Intergenerational Worship

Bible Reading

Year A – Advent 4 Dec 18 2016 Romans 1:1-7

What is this: Intergenerational Bible Reading

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

Time: 5 minutes +extensions

Bible Focus/theme: Romans 1:1-7

What’s needed:
- Seven Christmas cards with appropriately ‘biblical’ Christmas themed images. Inside each card paste one verse from Romans 1:1-7. Remember to number the cards.
- Romans 1:1-7 displayed on screen or in hard copy for each person.

Optional: Extra blank Christmas Cards made with any of the Advent Art images from this series by Chris Booth, but especially ‘Mary and Elizabeth’, ‘Mary tells Joe’ and ‘Nativity’.

find HD images here https://www.dropbox.com/sh/obaoj7z1utd0qcc/AAAJml8tlCVpaF-hLCPvjkXS7a?dl=0
Introduction

It’s the time of year when people send Christmas cards. It’s kind of an old-school thing to do. Hand written letters sent through the post with a stamp aren’t so common anymore. But Christmas is a time when many people still send cards.

- **If you are relaxed about time, invite some people to share how many Cards they have, where their cards are from, who they have sent cards to….make the most of the intergenerational angles. Posting letters is something that has been more routine in the lives of the oldest members of your community, but giving cards to everyone in the class is a common experience for primary aged children.**

Christmas cards give us the chance to share a little bit of the Christmas Story, in the picture, and in the words inside the card. When we send a Christmas Card, it’s a way of saying to someone we care about, ‘the Christmas Story, which is God’s story is your story and my story too’.

That’s pretty cool – finding ways to remind one another that we are part of God’s Story.

In our Bible reading from Romans, this is also exactly what is happening. It’s the beginning of a letter that Paul is sending to some followers of Jesus in another city – in Rome. It’s not a Christmas Card, but it almost could be, because Paul is telling the followers of Jesus in Rome about how his story and their stories had become connected with the Story of God, what we’d call the Christmas Story. Paul reminds them in his letter, his kind of Christmas card, that Jesus was promised from long ago, and spoken about by the prophets, his life was lined up with the pattern of God – which God’s people already knew.

These Christmas Cards have Paul’s message to the followers of Jesus in Rome. The messages might not sound like the things that Hallmark print in their Christmas cards, but the message is right on for Christmas. We are going to read Paul’s message in these cards now.

Romans 1:1-7
1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

1:2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures,

1:3 the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh

1:4 and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,
1:5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name,

1:6 including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

1:7 To all God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- *Invite volunteers (or prepared readers) to come and collect a card. Each person in order reads their part of the reading.*

- *Extension activity: provide your community with blank Christmas cards made with Chris Booth’s images. Invite them to choose a phrase from Paul’s letter to the Romans (keep displayed on screen) to write on a card and send to someone else in the community. Continue to encourage exploring the idea of the Christmas story being larger than ‘Mary and Joseph in the stable’ (which of course isn’t even accurate). And to reflect on the ways God’s Story includes us.*

- *Further take home extension. Provide extra cards for those who would like to take some home to send to others, outside of your gathering.*

Sample phrases for Christmas Cards form Romans 1:1-7

“You are called to belong to Jesus Christ”
“Grace to you and peace from God”
“God promised the gospel beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures”
“through Jesus we have received grace”