

Youth Night

The Old Testament and the Promise of a Savior

Purpose of the Night

This Youth Night is designed to provide a teaching and overview on the Old Testament with the creation of man and the fall of man and God's promise of redemption. Often times, we can place aside the Old Testament and put it off as irrelevant because of its time in history, its long and confusing words and names such as "Habakkuk", and because it really doesn't seem to mention or be anything about Jesus...or so we think. In reality, the entire Old Testament is all about Jesus and our Father's plan to send Him as a redeemer for our Original Sin.

Supplies Needed

Bible for each small group
Paper and pencils for each small group
Blindfolds
candles

Environment

The environment for this night should represent the image of sin and its effect on mankind. On one end of the room, create the scene of a garden by bringing in potted plants and anything else that represents a garden. Attached to the garden place a chain that weaves around the room to the other side where there will be a cross. At various parts of the chain, place images or statues that represent scenes or people in the Old Testament. When the chain reaches the cross, have it broken.

Preparation

Snacks/fellowship time (20 minutes)

Before diving into the topic, have snacks or even a meal available for the youth as they arrive. Play fun music while youth are coming in. Allow them time to socialize with their friends as well as to meet any new people. Be sure to have yourself as well as any core team mingle among the kids and reach out especially to anyone who may be new. This time would also be a good time for any announcements as well as announcing any birthdays.

Small Group Icebreaker Game – "Write Draw Write" (15 minutes)

Divide the group into small groups of 6-12 people or if the whole group is smaller than 12 people, just have one group. Create a stack of small pieces of paper for each person. Each stack should have the same number of pieces of paper as people who are playing. To begin the game, have each person write a word or short phrase on their first piece of paper. Do not have anyone share who is writing. Once everyone is finished, each person will pass their stack of paper to the person on the right. Each person will now have a new stack of paper. With the new stack have each person read the word or phrase to themselves and then place the first piece of paper at the back of the stack. On the next piece of paper, each person will

draw a picture describing the word or phrase. Pass to the right and do the same thing, only this time, write a new word or phrase describing the picture. Keep repeating these steps until the stacks have gone all the way around and each person has their original stack. Have each person share the contents of the stack.

Introduction of the Topic (5 minutes)

Transition the youth into the main space to begin the night. The youth minister will begin by welcoming everyone and introducing the topic of the night. Process the opening game by explaining how God's plan for us at creation was perfect, but how original sin affected all people and our perfect nature was altered because of it just as the messages in the game were altered from round to round.

Proclamation

Proclamation verse: Revelation 21:4 – "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain".

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Reading (Revelation 21:1-4)

A Reading from the Book of Revelation

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them [as their God]. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away."

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

We come before you this day in thanksgiving for your great plan for us. We are sinners as our first parents, yet even in their disobedience, you promise redemption through a savior. Let us trust in your plan and look to the example of your servants throughout the Old Testament and ultimately in the example of your Son, Jesus Christ. We ask this in Your Name.

Amen.

(Optional) If you have a musician who can begin the night with a praise and worship song, that could be used as the opening prayer

Explanation

Teaching (10-15 minutes)

Choose a speaker to talk to your group about this topic and its importance in our lives. The speaker can be the youth minister, a core member, a parish priest or deacon, a guest speaker, or anyone who you feel may be qualified to speak on the topic. You can use the outline below to provide some thoughts for this talk.

Our Faith is built upon a trust and hope in God's Plan

- What is hope?
 - o *Hope – The theological virtue by which we desire and expect from God both eternal life and the grace we need to attain it (CCC 1817)*
 - o Often times in life, God's plan is difficult to see and realize. This was especially true in the beginning of Scripture when mankind fell to sin and it seemed that humanity was destined for an eternity without God. Yet through God's perfect and complex plan, He delivered us from sin

This plan begins and unfolds through the Old Testament

- The Fall of Man – Man's rejection of God
 - o **Genesis 3**
 - o At the very beginnings of Scripture, man was created along with all of creation. However, even in paradise, Adam and Eve were succumbed to temptation and fell allowing all of mankind to fall from God
 - o However, God's promise to redeem us – **Genesis 3:15**
 - o This promise unfolds throughout the course of the entire Old Testament

The Old Testament pre-figures and prepares us for Christ

- Prefiguring figures
 - o Noah
 - o Abraham and Isaac
 - o Jacob
 - o Moses
 - o David
- Prophets spoke about an point towards the climax of this Plan

We must use the Old Testament in our own spiritual journey of finding trust in God

- The Old Testament is actually all about Jesus. Everything in it points toward His coming and we can use this part of Scripture to allow our lives to point to Jesus.

Application

Small Group Discussion (15-20 minutes)

Lectio Divina

Each person in the group will receive a slip of paper with the Scripture passage below on it and a pencil. The group leader or one of the youths should read the passage aloud. Take about 30 seconds to silently think about it. Have it read again. Take about a minute to silently meditate upon it and encourage the group take notes or underline key words that might stick out. Have it read one final time and then begin to discuss.

Revelation 21:3-4 – *“I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with*

them [as their God]. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.”

Small Group Questions

- What stood out to you from this passage? Was there a word or phrase that spoke to you?
- What is the meaning of this passage?
- The passage says, *“He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.”* What has caused the “tears” and what is meant by the “old order”?
- The Fall of Mankind at the beginning of Scripture was the original choice of disobedience to God. How do we see the Fall manifested in our world today? What are some of the ways in which our world is “fallen”?
- How, in our own lives, are we affected by the Fall? How are we as individuals fallen?
- Why is the Fall of Mankind an important theme in the Old Testament?
- Why did God allow for such a long chain of events (the Old Testament) between the Fall of mankind and Jesus? Why didn’t He just redeem us right after Adam and Eve committed Original Sin?
- Is the Old Testament significant? Do we really need it since Jesus has already risen from the dead and redeemed us? (Yes we do!)
- How is the Old Testament significant for our lives today?

Trust Walk (20 minutes)

Begin Small group with an opening prayer

- Take a moment to explain that they will be taking part in a very prayerful experience in the next few minutes. It might be a good idea to have your small group enter into some silent prayer for a minute or some sort of brief exercise that gets them to quiet down and enter into a spirit of prayer

Read the story of the Fall

A Reading from the Book of Genesis

Now the snake was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden’?” The woman answered the snake: “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.’” But the snake said to the woman: “You certainly will not die! God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know good and evil.” The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Quietly have the teens form into a line and be blindfolded. Take one more chance to remind the teens that they will be participating in a prayerful experience so they should not be talking to anyone. Encourage them to pray and meditate silently on the Scripture.

Guide your line outside and ultimately to the church or a prayerful place. You can take whatever route you'd like just as long as you don't take too long. While walking, stop periodically to read one verse (below) at a time. Be sure to read the verses in order:

Genesis 3:14-15 – *Then the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you shall be banned from all the animals and from all the wild creatures; On your belly shall you crawl, and dirt shall you eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel."*

Genesis 9:9-12 – *God said to Noah and to his sons with him: "See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you: all the birds, and the various tame and wild animals that were with you and came out of the ark. I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all bodily creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood; there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth." God added: "This is the sign that I am giving for all ages to come, of the covenant between me and you and every living creature with you"*

Genesis 17:5, 6-7 – *No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I am making you the father of a multitude of nations... I will make nations of you; **kings** will stem from you. I will maintain my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout the ages as an everlasting covenant, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.*

Exodus 3:5-6, 13-14 – *"God said: Do not come near! Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your father", he continued, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God... "But," said Moses to God, "if I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what do I tell them?" God replied to Moses: **I am who I am**. Then he added: This is what you will tell the Israelites: **I AM** has sent me to you.*

Exodus 12:12-14 – *For on this same night I will go through Egypt, striking down every first-born of the land, both man and beast, and executing judgment on all the gods of Egypt-I, the LORD! But the blood will mark the houses where you are. Seeing the blood, I will pass over you; thus, when I strike the land of Egypt, no destructive blow will come upon you. "This day shall be a memorial feast for you, which all your generations shall celebrate with pilgrimage to the LORD, as a perpetual institution.*

1 Samuel 17:37, 49-50 – *David continued: "The same LORD who delivered me from the claws of the lion and the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul answered David, "Go! the LORD will be with you." ... David put his hand into the bag and took out a stone, hurled it with the sling, and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone embedded itself in his brow, and he fell on his face to the ground. Thus David triumphed over the Philistine with sling and stone; he struck the Philistine dead, and did it without a sword in his hand.*

2 Samuel 7:8-11 – *Now then, speak thus to my servant David, Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the flock, to become ruler over my people Israel. I was with you wherever you went, and I cut down all your enemies before you. And I will make your name like that of the greatest on earth. I will assign a place for my people Israel and I will plant them in it to dwell there; they will never again be disturbed, nor shall the wicked ever again oppress them, as they did at the beginning, and from the day when I appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you*

Isaiah 43:1, 49:16 – *I have called you by name; you are Mine! ... Behold, I have inscribed your name on the palm of My hands*

Jeremiah 29:11 – *For I know the plans that I have for you, plans for your welfare and not your woe*

John 14:12 – *He who believes in Me, and the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do*

Revelation 21: 4 – *“Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them [as their God]. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.” The one who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.”*

Celebration

Eucharistic Adoration (10 minutes)

At the end of the trust walk, groups will conclude in the church in front of the Blessed Sacrament in Eucharistic Adoration. If Adoration is not possible then gather in front of the altar or tabernacle or if not the church then in a suitable prayerful place. Try to make the environment for this as prayerful as possible. Turn down the lights and have a lot of candles.

Once everyone is in, have everyone remove their blindfolds and have a few minutes in silent prayer. Conclude the prayer with a Hail Mary.

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

The Youth minister or an adult core member should offer a few words to process the trust walk and closing prayer by discussing how sin blinds us to God’s love. Yet over the course of the Old Testament, God still guides us ultimately to Christ who restores us back to sight.