

Create



✓ **Prepare in Advance**

Facilitator: In advance of the session:

- Provide pens/pencils and paper and envelopes for the writing option.
- Provide and keep a collection of art supplies for each week including but not limited to: crayons, chalk, color pencils, markers, glue, tissue paper, colored construction paper, paint brushes, watercolors, finger paints, scissors, and a variety of scrapbooking paper and old magazines.
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the *Bible Background Video* ready to view.

✓ **Breath of God**

Ask a volunteer to read Isaiah 60:1-9. Then, show the *Bible Background Video*.

Say: The prophet Isaiah's words in Isaiah 60:1-9 are words of hope to a hurting group of people. Their treasured past is in fragments, and there is little joy in the present. The home that they are returning to is nothing but rubble and rebuilding is full of backbreaking labor and painful memories. Although most of us today have not experienced anything like being displaced from our nation or losing everything, we are a people who are hurting – hurting for loved ones who are lost, memories that are just memories, homes to which we cannot return. Tragedy still abounds in the world today. As we have just celebrated Christmas and the New Year, a time in which we look towards the celebration of Christ's birth and a time in which we look forward to what the New Year brings. Hope is what sustains us and keeps us looking for the light even when darkness is threatening to swallow us.

Ask: How do you define hope?

Invite each participant to choose either the Writing or Visual approach. Spend the next 20-25 minutes with that experience.

✓ **Create- Writing**

Invite participants to write a letter to themselves to be opened at the beginning of 2014. In the letter, ask participants to write about what they hope for the next year. Encourage participants to include an element of spiritual growth in their letter instead of just making a list of goals or resolutions. Ask

participants to reflect on Isaiah 60:1-9 while they write.

✓ **Create – Visual**

Invite participants to create a visual representation of the role of hope in their own lives.

✓ **Share**

Call the group together. Allow participants to share their creations with the group.

Ask: How do we hold onto hope when we are surrounded by darkness?

Close with prayer.

(After the session, consider leaving the group's creation on display throughout advent and allow participants to add to it throughout the week or find a way to share the creations of the group- post pictures on Facebook, on a church website, or in a portfolio/frames kept either in a public place in the church or in your group's special gathering place.).

By Noelle Owen

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