



VESPER OUTLINE – SHARING OF OURSELVES

This lesson is designed to be small group discussion(s) based on scripture.

Enhancer of Joy

Scripture

Lesson Developed by

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Tips to Prepare

Check to make sure that no kids have allergies to skittles. You can always plan for another candy.

If you have a large youth group, break into teams for this session. Be sure to speak with your leaders beforehand about pushing youth to answer questions in depth, not just with a one word answer.

Materials Checklist

- Name tags
 - Skittles
 - Votive candles, tea candles or string lights
 - A few larger candles
 - Lighter
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Setting the Atmosphere

Select a separate room from the one that the youth gather and snack in for the vespers. Consider using a sacred space like a meeting house, chapel or other cozy space. Lights should be off or dimmed, and small votives, tea lights or string lights should bring just a touch of light to the space.



Scripture Focus

Romans 12:6-8

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Purpose

To facilitate and in depth, small group conversation with youth based on scripture.

Objectives

Youth will leave having had an experience of sharing of themselves in a safe space. To create a space of trust among youth. To provide youth with an opportunity to see how scripture can be thought provoking and bring about meaningful discussion.

Gather

Gather [5 minutes]



Greeting One Another:

Each student should be greeted by name by adults in the room. Have snacks available when they arrive and name tags out. Throw balls around or have them move around a bit to get excess energy out of their system before you start the session.

Opening Prayer:

Dear God, give us open and brave hearts ready to encounter you and one another. Give us ears to hear what is really being said and to hold sacred what is shared. Give us authenticity that we might be ready to laugh or to cry together. Finally, give us a sense of your presence in this space and outside of this circle. In your Son's name we pray. Amen.

Introducing the Session:

Vespers or small group conversations provide youth with a place where their voices can be heard. Small group conversations should always remain confidential and burdens that are too heavy for other youth to bear (ex: self-harm or suicidal thoughts) shouldn't be discussed within the circle, but youth should be made aware that their adult ministers are always available and willing to listen and care for them. It is important to set the tone of the conversation before it begins. All which is spoken of is kept between the group present, and is not to be shared in other social circles etc. When all youth agree to this they will likely feel as though they can be their true selves and reveal a bit more about who they are with their peers. Use the scripture from Romans to teach youth that all of God's people have gifts- some will be great listeners and some will have a compassionate hearts etc. When we share ourselves with others through meaningful conversations we open the door to share our gifts with others.

Engage

Engage [30 minutes]

Activity 1: Vespers

- Gather in the designated vesper space and have kids settle into a circle. Put a candle in the center of the circle.
- Open the bag of skittles and hand each youth a handful. Instruct them to not eat them yet.
- Have them count which they have the most color of and that is the question they will be asked to respond to. Plan to go around the circle once or twice.
- Instruct youth to take the candle from the center when they are ready to share. Everyone



else should remain quiet and respectful as they share.

- When someone is ready to share, ask what color they have the most of and ask the appropriate question:

RED: What is a gift or talent you have that you admire in yourself? Where do you get to use it?

GREEN: What is the greatest gift a place or community has ever given you? Why was it so special?

PURPLE: Who is someone that feels like a gift in your life? Why are they important?

ORANGE: What is one thing (heirloom) that you either received as a gift or know you will pass on as a gift? What is special in the receiving or giving?

YELLOW: If you could give anyone anything what would you give? Why?

- Close in the Lord's Prayer to end vespers.
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Reflect

Reflect [5 minutes]

Before youth depart share with them that having meaningful conversations doesn't just happen in a space at church when the lights are dimmed. We are called to get to know our friends and family in deeper and meaningful ways.

Send Forth

Send Forth [5 minutes]

- Encourage youth to go home and ask their family the question that they were prompted with answering today.



- As someone to offer a closing prayer.