

Leader Guide

Fearless Witness: Being Beloved by God

Date: January 20, 2021

Scripture: Luke 23:39-42

Big Idea: The first thing we need to know about loving God is that God loves us first! So much so, that God sacrificed God's self, in Jesus, on the cross.

This is a heavy topic, it involves death, and can be hard to imagine/think about. Watch for students feeling uncomfortable. Also it's complicated! Don't hesitate to reach out with questions.

Guide Pro Tips

1. Jesus was always plan A. God knew we would need a savior – that we can't save ourselves.
2. Before we can love God, or even love our families and ourselves, we need to know that God loves us.
3. That basically sums up Jesus' message to the world: God loves you so much that you are saved despite the way you treat each other and creation and even God!
4. We are reminded of these things in baptism and in holy communion.
5. Aside: we have to be careful about blaming "the Jews" for killing Jesus (that's the source of much anti-Jewish/anti-Semitic feeling in the world, and brought on the Holocaust in World War II). It's more accurate to say that Jesus was physically killed by the powers of Empire (which represent our evil in institutional form) and that WE continue today to convict Jesus and send him to the cross.

Gathering and Centering

Tonight I will lead a guided meditation leading us to the cross.

Video

Tonight's video is from the Bible Project: https://youtu.be/G_OIRWGLdnw?list=PLH0Szn1yYNec-HZjvHooeb4BSDSeHhEoh

Discussion in Large Group

- What did you notice about this video?

- God never abandoned Jesus during his suffering (God and Jesus are one don't forget), who do you know who will never abandon you? Who loves you this much? Does everyone have access to this much love?
- Why do you think it's important to know that God is always with us, especially when we are suffering?

Bible Study

Look up Luke 23:39-42

Open the Google Doc:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeoJGfOQymz5JeXbijaMilbbODSznq2bAlwKqzfUdEox6uxoA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Let's think about the two men beside Jesus.

- Which one is easier to relate to the man who doubted or the man who had faith Jesus was innocent?
- How much guts do you think it took to ask Jesus to remember him? What kind of answer do you think he wanted?
- How do you think Jesus' answer made the man feel?
- What's it like to know that you will experience God's kingdom with Jesus?

Journal Question

- If you could do anything, without fear, to make the world a better place, what would you do? How is God involved in that idea?