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Go Fly A Kite - Delighting in the Lord

Senses involved: Sight, hearing, smell, touch

Supplies Needed: Windy day, big open field/beach, kite, extra string (read kite package) and anything else needed if you choose to add a camp/bon fire and food to your activity.

This wider expression of worship involves taking delight in the Lord. As we allow ourselves to play in his kingdom we connect with him on a more lighthearted level.

You can open with a name game, explain the activity, explain its purpose and help them feel at ease.

The whole idea of flying kites might not seem like worship to some and others may feel a little shy.

Ask them to help assemble the kites and attach the string. (Even if they've said they don't want to fly one, you can include them by asking if they want to help assemble). As they're assembling give instruction to be aware of their surroundings (through sounds, sights or smells).

Once the kites are ready, take some time to read some scripture about delighting in the Lord.

Possibilities are: Job 27:10, Job 22:26, Psalm 21:1-2, 1 Peter 1:8, Psalm 37:4.

Then, offer a prayer. Something like, 'Father, we want to worship you and delight in your presence.

Give us permission to let ourselves enjoy this time with you with no restrictions. Our desire is to experience the freedom and light heartedness by turning our focus to you. We want to praise you Lord!'

Let them have as much time as they desire or weather will allow with the kites. (If it just isn't windy at all, you best bring a back up plan such as a lectio divina)

After the activity, you can ask them any of these (or your own) questions:

*What were you thinking about as you were flying the kite?

*What did you see, smell or hear during this time?

*Describe the resistance you felt hanging onto the kite.

*What areas in your life relate to this tension?

*How do you think God feels when he sees his sons/daughters playing in his kingdom?

You can close with a short prayer. Something like:

Thank you Papa for giving us the freedom to play in your kingdom. We loved spending time with you and the beauty you've created for us to enjoy. We love you!

Valentine card to Jesus - Yup, this is for guys and gals

Senses involved: Sight, touch

Supplies suggested: Colored paper, crayons, markers, scissors, glue, stamp patterns/ink, worded candy hearts, anything that would complement making a card.

Note: A variation on this exercise would be to have them create a valentine from Jesus to them.

This wider expression of worship involves exploring a deeper level of intimacy with Jesus and allowing ourselves to enter into a love relationship with him.

You can open by explaining to them that worship is going to look a little different today/tonight and that you are going to be making a valentine card to Jesus. You could take the opportunity to share what intimacy looks like with Jesus. Just as in any loving relationship, we demonstrate our affection through shared time together, talking, playing, and creating space to know and be fully known.

Read some scripture about loving God. Possibilities are: Luke 10:27, Matt 22:37, Pro 8:17, Psalm 37:4, Psalm 91:14

Pray something like 'Lord, we want to express our love for you right now. We invite you to meet us in this time we offer especially for you. We worship and adore you. Our desire is to be close to you, feel your presence and hear your voice.'

Let people begin taking any supplies they would like to make their card for Jesus.

After the activity, ask any or all of these questions as God leads:

*What's coming to mind as you allow yourself to think of Jesus as your valentine?

*What words of love do you hear yourself saying to him?

*What emotions are surfacing as you make his card?

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*What, if anything, is he saying to you, through words or pictures?
Give anyone the opportunity to share their valentine out loud, but give them the option to pass.
Offer a closing prayer or transition into some ministry time.

Sky Lantern Surrender - Offering up our brokenness

Senses involved: Sight, Touch

Supplies needed: Sky lanterns can be purchased online. NOTE: This is now illegal in the state of MN, but not yet in WI.

Optional: fine point Sharpie pens.

Note: Paper lantern is extremely fragile; take care not to rip when writing. *Outdoors preferably over a large body of water *

This wider expression of worship involves allowing God to put his finger on an area in our lives that he is inviting us to release to his will. The lighting and releasing of this lantern can be powerfully used to bring healing and freedom in an experiential way.

You can open with a name game. Then, spend some time reading scripture that focuses on surrender. Some possibilities are: Phil 2:5-8, Matt 11:29, Matt 7:21, Psalm 13:3-6, James 4:7-10

Pray something like: 'Holy Spirit put your finger on anything that you might be asking us to surrender to you. Remind us that we can trust you with whatever you're going to highlight.

Introduce the lantern by explaining that it represents an area of their life that they feel God is leading them to let go of. Sit them in a circle with the lantern and supplies in the center and tell them that we are going to take time to pray and listen in order to identify what he wants them to release in a word or phrase. You may have the option of using art supplies of write or draw on tissue paper and attach to lantern.

As you are lighting the lantern, tell them to be thinking about any or all of these questions:

*What does it mean to you to watch the lantern go up in the sky?

*What did the delicate paper you worked with remind you of in your life?

*What is God inviting you to receive in exchange for what you let go?

Give them an opportunity to share their experience and end with Thank You Jesus, amen.

Mold Me Make Me - Allowing Jesus to shape our lives

Senses involved: Sight, touch

Supplies needed: clay or play doh, light music

This wider expression of worship involves shaping and creating something while yielding to Jesus, the potter, surrendering our will for his will. When we yield, we allow him to shape our lives to be everything he has created us to be.

You can open with a prayer, something like: 'Jesus, you were an example of how to yield to the Father's will. We want to be more and more like you. Show us what that looks like and reveal any areas in our life where we want control. Help us to hand that area and control over to you.'

Read some scripture that addresses yielding to the Father. Possibilities are:

Isaiah 64:8, Jeremiah 18:1-6

After everyone has a hunk of clay/play doh to work with, they can begin shaping it as they think about the questions below. Remind them the goal is to interact with Jesus and there's no wrong way to create. Play some light music.

*Who is shaping my life?

*How am I molded by the influence of others?

*How do the pressures of society direct my life?

*How is my life shaped by the demands of my schedule?

When they are done molding, move into discussing these questions.

*Consider your clay creation. What does it symbolize for you?

*How are you like or unlike the clay you are shaping?

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*How are you allowing God to mold you?

*If you're not allowing him to mold you, what is getting in the way?

Pray something like: 'Thank you for always shaping when we let you.'

Picture This - Seeing Through The Lens of His Love

Senses Involved: Sight, Hearing, touch

Supplies needed: Digital camera or cell phone cameras. Those without a phone can team up for this exercise.

This wider expression of worship involves capturing a picture of something in God's creation .To become more aware of and have an appreciation for God's creativity in nature.

Open with a scripture reading relating to the beauty of his creation. Some possibilities: Psalms 104:1-19, Romans 1:20, Nehemiah 9:6, Psalm 96:11-13

Pray something like: 'Papa, thank you for your creation. Show us your beauty in things we may not have found beautiful before.'

Have them go outside and start looking around asking Jesus to show them his beauty. They can take a picture of anything he reveals to them. Encourage them to interact with the object they are photographing with as many senses as possible.

When the activity is done, ask some or all of the following discussion questions:

*What was he saying to you as you were looking around?

*What was it like to really see something with new eyes as you looked upon his beauty?

*How does it make you feel knowing he created all this beauty for? Imagine if he had created the world in only black and white!

Finally, give them the opportunity to show their picture and share what they found beautiful.

Close with a prayer. Something like: 'Thank you Papa, for walking and talking with us about your beauty, your creation and giving it all to us as a gift. We appreciate how you paid attention to every detail and we want to worship you by doing the same.'

Lectio Divina - Divine Reading

Senses Involved: Sight, hearing

Supplies Needed: Selected scripture

This wider expression of worship is a method of praying with scripture that involves listening with the heart. Select a short passage from the bible - usually no more than a few verses - and read it three times through, slowly reflecting on each word and phrase, paying attention to how scripture is sifting our soul.

Select a passage to be read. The Psalms are a wonderful choice.

Begin by praying something like, 'Lord, speak your truth into our hearts through your word. Amen.'

Have a minute of silence to become present before you begin.

First reading - read the passage slowly one time through. Be sure to pause between each phrase. An example from 1 Corinthians 13: 4: Love is patient (pause) Love is kind (pause).

Enter into three minutes of silence.

Second reading - read the passage slowly again as before, and be aware of any words or phrases that catch your attention or that you feel God is highlighting.

Enter into three minutes of silence.

Third reading - read the passage slowly again as before, and prayerfully ask God what He is saying to you specifically through the word or phrase that stood out to you. Then, ask God to show you how to walk it out in your life.

Enter into three minutes of silence and say amen.

Be sure to leave time for people to share their experience and what they felt like God revealed to them. This is a significant piece of the meditation and can be a powerful time of ministry.

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Visio Divina - Divine Seeing

Senses Involved: Sight

Supplies Needed: A painting, photograph, or digital image. You can also handout printed copies, paper, colored pencils or pens.

This wider expression of worship is praying with images or other media and invites us to see at a more contemplative pace. The intent is to see deeply, beyond first impressions, below initial ideas, judgments, or understandings and allow God to speak to us personally.

Explain that you are going to lead them through a session of Visio Divina, where they will interact with God through contemplative prayer with an image. The meditation involves looking at an image three separate times and allowing God to speak to us as he brings up feelings, ideas, memories and revelation. They can respond to him by journaling, drawing pictures, words, writing a poem or song. There is no wrong way to respond!

Pray something like this, "Lord we invite you here, would you be our guide as we enter into a new expression of worship. Give us eyes to see what you have to show us through this image and ears to hear what you are speaking. We love you, amen."

Begin with a minute of silence to become present.

When you are ready, look at the image, taking time to let feelings and thoughts come to you as you take in forms, figures, colors, lines, textures, and shapes of the artwork.

Spend the next five minutes asking the following questions to guide their viewing:

*What are your initial thoughts or feelings?

*What does it look like or remind you of?

*What do you find yourself drawn to?

*What do you like and not like?

Tell them in this initial stage of seeing, to simply notice these responses without judgment or evaluation. If you don't like the image, or the feelings evoked, simply acknowledge that this is your initial response and continue to stay open to the image and the prayer.

If you have an immediate idea as to what the image means, again, simply acknowledge that this is your initial response and stay open to "the more" as the prayer unfolds.

Look at the image a 2nd time

Tell them: allow your silent prayer to expand as you return to the image with an open heart and mind. New thoughts, meanings, and feelings may arise; initial impressions may expand and deepen. No matter what your response to the image is -delight, disgust, indifference, confusion, ponder prayerfully the reason for your various responses and what these responses might mean for you.

Look at the image a 3rd time

As your prayer deepens, ask the Holy Spirit what he wants to unveil. Continue to be aware of the thoughts, feelings, memories and meanings evoked by the image.

Respond to what you are experiencing by journaling, drawing pictures or words as you reflect on the following questions. This is for your eyes only.

*How are the things you are responding to in the image connected to your life?

*What do you feel like God is showing you personally?

*How is he inviting you to walk this out in your life?

End by resting in God's grace and love and say amen.

Be sure and leave time for people to share their experience and what they felt like God spoke to them. This is a powerful time of ministry and connection as people share.

Handel's Hallelujah Chorus - Hearing it again for the first time

Senses Involved: Sight, hearing

Supplies Needed: A recording of the piece. Buy on iTunes or play from YouTube. Copy of lyrics to hand out, a few candles if dimming lights.

This wider expression of worship will allow people to praise God as we understand the inspiration for, and the creative process involved in penning this musical masterpiece.

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Begin by explaining that we are going to do something different for worship and will be listening to Handel's Hallelujah Chorus. Most of us are very familiar with this traditional hymn and hearing it performed during the Christmas season. We are usually not aware of the rich history or divine inspiration behind its creation.

Start with a prayer like, "God thank you for who you are. Thank you for gathering us here together in community and we ask that you would melt away the cares of our day so that we can be fully present and experience you."

In 1741, George Frederic Handel was extremely discouraged and felt that he was giving his last concert as he was being forced to retire from public activities at the age of fifty-six. Then he was given a commission from Dublin charity to compose work for a benefit performance. Handel set to work composing and grew so absorbed in the work that he rarely left his room, hardly stopping to eat. A friend who visited him as he composed found him sobbing with intense emotions. Later, as Handel groped for words to describe what he had experienced, he quoted St. Paul, saying "whether I was in the body or out of my body when I wrote it I know not".

Within six days part one was complete. In nine more days he had finished part two, and in another six, part three. The orchestration was completed in another two days. In all, 260 pages of manuscript were filled in the remarkable short time of 24 days. Sir Newman Flower, one of Handel's many biographers, summed up the consensus of history: "Considering the immensity of the work and the short time involved, it will remain, perhaps forever, the greatest feat in the whole history of music composition."

Handel's title for the commissioned work was simply Messiah. It is based on 3 scriptures out of Revelation.

Have someone read the following scriptures:

Rev. 11:15 "The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.'"

Rev. 19:6 "Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: 'Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.'"

Rev. 19:16 Revelation 19:16: "On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

Tonight we are going to listen to a section of the Messiah called Hallelujah Chorus - The word "Hallelujah" is compounded of two words, signifying praise and Yah---a contraction of the Hebrew name of God. Hallelujah means Praise ye Yahweh.

At this time, pass out lyrics, light some candles and dim lights and say the following:

Messiah premiered on April 13, 1742 as a charitable benefit, raising 400 pounds and freeing 142 men from debtor's prison. He never directed for payment only charity.

Play music

Lyrics:

Alleluia (Aleluya)

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah

For the lord God omnipotent reigneth
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah
For the lord God omnipotent reigneth
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah
For the lord God omnipotent reigneth

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah
(cont.)

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Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah
(For the lord God omnipotent reigneth)
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah,

For the lord God omnipotent reigneth
(Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah)
Hallelujah

The kingdom of this world; Is become
The kingdom of our Lord,
And of His Christ
Of His Christ

And He shall reign forever and ever
And he shall reign forever and ever
And he shall reign forever and ever
And he shall reign forever and ever

King of kings forever and ever hallelujah, hallelujah
And lord of lords forever and ever hallelujah, hallelujah
King of kings forever and ever hallelujah, hallelujah
And lord of lords forever and ever hallelujah, hallelujah
King of kings forever and ever hallelujah, hallelujah
And lord of lords
King of kings and lord of lords

And he shall reign
And he shall reign
And he shall reign
He shall reign
And he shall reign forever and ever

King of kings forever and ever
And lord of lords hallelujah, hallelujah
And he shall reign forever and ever
King of kings and lord of lords
King of kings and lord of lords
And he shall reign forever and ever

Forever and ever and ever and ever

(King of kings and lord of lords)
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah

End with a few minutes of silence, as emotions will be high.

Allow time for people to share their experience if they would like.

Orange – Peeling Back The Layers Of Our Soul

Senses Involved: Sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste

Supplies Needed: Oranges or Cuties, napkins

Note: Allow at least 15 minutes to do this exercise, it's important not to rush.

This wider expression of worship involves leading people through a prayerful meditation as they peel and eat a simple orange. It is a creative way to teach people to slow down and experience God and his goodness in the most regular, everyday activities of life.

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Begin by telling the group the definition of worship: **It is our response to our knowledge and experience of God.** Pass out the oranges and explain that we are going to explore experiencing God through our five senses with a guided meditation of peeling and eating an orange. Please do not start to peel it yet; we are going to do it as a group.

Pray something like "Father, would you help us meet you face to face and experience your goodness through the use of all the senses you have given to us as a gift."

Instruct them to start by really looking at the orange as you turn it in your hands. Notice the color, texture and any imperfections. Allow a few minutes for this.

When they are ready, instruct them to slowly peel the orange. Notice the sound as you pull back the skin, the feel of the peel in your hands. After a few minutes ask them to smell the orange and to reflect on the abundance of having an orange possibly out of season, readily available at any hour in Minnesota. Reflect on the abundance of God. Allow a few minutes for peeling.

When you are ready, begin to separate the orange and start to eat it. After a few minutes say, "Psalm 34:8 says to taste and see that the Lord is good. Thank him for making taste buds."

*What is God speaking to you as you separate the sections?

*How is the roughness of the peel or the sweetness of the juice a symbol for areas in your life?

Do not rush the process. Allow at least 15 minutes to peel, eat and simply enjoy being with God.

Wait until most have finished eating and then ask if anyone would like to share their experience and what they felt like God spoke to them. This is a powerful time of ministry and connection as people share.