Intergenerational Worship

Bible Reading – Psalm 122
Year A – Advent 1 November 27 2016

What is this: Intergenerational Bible Reading and Art Observation

Where it’s used: In any intergenerational gathering, but specifically Lectionary based gatherings.

Time: 8 minutes

Bible Focus/theme: Psalm 122

What’s needed:

- Enough wooden blocks to build a convincing sized city; at least one block per person in your gathering. Print out individual phrases of the text of Psalm 122 (a few words is enough, but they should make sense) on paper and tape one to the side of each of the blocks.
- Distribute the blocks among your gathering before the service begins, either by leaving a block on or under each seat, or ask some helpers to add to the welcome and greeting at the door and give a block to each person as they arrive, saying something like ‘Please take a block - this will help with joining in the Psalm today.’
- Clear stable space for block building.
- Art work by Chris Booth as an A1 sized poster, set as a backdrop to the space where your city will be built
Today we are reading from Psalm 122 from the Bible. This is a poem-y prayer calls God’s people to go to God and pray for peace for our cities.

So as we read the Psalm today, we are going to bring it to life in two ways:

Firstly, it calls God’s people make a journey, to ‘go up to the house of the Lord’ – so I’m inviting all of us to get out of our seats and make a journey to the space at the front.

Secondly, the psalm calls us to pray for peace. So as we are moving around, building the city, we are going to try and do that peacefully. We’ll need to think about what that means. What does peace look like? Peacefully doesn’t always mean quietly or silently. So we don’t have to be silent as we build the city – but let’s do it with peace.

So find your block and read the words from the psalm that have been stuck to it quietly to yourself. If you aren’t sure how to read those words, ask someone near you to help. It’s what we’re here for, to help each other.

Before we start moving around and building the blocks into a city, let’s read the psalm once together. Join in on the words you have on your block.

- Read the Psalm slowly and expressively.

I wonder if you noticed in the psalm some building kinds of words? – maybe you have one on your block? Call out if you have a building word...

- Accept and affirm contributions. If the group are a bit slow to get going prompt with some suggestions…‘Does anyone have the word ‘towers’?
- Possible building words include: house, gates, built, bound firmly, set up, walls, security, towers.

Now that we are a little bit familiar with the words of the Psalm, lets get into the action of the psalm.

We’re going to read again, and as we do, when we get up to your words, come and add your block to build the city. Here we have the artwork based on this passage by Melbourne artist Chris Booth as a backdrop behind the city, showing the mountain to which God’s people are coming to pray for peace for the city.

As we get into the action of the Psalm, and we are doing this city building together, listen for the Psalm, but also take the opportunity as you meet people and build together to say ‘peace be with you’ to one another.
• Read Psalm a second time, and allow time for building. Reading expressively, and at a slow, easy pace, with clear, gentle positive hope will influence the atmosphere in this time. Choose your reader wisely, to project this peaceful strength through the reading over your gathering and building together.

Conclusion

This ancient Psalm called the people of Judah to pray for their city, Jerusalem; we are called to pray for our cities. Today we’ve built a city here in our community – and we are called to pray peace for our community.

Prayer: (responses in italics.)

Loving God of Peace,
We pray peace for the cities of the world.
May we build ways of peaceful living in your world.
We pray peace for our cities, the cities we have come from, and lived in.
May be build ways of peace on our travels and journeys form place to place.
We pray peace for the city of Melbourne.
May we build a life of peace to share together here.
We pray peace in this local community.
May we build for peace in all we do as neighbours and friends.
Amen.