

# Share Hope

MARK 2:1-12; LUKE 1:39-49

3



## GOAL

Youth explore ways friends, family, and communities lean on one another, offering and receiving hope.

- A Art
- AM Active/Movement
- AT Abstract Thinking
- C Conversation
- CT Concrete Thinking
- D Drama
- G Game
- M Music
- QC Quiet/Contemplative
- S Service
- T Technology
- X Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



## PRAYER

God of all hope, open my heart that I may give and receive with the young people who will gather for this session. Form us into a shared community for one another. Amen.

## THIS SESSION

We all experience times when hope is hard to come by. Although our culture teaches us to power through our struggles or pretend everything is fine, our faith teaches us to reach out, to lean on others, to borrow hope, and to share it with others when they need it. In this session, youth explore ways friends, family, and communities lean on one another, offering and receiving hope.

## THE BIBLE STORY

Youth explore two stories about people offering and receiving hope.

Mark 2:1-12 details the story of a man who is paralyzed. Hope, given and received, is found throughout the story. His friends lower him through the ceiling to get to Jesus, who heals him. The account of Mary's visit to Elizabeth in Luke 1:39-49 comes soon after Mary learns of her pregnancy. It shows a young woman at a time of need reaching out to someone she trusts. Elizabeth's enthusiastic welcome reassures Mary that God is with her.

## CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Youth can be self-conscious and often do not feel free to show their vulnerability to others. As they become more independent, they may be less inclined to ask for help when they need it, believing it is childish. Bearing one another's burdens requires courage, empathy, and a foundation of trust. Studying Scripture that shows the power of friends coming together to help one another can be a springboard for youth to explore ways they can help one another. Observing Mary being vulnerable in reaching out to a trusted family member stands as a model for seeking hope and help when needed.

## SESSION PREPARATION

- Use a different color marker to write phrases on the graffiti sheet for this session: "Some days, you need a hand. There are other days when we're called to lend a hand." —President Biden<sup>1</sup>/ "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).
- "Mary Visits Elizabeth" (p. 23): Print Resource Page 1 and cut into strips.

Depending on the options you choose:

- "Sharing Hope in Church" (p. 24): Invite your pastor or a leader of your congregation's prayer ministry to visit the session and talk about supporting one another through prayer.

1. "Biden's Inauguration Speech: Read in Full," *The Independent*, Gino Spocchia, January 21, 2021. [news.yahoo.com/joe-biden-inaugural-speech-read-181935418.html](https://news.yahoo.com/joe-biden-inaugural-speech-read-181935418.html).

# GETTING STARTED

- ☐ Copies of Resource Page 1 from session 1 (p. 11)
- ☐ If using during Advent: copies of Resource Page 2 from session 1 (p. 12), Advent wreath and candles (optional)

## OPENING LITANY

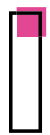
C

Welcome young people as they arrive. Check in briefly with each person. Invite youth to talk about examples of hope they saw since the last session.

If you choose to include an Advent candle lighting ritual, do it here. Distribute copies of Resource Page 2 from session 1. Light the candle used in the last session and two more. Leave them lit during the session. Invite a volunteer to read the leader part for Advent 3.

Distribute copies of Resource Page 1 from session 1 and lead the opening litany. Collect the resource pages to be used in the final session.

Read aloud the new phrases you added to the graffiti wall.



## INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

- ☐ Internet-connected device



The goal is to have each person in a circle sit on the lap of the person behind them while providing a lap to sit on for the person in front of them. They are supporting and being supported by another.

Persons with limited mobility may sit in a chair placed side-by-side in the circle with the youth, providing a lap for another to sit on.

## LEAN ON ME

M C

Listen to the YouTube video “Lean on Me” ([bit.ly/FMLean](https://bit.ly/FMLean), 4:17) and discuss the lyrics. What stands out to you? How is hope shared?

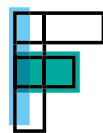
## GROUP SIT

G AM

Gather youth in a circle. Have each person turn so their left shoulder is toward the inside of the circle. Each person steps sideways toward the center of the circle, bringing everyone close together. On cue, each will bend at the knees to lower their bodies until seated on the lap of the person behind them.

When they are ready, the leader counts to three and each person sits slowly. For an added challenge, have the youth stand up and not break the circle. Turn so the right shoulder is toward the center and sit again.

Discuss what was challenging and what was unexpected in this activity.



## FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Props for role play (blanket, digging tools) (optional)

## FRIENDS OFFER HOPE

D CT



First-century houses in Palestine were made of wet mud and straw, which, once dried, provided relatively strong roofs. Still, with brunt impact and determined digging, one could break open a roof from the top.

Prepare to read Mark 2:1–12. Invite volunteers to act out the passage as you read. Afterward, ask about this passage:

- ➔ How did the man’s friend share his burden?
- ➔ How did Jesus treat the man and his friends?
- ➔ Where do you see hope being offered and received?

- ➔ Who are the people who have carried you during difficult times?
- ➔ When have you shared hope and carried others in their times of need?

## MARY VISITS ELIZABETH

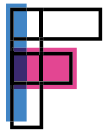
G CT

Story strips cut from Resource Page 1

Shuffle the strips and place them face up on a table. Have youth work together, putting the strips in order, to construct the story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39–49). Read aloud the story when youth complete their work. Invite them to comment on images or phrases that stand out to them.

Point out that, although we do not know how Mary and Elizabeth spent their days together, it is likely that they leaned on each other, sharing hope and finding joy in the presence of each other and in God. Ask:

- ➔ When you have big news to share, who do you call or text first?
- ➔ Why do you think Mary went to stay with her cousin Elizabeth when she was first pregnant?
- ➔ How do you think Mary and Elizabeth might have shared or received hope from each other?
- ➔ What are key takeaways from this story about offering and receiving hope?



## FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or more options.

## HONORING AND REMEMBERING

T CT

Internet-connected device

Tell about the AIDS memorial quilt using information you already know and gleaning facts from the following:

In the 1980s, a previously unknown virus spread quickly, hitting already marginalized communities in the United States hard. As many gay men were among those affected, the federal government under President Ronald Reagan did almost nothing to help. Many died due to prejudice and ignorance. But many people organized in creative ways, giving hope to one another. One way was to make a quilt for every person who died. Many quilts were put together and displayed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to call attention to the tragedy. The AIDS memorial quilt was first displayed in 1987. Since then, it has grown to over a million square feet, honoring and memorializing the lives of those who died of AIDS.

The quilt in its entirety can be viewed at [bit.ly/FMAidsQuiltInteractive](https://bit.ly/FMAidsQuiltInteractive). Pull up the website and explore images of the quilt. A YouTube video ([bit.ly/FMQuiltVideo](https://bit.ly/FMQuiltVideo), 5:20) shows an interview with one of the original creators.

Discuss:

- ➔ How does the AIDS quilt show hope?
- ➔ How does displaying the AIDS quilt help us to bear one another's burdens?
- ➔ How can we share hope in the midst of such pain and loss?

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- Internet-connected device

## COLOMBIA ACCOMPANIMENT PROGRAM

T CT

Have youth use internet-connected devices to access information about the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship's Colombia Accompaniment Program ([bit.ly/FMPeaceFellowship](http://bit.ly/FMPeaceFellowship)). The program offers support to leaders in the Presbyterian Church of Colombia who work for human rights and peace in their communities. People from outside Colombia are trained as "international accompaniers," who then travel to Colombia to share hope, safety, and support through their presence on the ground. Summarize the information on the webpage.

Scroll to the bottom of the webpage and take turns reading aloud the three main accompaniment commitments. Ask:

- ➔ How does the work done by accompaniers show support for siblings in Colombia?
- ➔ What is helpful about this work?
- ➔ Why is it important for the accompaniers to be requested by the people in Colombia?

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- Invited guest: pastor or leader of prayer ministry

## SHARING HOPE IN CHURCH

X C CT S

Introduce your visitor and have them explain the prayer ministry of your congregation. Invite them to talk about the ways the ministry offers support to people in the church and is also an activity of support for those who pray. They can share how someone gets to be on the prayer list and what other care is offered to people in the church.

Encourage youth to ask questions of the visitor. You may use suggested questions below. Following questions and conversation, involve the group in prayer for people on the church's prayer list. Encourage the youth to keep these folks in prayer throughout the week.

Suggested questions:

- ➔ How is prayer hopeful for people on the prayer list? Especially when they can't hear your prayers?
- ➔ What happens when someone is prayed for? What do you pray for? Do you name specific prayers?
- ➔ If someone doesn't want to be prayed for, how do you respond? How do you help them?
- ➔ How do those who pray receive hope when they are praying for others?



## PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

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- Copies of Resource Page 2
  - Pens
  - Blank note cards and envelopes

## NAME-THANK-GIVE

QC

Point out that each of us has probably needed to lean on another for help or hope. Youth have probably offered help or hope to a friend or family member. Distribute copies of Resource Page 2, note cards, pens, and envelopes. Explain Name-Thank-Give options. Have youth choose at least one way to practice sharing hope.

## SHARING HOPE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

T CT

☐ Internet-connected device

Have youth use social media to offer hope to others. They may create memes or post a Scripture passage, quotation, or image to share hope. Refer to the graffiti wall for ideas of quotations and messages.

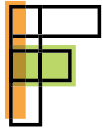
## SHARING TANGIBLE HOPE

CT S

Brainstorm ways youth can offer tangible hope by providing food, clothing, or other items to people who have need of these. Plan how you will gather and give these tangibles. Discuss how collecting and sharing tangible items communicate hope. What hope comes in giving to others?

Giving suggestions:

- Gather items from home to contribute to an existing food or clothing ministry supported by your congregation.
- Collect or gather new or gently used children's books to place in a "little library" in your community.
- Connect with a social worker through a local school to donate clothing to their in-school clothes closet or donate food items to a backpack program.
- Make kits to be distributed to persons following a disaster or health emergency. Information for making school, emergency, and hygiene kits for Church World Service can be found at [bit.ly/FMHealthKits](http://bit.ly/FMHealthKits).



## FOLLOWING JESUS

Revisit the graffiti wall and discuss the significance of the new phrases added for this session. Add more phrases suggested by youth.

Brainstorm ways to share hope this week. Challenge youth to look for places where they see people bearing one another's burdens.

In closing, have youth gather in a circle and hold their hands in front of them, the thumb of each hand facing to the right (one palm face up, one palm face down). Keeping their hands in the same position, have them reach across themselves to take the hand of the persons on either side. As the youth are holding hands, one hand is being supported, and one hand is supporting another.

As your closing prayer, ask the youth to name actions that give them hope. After each statement, all say in unison, "I give hope to others, and I receive hope from others." Close with a group "Amen."

# Mary Visits Elizabeth

In those days, Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country.

Mary entered the house of Zechariah. Mary greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb.

Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth exclaimed with a loud cry.

"Blessed are you among women. Blessed is the fruit of your womb."

"Why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?"

"As soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy."

"Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

"God has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed."

"The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name."

# Name-Thank-Give

Read the Name-Thank-Give options and choose at least one way to practice sharing hope. Use the space to record your lists.

## Name the people you can lean on.

Who are the people you can borrow hope from? Make a list of the people you can reach out to when you need someone to lean on. Plan to reach out to two of these people and ask if they would be willing to be one of your go-to people when you feel short on hope. When you do feel short on hope, be courageous and reach out to them.

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## Thank the people you've borrowed hope from.

Think of people whom you have leaned on or borrowed hope from. Write a thank-you note to one of them. If possible, read the letter to them in person.

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## Give hope to others.

Who do you know who might need some hope? Write down their names and spend a few minutes praying for them. Pick one or two people, write notes of encouragement, and give them to the people.

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