

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Down to the River to Pray Activity & Explanation

Need: Down to the River to Pray song/cd, cd player, ribbons or something similar

Directions: First explain the symbolism of the whole thing (see application section below), then form 2 lines of people in kind of a tunnel format, each standing (or on their knees) waving a ribbon or something similar to simulate water washing over them. The person at the front of the line steps into the tunnel/river and slowly walks through it to the other side of the river, then takes their place again as part of the tunnel/river. Continue until all have been washed in the river

Application: Explain it like John the Baptist's baptism or Jewish cleansing. He walked in one side of the Jordan River and submerged himself and then walked out the other side of the Jordan River cleansed and baptized. The Jews did this in Jewish baths. They ritually went in one side of their cleansing baths and out the other side because it symbolized them being cleansed of all their sins (their lies, their hypocritical lives that said one thing and did another, their unhelpful acts against their friends and family and enemies, their indifferent attitude toward God, and all the other "stuff" that they needed to get rid of so they could have a fresh start).

Creative Expression Activity (from Warwick 2006)

Need: paper, pens/pencils

Directions: First handout a piece of paper and pen/pencil to everyone, then have them write down the following questions with space between to write answers. After you've given them ample time to think and complete the questions, divide them up into groups of 4 to share and see if they can come up with a theme. Then have each group come up with a way to present their theme to the whole group (examples: through visual arts, drama (acting it out or using creative movements), storytelling, music, or written poem or prose or whatever)

Questions:

1. A time in your life when you've been hurt.
2. Favorite childhood memory.
3. A person you miss.
4. Time you forgot something.
5. A first impression that you had that you later discovered was off/wrong.
6. An overwhelming moment in your life.
7. A moment of pure joy.
8. Name and/or situation of your first crush.
9. Something you learned from a child.
10. A time when you felt lonely.
11. A time or situation in which you missed an opportunity to witness.
12. A time when you made a new special friend.
13. Who is one of the most influential people in your life and why?
14. A concern you have about this coming year.

15. Where you went and what you did on your favorite vacation.
16. Who was your childhood hero and why?
17. A talent you have.

Prayer Labyrinth

Need: cd players, laminated paper with the station title & suggestions for prayer on it (for each station), a mirror, paper, pens/pencils, nails, hammer

Directions: Set up a prayer path with stations along the path where group members are to stop and pray. Each station needs a cd player that is playing music to match the theme of that station. The 1st station is “Noise” (a loud rock ‘n’ roll cd might be most appropriate here). At this station, they are invited to pray about ridding their lives of everything that interferes with their relationship with Jesus. The second prayer station is “Reflecting on Self and purpose in Christ”. Put a mirror on the wall for people to look into. Station #3 is “the World” where the group prays for anything and anyone in the world who is created by God (ie, areas struck by natural disaster, famine areas, places of persecution or disease, those who have not yet heard about Jesus Christ, etc). The last (4th) station is “Worry”. Here, they are asked to write down whatever is bothering them and then carry their worry list to the cross and after prayerful release, nail it there.

Application: Time with God to reflect on their life, to hand everything back over to God, to step outside themselves and pray for the wider world....pretty self-explanatory.

Candlelight World Prayer Broadcast

Need: candles for everyone, matches, a globe, groups, cards with a region of the world printed on it and a list of ideas to pray for that region

Directions: Give each person a candle and assign a region of the world to each group. Inform them that the lights will go off, and the leader in their group will begin praying for that region of the world (his candle is already lit), have them take turns praying for that region. After each person finishes praying, they light the candle of the person next to them and that person prays, until everyone’s candles are lit. Suggest some things that they can be specifically praying for that region (anything in particular that’s currently going on there, famine, homeless, the lost people who haven’t yet heard of Jesus Christ, specific people that they know who live in that region, persecution, etc). After all the candles are lit, prayer continues around the circle in the same way as before only giving thanks for what’s going on in that region.

Application: self explanatory

CFO Distinctives Activity Ideas (This next set is Carissa's)

Walking Meditations

Intended Audience: Youth and older children (must be able to read)

Connection to CFO Day: Morning Meditations

Supplies: phrases, quotes, or verses tacked to trees, benches, or anything else outside & quiet mellow music for background

Directions: In an attitude of silence, form a line of people spread out by about 15 yards to allow space between people. Walk slowly and quietly from tree to tree (the ones with quotes/verses attached to them), meditating on the words, thinking about the words. Don't crowd the person in front of you. Allow them whatever time they need to read the phrase before proceeding to the next tree.

Talking points for reflection/debriefing: It's a group activity, yet individual for reflection & youth introduction to meditation and quiet time with God

Ball Catch Sharing

Intended Audience: youth and/or children

Connection to CFO Day: Talks/Testimony Sharing

Supplies: A very large, cheap plastic ball from Walmart's toy section with fun *and* thinker questions written all over the ball with a Sharpie

Directions: Spread out around the room but have everyone face each other in a rough circle type shape so they can see each other, then toss the ball to one of the youth, they must catch the big ball with two hands and answer whichever question is closest to their left hand thumb. Once they've answered the question (the rest of the group may ask questions to inquire deeper about their answer if desired), they toss the ball to another person, proceeding likewise.

Talking points for reflection/debriefing: It requires and encourages each person to share about their lives – their past, present situation, and hopes for the future – as well as asks fun questions that simply help the youth get to know each other better (relationship builder)

The Lord's Prayer Rhythms

Intended Audience: youth and/or children

Connection to CFO Day: Rhythms (movement & reflection on devotion to God)

Supplies: none required

Directions: Have the group spread out, and echoing the leader, proceed through the Lord's Prayer using gestures and movement for each word or word group. Alternatively, you can have each pair of kids come up with actions/motions for each part of the Lord's Prayer. (Example: "Thy Kingdom Come" bring one arm down from the upward reaching position to the body builder flex position, and for "Thy will be done" bring the other arm down in the same motion, "on earth" reach low & sweep the ground, "as it is in heaven" swing to the sky & wave hands back and forth like tree branches, etc)

Talking points for reflection/debriefing: Break it down line by line and discuss what each part of the Lord's Prayer means and how we can incorporate it into our daily lives, what it means for us and how we live and interact with people

Creative Expression

Intended Audience: youth, college/career

Connection to CFO Day: Creatives

Supplies: paper, pens/pencils

Directions: First handout a piece of paper and pen/pencil to everyone, then have them write down the following questions with space between to write answers. After you've given them ample time to think and complete the questions, divide them up into groups of 4 to share and see if they can come up with a

theme. Then have each group come up with a way to present their theme to the whole group (examples: through visual arts, drama, storytelling, music, or written poem or prose or whatever) *Questions:*

1. A time in your life when you've been hurt.
2. A person you miss.
3. Time you forgot something.
4. A first impression that you had that you later discovered was off/wrong.
5. An overwhelming moment in your life.
6. A moment of pure joy.
7. Name and/or situation of your first crush.
8. Something you learned from a child.
9. A time when you felt lonely.
10. A time or situation in which you missed an opportunity to witness.
11. A time when you made a new special friend.
12. Who is one of the most influential people in your life and why?
13. A concern you have about this coming year.
14. Who was your childhood hero and why?

Talking points for reflection/debriefing: It encourages sharing/testimony, mutual care for each other, and encourages groups to share about God's thread of provision and strength and love that He's woven through our lives, often without us noticing...plus it's just plain fun to be creative!

2 Good, 2 Bad, 1 Great Prayer Activity

Intended Audience: youth and/or children

Connection to CFO Day: Prayer

Supplies: none required

Directions: Give instructions then instruct the group that we'll begin with 3-5 mins of silence to think about our answers to the questions and to quiet and prepare our hearts for prayer. But first, break large groups into smaller groups of 5-6 kids. In their group, they'll go around the circle sharing 2 good things that happened in their life in the past year, 2 bad or hard things that happened in their life, and 1 really *great* thing that happened to them. After they've shared those things with their group, have that kid move into the center of the circle and ask the rest of the group to pray for that kid – at least 4 prayers of thanksgiving to God for them or something they shared that happened in their life and at least 2 prayers asking God for something for that kid. After that, close with “and all God's children said.....AMEN!” (they always thoroughly enjoy saying that energetically) ☺ They then proceed to the next kid until all kids have been prayed for.

Talking points for reflection/debriefing: This is an introduction to prayer (especially praying out loud) since that's largely unfamiliar for most kids and praying for other people out loud is usually an easier starting point for kids – you can build on this later.

Truth or Challenge Icebreaker

Intended Audience: youth and/or children

Connection to CFO Day: general (get-to-know-you for 1st group get-together)

Supplies: pre-made truth cards, pre-made challenge cards (see file download for card ideas/examples)

Directions: Have the group sit in a circle and beginning with a youth leader, proceed around the circle in turn. Whoever's turn it is must decide which card they'd like to draw (a Truth or Challenge card) and follow the instructions on it, either sharing their answer to the Truth question with the group or demonstrating their random “skill” ☺ by following the directions on the Challenge card

Talking points for reflection/debriefing: this is a very fun and yet simultaneously under-the-surface, non-shallow look into the lives and thoughts of each youth/child, it's a relationship building activity

Refuge Afterglow Youth Activity

Intended Audience: youth

Connection to CFO Day: youth afterglow time/general

Supplies: a large playing field type of area

Directions: Form two teams. One team will represent the “persecuted church” and the other team will represent the “persecutors”. The object is to get as many members of the “persecuted church” as you can into the Refuge’s safe circle without them being captured/imprisoned. At the beginning of the activity, the “persecuted church” will be allowed to go out and scatter (3-5 mins to do so), then at the sound of the whistle “persecutors” will be released to go out and chase down the “persecuted church”. At this point and time, there is *no* Refuge to run to, so the “persecuted church” must hide and maneuver carefully to avoid being arrested. When the whistle blows the second time, a Refuge has come (ie, the whistle blower...me or some other youth leader). The “persecuted church” must find the Refuge and get into the Refuge’s safe circle in the allowed 10-12 minutes (with youth leader yelling out 5min, 2 min, and 30 second warnings before time expires). “Persecutors” may go anywhere, but can only capture someone by holding on to them long enough to say “you’re mine, you’re mine, you’re mine”. (Everyone is on their honor, so *please* be honest!) If a “persecutor” captures someone appropriately, they must then take their prisoner to the established prison. If a member of the “persecuted church” makes it to the refuge, they must be able to quote Psalm 46:1 by memory to the Refuge (ie, the whistle blower and youth leader) in order to abide there. NOTE: *No* tackling or using objects of any kind that could be construed as some sort of weapon!
Talking points for reflection/debriefing: To establish teamwork, reiterate the truth written in Psalm 46:1, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”, and solidify in the minds of the youth how God cares for us, sees us, and will protect us if we run/turn to Him for shelter when we’re going through hard times

Ambon, Indonesia Night Mission (optional)

Intended Audience: youth, college/career

Connection to CFO Day: youth time/general

Supplies: supply cards, bible, flashlights, tarp, light sticks

Directions: See activity folder files for this activity

Talking points for reflection/debriefing: We live in a world where comfort and security are the highest priorities for most people. In fact, today’s society finds it hard to believe in a truth worth living and dying for. But some Christians are finding the courage to do just that. Their calling to reach the unreached and the hardened hearts of people in other corners of the world, they argue, is *worth* the risk. God has given them a purpose worth living...and dying for, and that purpose is the salvation of those for whom Christ sacrificed everything to die for Himself. The love and compassion of these courageous Christians supersedes their own needs. They’re persecuted, beaten, thrown in prison, burned, and shot, but the truth is that the gunmen have not taken their lives. The gunmen cannot take away what these Christians have already given up (their lives). There is really nothing radical in going and giving one’s life in a remote and dangerous environment when one has already died to self by giving their life to Jesus Christ. This activity often takes youth to an altogether new and deeper level of faith in God, it forces them to a small degree to consider the strength of their faith and encourages them into a place where they begin to consider what it means to truly give your life to Christ. When Jesus first sent out His disciples (and later commissioned us) to disciple the nations, He did not say that we should share the gospel only where we are welcome and it’s safe to do so. He sent us to make disciples of all peoples, and He *demonstrated* the cost of such obedience by giving His own life on the cross. In Luke 9:23, Jesus tells us that we must take up our cross and die to ourselves. In 2 Timothy 3:12 and many other places throughout the New Testament, Jesus says that His followers will be persecuted...misunderstood, hated, and killed for His sake. He sends us (just as He sent the disciples) into a hostile world, asking for obedience with no guarantee of safety and security, at least not in a worldly sense. Endurance is vital to any sustained mission effort, but what *is* endurance? 1) The ability or power to bear prolonged exertion, pain, or hardship. 2) The survival or persistence of something despite the ravages of time. The Christian life is one of endurance. We must endure the hardships of indifference and rejection from those we share Christ with, sometimes even from those who are closest to us. We must intentionally persist in our efforts over time! We can not survive long on enthusiasm alone, but on genuine, God-strengthened determination to hold to Christ, to choose obedience, to carry our cross every day, to give our life back to Him, and then by extension, to reach the lost.

Activity Ideas
(These are from Robin Smalt)

Wall of Affirmation

Need: One piece of cardstock for each camper, different colored permanent markers

Directions: Each camper writes their name on a piece of paper and then the papers are taped to the wall. Throughout the week, campers can write encouraging messages to one another on each other's papers. At the end of the week campers read their own messages and can take the paper home with them.

Application: Christ-followers see the good in others and affirm those things

What Is Prayer? (Discussion)

Need: Small pieces of paper, pens, whiteboard (if possible)

Directions: Prayer is different for different people... let's expand our understanding. How would you describe prayer to someone who'd never heard of it? Have each person individually write one-sentence definitions of prayer and then compile answers. Let group discuss definitions that are new/intriguing to them. (E.g. communicating with God, relationship, spiritual attentiveness, intimacy, resting in God, focusing on Him, breath of the soul.) Follow this wherever it goes. Allow group to try a new sort of prayer if one occurs to them.

Application: Discipleship, expanding the spiritual life

Scavenger Hunt—Christ's Selflessness

Need: The words from either Mk 8:34-5 or Lk 9:23-4 written one to a page, adult helpers, Bibles

Directions: Find and piece together verse about Christ's selflessness (Mk 8:34-5 or Lk 9:23-4). Different groups of adults will have key words to the Scripture. In each group one person will be "set apart" (adults can decide for themselves how to do this). The person set apart will have the clues so the kids must figure out which person that is. If they are wrong, they must go to a different group of adults and then come back. Also, a different youth must be the one to ask. After the youth get all the clues, they must get a Bible and figure out the Scripture passage and then memorize it as a team. Afterwards, give them 3 mins each to think about what Christ's selflessness means for their life. Leaders share what it means to them. Then discuss as a group what it means for us this week.

Application: Contemplating who Christ was and what it means for our lives. Also prompts inter-generational communication.

Adult Interview

Need: List of starter questions for interviews

Directions: Send groups of 2 youth to interview and pray for one adult at Afterglow (about 20 mins)

Application: Changes youth perspective to "What can I do for someone else?" Also lets them get to know older campers as people.

Praying Through the Five Senses

Need: bag of candy, strong scent

Directions: Listen to surrounding sounds and pray for whatever it makes us think of (e.g. birds chirping cause us to praise God for His creation) OR play a song and have the youth worship as they listen. With eyes closed, reach into a bag of candy, touch, unwrap, and put candy into mouth. *Feel* and *taste* and pray (e.g. thank You Lord for your creativity in blessing us with different tastes, thank You for providing us with food). If possible, pass around a strong smelling flower or other scent. *Smell* and pray. Hold hands in circle and *feel* connected to the Body of Christ while praying. Lastly, open eyes and *look* at each other as we pray.

Application: Continue expanding campers' concept of prayer.

Intercessory Prayer

Need: nothing

Directions: Intercessory prayer (selfless love, solidarity with hurting world) for friends, family, cities, schools, country, world. Begin by yourself, then pray back-to-back with a partner, then in a group of four, etc. At each progressive step, intercede for a larger group.

Application: Continue expanding campers' concept of prayer.

You are the Light of the World (from various sources)

Need: squirt/water guns, individual candles, large or 3-wick candle, matches, an empty room or small field;

Directions: Break youth into 2 groups; Group #1 is the "worldly threats and distractions" or something similar; Group #2 are the young Christians. Leader lights Group #2's individual

candles, ideally from a 3-wick candle signifying Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Group #2 is to make their way from one end of the room/field to the other without getting their light doused by Group #1, who are armed with squirt guns. If a light is doused, it may be re-lit by a fellow Christian or by the leader with the large (3 wick) candle. Note to Leader: Remember that the Light is stronger than the darkness when setting up the logistics. After first round, switch groups and let them experience the other side. (Enjoy watching the youth come up with strategies to help one another, even when not instructed to do so.)

Application: Christians face challenges in their daily life, and there will be tough times. Christianity is a team sport. We are there for one another. Surround yourself with fellow Christians as you go out into the world. Remember that Christ is always alongside you, even when things are hard and seem impossible. He will always be waiting for you to turn toward Him and accept His grace. Run the race with joy and passion.

Scripture Drama (Martha Dobra)

Audience: children (and even adults!)

Need: Bible story, pieces of cloth from someone's fabric stash and cords or strips of fabric for Bible age costumes, cards for writing out parts, construction paper, fat markers and yarn for labels so we know who is who, various props depending on the Bible story chosen.

Purpose: To plant deep in every person's heart the reality of the stories we read in the Bible.

Plan: Read over the story with the children. Write out spoken parts for children and the narrative, which is read by the adult. Actually, the adult can just read the story out of the Bible. Practice with the children, the action and speaking parts. Have the children make their own name tags. If a few adults are required for acting parts, contact them, and let them know what they are to do.

Plan with the Council Ring the best time for the Performance. It can be during recreation or right after lunch if it is outside or before the worship and talk, or during fun-night, etc.

Gather props.

A the time of the Drama, let the children drape themselves with the fabric pieces and tie on head pieces, etc. and put their labels on. Let the adults dress in the left-overs. If this is done several years in a row, the adults will begin to bring their own costumes, and then it is really fun.

Children and adults act out the story as it is read and the children speak their parts when cued.

The simplified version is to act out stories during the class without costumes or labels.

This last batch of ideas were garnered during our workshop at May 2010 Annual Meeting. Except for the first one, I found this batch pretty discouraging. Do with them what you will.

Pam

Resting in the Grass

Intended Audience (youth, children, etc): Children

Connection to CFO Day (prayer, creatives, rhythms, etc): rest time

Supplies (pens, paper, etc): blankie, field, bug spray, nice day if possible

Directions (how to conduct the activity):

Take a walk across a large field, lawn. Lay in the grass and watch the clouds, birds etc. See pictures in the clouds, watch breeze in the trees.

Talking points for reflection/debriefing:

Are you relaxed? What did you see? Did God speak with you? Did you see Him at work?

Play time* (Not Sure this is really CFO)

Intended Audience (youth, children, etc): children

Connection to CFO Day (prayer, creatives, rhythms, etc): prayer

Supplies (pens, paper, etc): outside, trees, Bible verses

Directions (how to conduct the activity):

Jump rope, say your verse. Encourage and cheer when not performing.

Talking points for reflection/debriefing:

Encourage and cheer when they say the verse

Hallmark time

Intended Audience (youth, children, etc): children

Connection to CFO Day (prayer, creatives, rhythms, etc): worship

Supplies (pens, paper, etc): pens, markers, paper, glue, tape, glitter etc.

Directions (how to conduct the activity):

Have them make a card for God. Scriptures of remembering you. thanksgiving

Talking points for reflection/debriefing:

Tag Time * (NOT sure this is CFO yet)

Intended Audience (youth, children, etc): children, youth

Connection to CFO Day (prayer, creatives, rhythms, etc): ??

Supplies (pens, paper, etc): none

Directions (how to conduct the activity):

Play Tag. When tagged have to say a Bible verse or else they become it.

Talking points for reflection/debriefing:

Dodge Ball * (HOW is this CFO?)

Intended Audience (youth, children, etc): children, youth

Connection to CFO Day (prayer, creatives, rhythms, etc): rhythms

Supplies (pens, paper, etc): outside, balls, trivia questions with answers

Directions (how to conduct the activity):

Play dodge ball. When they get hit by a ball they have to answer a ? or recite memory verse to get out of jail

Talking points for reflection/debriefing: