First Sunday of Advent: Stop! Be still…

Creative Prayer Ideas

Newspaper hearts

Provide newspapers and ask people to highlight key words or phrases that illustrate the turmoil the world is in. Ask them to cut out these words into the shape of a heart. Stick on to a large sheet(s) of paper, with Psalm 46:10 already on it. Pray for peace for this world. (The newspaper hearts can also be made into a tree decoration – for a tree of peace.)

In the news

Display some newspaper headings. Ask people to share with the person next to them some of the news that has worried them and then pray together. By talking and acknowledging these situations, it can help lessen the impact worrying about them can have.

Just breathe

As a group, breathe in and out together. The leader says ‘Breathe in’ and then says something current that might worry people; then ‘Breathe out, be still, and know that I am God.’ For example: ‘Breathe in: migrants are desperate to find a safe place to survive. Breathe out: be still, and know that I am God. Breathe in: people who are struggling financially. Breathe out: be still, and know that I am God …’

Creative Worship Ideas

Memorise!

Encourage the congregation to commit the following verse to memory so that they can refer to it throughout the Advent season ‘…Be still and know that I am God; I will be

exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth’ (Psalm 46:10). You can print out different sections of the verse on large sheets of paper and have people come to the front to hold it up. Each time the verse is said, one person puts their sheet down, so that gradually people have to say it without any visual help.

Newspaper headings

What would our own newspaper headings be at this time of year? What crazy things do we spend our times doing and stressing about? *Woman shops so long in supermarket family reports her as missing? Boy writes longest list ever to Santa? Man wraps record number of presents?* Ask people to suggest some funny examples.

Musical statues

Play a game of musical statues with upbeat music (with just the children, or the whole congregation if you think it will work!). When the music stops, after a few times, emphasise how peaceful it is in the moments when everyone stops and freezes.

Prepare

During Advent we don’t always take the time to prepare our hearts for Jesus’ birth, as we would usually do during Lent. Encourage people to think of ways they can be still and prepare their hearts for Christmas. Cut out paper Christmas baubles on which people can write down one way in which they will seek to be still in the coming weeks: whether it’s through journaling, setting an alarm as a reminder, using a ‘Be still and know’ worship playlist, going for a walk alone etc.