

JOURNEYING TOGETHER IN HOPE: ADVENT 2020

First Week: HOPE



Aim: Participants will have a better understanding of what Hope is and to awaken new hope through a deeper awareness that the Christ Child desires to be born anew in them. Also, for them to embrace their journey in hope this season.

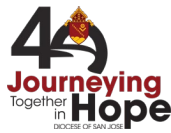
Preparation needed: Set up a group session with family and/or roommates. Follow all health and safety considerations. You can also have this session with a group on Zoom or another platform.

Materials

1. Bible
2. An Advent wreath or a candle
3. **Gathering Song:** Song: Ready the Way | Curtis Stephan
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GGd6n5g8bo>
4. **Song of Reflection:** Hail Mary, Gentle Woman
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RERoQ1biLdE>

Structure for session:

1. Welcome, Light first purple candle or a candle you may have.
2. Play gathering song and followed by prayer.
3. Sharing Human Experience provided in the session.
4. Message
5. Reflection & Integration
6. Response – What are you being called to do?
7. Final prayer



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Opening Prayer:

- **Light the 1st candle (purple) of the Advent wreath. As you light it say:**
"We light this first purple candle because, like God's people centuries ago, we look forward with hope to the coming of Christ"
- **Then play the following song if possible:**
"Ready the Way" – Curtis Stephan | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GGd6n5g8bo>
- **Conclude with the following short Advent Prayer:**
"Lord, as we gather, may you guide us this holy season of Advent, to be closer to You. Strengthen our hearts with hope and give us courage to live each day praising You. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen."

Human Experience: We begin a conversation explaining that we will reflect on the topic of hope this week. Please feel free to use these questions or your own:

- *Recall a time when you put hope in something or someone.*
- *How did it go? Were disappointed or did everything work well?*
- *Describe the situation and how you felt.*

Message: Use the following key concepts to begin sharing the message of the week.

1. Hope is not a wish. It's not outcomes or conditional. It's not optimism or a strategy.
2. Hope is relational. It's bigger than if things are going well for me.
3. Hope is rooted in Faith.
4. Hope is "a theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying, not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit." (CCC #1817)
5. "Hope is knowing the Lord, believing in his promises, and trusting that he loves us, transforms us and sanctifies us." - Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, encyclical *Saved in Hope, Spe salvi*."
6. Hope is knowing that our lives have meaning.

Use one or more of these bible passages to read with your group(s) or family.

- *The Call of Abram* - Genesis 12: 1-3
- *The Annunciation of our Mother Mary* - Luke 1:26-38
- *The Birth of Jesus Foretold to St. Joseph* - Mathew 1:18-25



Reflection, Discovery and Integration: Use the following questions to help participants personally reflect the topic of hope.

1. What is standing between you and an intimate hope-filled relationship with God?
2. How does Abram's call from God or Mary's "yes" to God inspire you to hope?
3. What situation(s) is God calling you to become a person of hope?

Response: Use the following question to help you in bringing out the response which God is calling you to do with the help of the Holy Spirit.

1. What is God giving you the chance to say yes to this Advent?
2. What can you do to make it a reality?

As time comes to an end, you can play the follow song followed by the closing prayer.

- Hail Mary, Gentle Woman (Jaime Biller)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1KT06TjwJA>

Closing Prayer: *Mother of hope, Accompany us on our journey! Teach us to proclaim the living God; Help us to bear witness to Jesus, The one Savior. Make us kindly toward our neighbors, welcoming to the needy, concerned for justice, Impassioned builders of a more just world. Intercede for us as we carry out our work in history, Certain that the Father's plan Will be fulfilled. Dawn of a new world, show yourself the Mother of hope and watch over us! The birth of your Son Was the dawn of our salvation. May we allow the Spirit to work in our lives in an effort to bring us closer to lasting peace. Amen.*

St. Pope John Paul II