only; do not mention physical appearance. Then say who the person is as you pass the balloon to them. They also choose someone and tell what they appreciate, and pass the balloon. For example, "This person is warm and friendly to everyone, and has a great sense of humor—they really made me feel joyful being around them...and this person is Amy."
2. Tell them beforehand not to worry about being last...that whoever is last will be first! (you'll explain at the end).
3. When you get to the last person, stop and do an extra special recognition for them, in honor of their being the last one: Pass the balloon around and have each person say one word that describes that person, and end with a Tootsie Roll spiral hug with the special person FIRST in line (ending up in the middle of the hug)!
4. Close with a prayer that everyone will go home safely, and remind them that the end of Conference is just the beginning... that they will bring their Conference experience home as a new beginning for their life at home...and the process begins again...

**Go immediately to the closing
at the Dream Bench, 10:15 am**

Appendix

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Family Group Leader Reference

Genesis Journal Pages and Handouts

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Family Group Leader Reference

The Genesis Journal is an 5" X7" bound booklet consisting of blank forms for the Y.O.U.ers to use to record their experiences. You will see most of the Genesis Journal sheets referred to in your Conference Material for the first time at the Family Group Leader meeting on the first day of Conference. Most of these sheets are self-explanatory and are not included here. However, there are two activities included here for which it will be helpful for you to see the printed information ahead of time:

What Shape Are You In?

(This will be given as a handout)

The Meaning of the Positions and The Shapes

First look at the meaning of the positions:

The first position is how you see yourself, but it's not how you really are. It's just how you **THINK** you are.

The second position is how other people perceive you—what they see in you that you don't really see. You'll go, "REALLY? You see **THAT** in me?" And you'll probably feel flattered, and your friends will be going, "Oh, yeah, that's **DEFINITELY** you."

The third position is who you really are, and what you're focused on right now, even if you're not totally aware of it.

The fourth position is what you're completely done with, something that you already know backwards and forwards and don't want to or need to deal with anymore. You've graduated from this one!

The fifth position is something that you definitely do **NOT** want to be dealing with right now, because it's just not the right time for it. It's **NOT** something you **SHOULD** be doing at all, so don't feel guilty that you're putting it off. It's supposed to be put off, but it's something that you'll definitely be dealing with sometime in the future.

Now, for the meaning of the shapes:

The Circle: wholeness, completion, oneness

The Square: balance, stability, dependability, being responsible

The Triangle: visionary thinking, planning, manifesting, making it happen

The Spiral: adventure, change, creativity, excitement, new directions

The Plus Sign: the quality of your relationships (with other people and also relationships to your environment--job, school, family, etc.)

The Joyful Vow

This is my new Beginning.

I am Awakened to the call of my Divinity.

I am Lifted from the No of all nothing.

I listen daily In The Silence for the voice of God within.

I salute my Unimaginable self, the Christ in me.

**I create my own Turning Points
by choosing love, forgiveness and understanding
instead of fear, blame and judgment.**

**I hereby make my Joyful Vow to God
in honor of my rebirth as a Divine Being.**

I vow to support myself daily on the spiritual path by:

I vow to make God a reality in my life at least once each day by:

I vow to bless myself and my world each day with the Christ love within by:

**By this Vow I ensure that the path before me
will be full of joyful surprises and miraculous events.**

And so it is.

Amen!

Additional Activities

These may be used wherever you need an extra fill-in activity, or as curriculum ideas for future chapter meetings or rallies. Feel free to use them as you see fit.

Activity 1: Rename Yourself

Purpose: To play with a new unlimited view of Self

10 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Have everyone scramble the letters of their first name to make an unimaginably different one. Examples might be: Anne=Enan, Joshua=Ushajo, Kelly=Lelyk. Have them invent a spiritual meaning for their new name that describes how they would like to see themselves, at their highest and best, and go around the circle having everyone introduce themselves and their names' meaning. Example: My name is "Enan," and it means "one who is peaceful and serene."

Activity 2: Life Scrapbook

Purpose: To discover the paths that serve us spiritually

25 min.*

Note: This activity from Family Group 6: *Turning Points* is included here in case groups didn't have a chance to experience it during the meeting.

* This activity can be done as a shorter, improvised discussion: Lead a short centering meditation based on the words below (omit the instructions about making the scrapbook page) and ask the questions, then after the meditation invite individuals to each share one of their responses.

Supplies: construction or regular paper, magazines, glue, scissors, pens, markers

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Say: "Pretend that you are a healthy, energetic 100-year-old. You have lived a wonderful life so far, choosing paths in life that honor and support who you are. You have become the person you always knew you could be. Your birthday party is tonight. Everyone important to you will be there.
"Make a scrapbook page of the wonderful life you have chosen to live so far. You can write, draw, use magazine cutouts, or any other way to express your ideas on paper. You might want to include the following:
"What are the goals you've achieved, the pleasant surprises, the kind of places you've lived?"
"What does your beloved home look like? Where is it? Who lives there with you?"
"You have a very fulfilling occupation. What is it? What do you do to provide a service

“What does prosperity mean to you? Do you have a lot of money? friends? space? personal satisfaction? freedom? or something else?”

“Who is important to you? Who are your dearest friends and loved ones? How would you describe the type of person you like to be with?”

“What do you do to be so healthy? What are your longevity secrets?”

“What are you most proud of?”

Announce that there will be about 15 minutes for them to create their scrapbook page, and that there will be a chance to share them with the group if they like.

2. Go around the circle and allow everyone an opportunity to show their scrapbook page and the fulfilling life they are living!
3. Close the activity by sharing the idea that the scrapbook page is like a road map of the paths that serve us spiritually, and we can redraw our road maps anytime we want to move in new directions.

Activity 3:

3rd Rock

Purpose: A fun look at ourselves

10 min.

Supplies: paper, pens, markers

Preparation: write on a sheet of paper the following headings: Favorite Activity, Goal, Fear, Pleasant Memory

Directions:

1. Say: “Close your eyes and pretend you are an alien from outer space. You have just landed on Earth and have taken over the mind and body you’re in right now. You have heard that human beings have very powerful minds. As you settle in to this new human brain and body, you begin to access all the thoughts, feelings and memories of this person. Your mission is to study and get to know this human person, taking notes on what’s important to them, their activities, their worries, their goals, their fears, their favorite people and things. Take a few minutes right now to study the mind of this human being, making mental notes on the thoughts you find within their brain right now. Answer silently the following questions as quickly as you can (Leader: allow a few seconds’ pause for reflection after each question):
 - What is one of this human’s favorite activities?
 - What is one goal this human is striving to make happen?
 - What one thing creates the biggest fear response in this human’s mind?
 - What is this human’s most important pleasant memory?”
2. Put the sheet of paper with the headings where everyone can see it. Say: “Now return to your post here in the circle, and make a record of what you found, using this sheet as a reminder. You can write or draw your report, using words or symbols.” Allow about 5 minutes for this, and then invite anyone to share one aspect (more if time) of their report on the “human being” they studied.

Activity 4:
If I Were Not Afraid...

Purpose: To explore our deepest goals

10 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Have everyone find a partner and sit facing them. Let one person practice active listening (nonverbal support through eye contact, compassionate facial expression, and complete attention). The other person will complete the statement, "If I were not afraid, I would..." as many times as they can in the allotted time. Explain that they will have two minutes to speak, and that they should gently encourage themselves to continue responding even if it seems they have run out of responses. This can be a very powerful activity that helps people delve more deeply into who they really are and what is really important to them. At the end of the two minutes, ask the listener to give the person a supportive hug for sharing so deeply, and then repeat, giving two minutes for the listener to have their turn to respond.

Activity 5:
Yop

Purpose: To release tension

10 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. This is best done in a location where you will not distract other family groups, such as outside or if you have a family group location away from other groups. Take a few moments to lead a short centering time for everyone to get in touch with any tension they are holding, any walls they'd like to let down, any resistance they're feeling.
2. Have everyone find a place to stand where they can feel like they are in their own space, without interacting with anyone else. Explain that everyone will have this opportunity to release the tension, walls and resistance they may have inside, through the power of their own voice. Suggest that they can turn the energy of the tension, etc., into vocal energy, and use the vocal chords and their breath to create a release valve.
3. Have everyone hold a deep breath, and on the count of three, exhale by shouting together as loud and as long as they can, using the sound "YOP!" This should be a long, drawn-out syllable using all their breath, not a short one. Expect to repeat this step two or three times, encouraging them to shout louder and longer each time. End with a cheer and applause to congratulate them for freeing themselves of negative energy.

Activity 6: Stand-Off

Purpose: To practice a healthy response to negative energy

10 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

1. Have everyone find a partner and stand facing them, about two feet apart, with feet shoulder-width apart and hands up, touching palms to palms. Explain that this is a game that shows how we interact with others when we have a disagreement. The object of the game is for each of them to try to knock the other person off-balance by causing them to move one or both feet (symbolizing your winning the argument). They can only contact each other using palms to palms. No other touching is allowed. They are allowed to use their own strategies, such as "faking them out" by pretending they are going to push the other person's hands and then dropping their hands suddenly when the other person responds with resistance.
2. After doing this for a few minutes, have one person in each pair practice nonresistance by not pushing back with their hands. Have them pretend to be shock-absorbers for the other person's pushing. (This symbolizes nonviolence, nonresistance, refusal to become engaged in a "fight".)
3. Have partners switch roles so the other person can experience being the nonresistant one. Circle up and ask what this felt like, and how it helped diffuse the energy of the other person. Discuss how this technique might work in an actual argument or physical confrontation.

Activity 7: Octopus Massage

Purpose: To bond and experience safe touch

20 min.

Supplies: CD or tape player, meditation music

Preparation: turn lights low if you can.

Directions:

1. Form groups of three. Designate one person to go first, and instruct them to lie comfortably face down on the floor. Play soft, gentle music and have the other two in each group give a gentle, loving massage to the person. The person being massaged may make special requests before or during the massage (such as avoiding a tender spot, or that they prefer a lighter or stronger touch), to ensure that they will be comfortable with the process. After a few minutes, quietly instruct them to end the massage by resting their hands on the person, giving them their unconditional love and acceptance through their hands. Have them switch places and repeat the process until all three have received a massage.

Activity 8: Name Chant

Purpose: To honor each individual as a unique expression of God

15 min.

Supplies: CD or tape player, meditation music (instrumental only).

Preparation: turn lights low if you can.

Directions:

1. Take time to set a sacred tone for this activity. Explain that you will be using your unique given names as a way to acknowledge the uniquely Divine being that each person is. The group will chant each person's name with reverence, putting their loving energy into the name and allowing the sound of the name to be another name for God, empowering the person in the center as well as the group with the sound. Form a circle and ask for a volunteer to go first. The volunteer stands in the center, with eyes closed, and states the name they would like to hear (their first, middle and last, or just the first and last, for example). The rest of the group will "chant" the full name as stated by the volunteer, very slowly, three times, in monotone. It should sound like singing with only one note, like when using "OM," not like speaking. Example: "Elizabeth... Anne... Wilson... Elizabeth... Anne... Wilson... Elizabeth... Anne...Wilson". Let the person stand in the center for a few moments and absorb the experience of hearing the sound of their own name spoken lovingly and with reverence.

Activity 9: Belly Laugh

Purpose: To lighten the energy after a heavy discussion

5 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

Have one person lie down face up on the floor, and the second person lie down perpendicular to the first, with their head on the first person's tummy. The third person lies down the same way with their head on the second person's tummy, and so on, until everyone is lying down. The first person begins the Belly Laugh by saying "HA!" followed by each other person in turn, with their heads being bounced by the person's tummy as they say it. Everyone will be spontaneously laughing in no time!

Activity 10:
Kick-In

Purpose: To create an opportunity for prayer support

5 min.

Supplies: none

Preparation: none

Directions:

Form a close circle with arms around each other. Invite requests from the group, for anything they'd like the group to support with prayer, including healing, blessings sent to those not present, etc. The prayer request is typically stated as "I'd like to kick in for healing for my grandmother..." or "I'd like to kick in for the people in my group who couldn't be here..." The other people in the group respond to each request by putting one foot into the center, expressing their prayer support by saying, "I'll kick in for that," or any other spontaneous expression of support. When there are no more requests, lead a short group prayer honoring all the requests made and support received, and end with an 'Amen.'