

This is a suggested guide for a group gathering of young people and their mentors or small group leaders. The aim is to share and to celebrate the experiences of using *devozine* and of spending time together. It is also an opportunity to give thanks to God for the growth that has taken place in your lives. Read through the session ahead of time and gather the supplies that you will need.

The theme for this group gathering is “Stations of Hope.” It involves a series of stations, or places of prayer, which focus on Christ’s resurrection.

group >>>>>> GATHERING

Based on worship experiences designed by Cheryl Lawrie and Craig Mitchell

BEFORE THE GATHERING

Send out invitations that include these words:

Explore the mystery.

Witness the hope.

Follow the way.

FOOD

If you choose to have food or a snack, it should be something simple and should be served at the end of the evening.

ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES

As people arrive, invite them to sit quietly in a room lighted with candles. When everyone has arrived, read aloud 1 John 1:1–3.

SAY: “As we celebrate the miracle and mystery of the Resurrection, we hope to experience the goodness of God and to be open to the presence of the risen Christ.”

Direct people to the stations. They may spend as much time as they wish in each place and do not need to visit them all.

STATIONS

Set up stations in separate rooms or at separate tables in a large room. Play instrumental music. Decorate each station with a colored cloth and flower petals. Display in large decorative print the title sentence, the full scripture passage, and the narrative/instructions for each station. (Type the copy below or download the PDF files from “Using *DZ* with Groups” at www.devozine.org.) Also provide the items listed.

They Bought Spices to Anoint Him [Mark 16:1–2]

(Item: a bottle of lotion)

Some stayed away in fear and despair, grieving his death and terrified for their lives. Three women dared to approach the tomb, bringing spices to anoint his body, to offer him praise even in death. But the body was not there!

Rub lotion into your hands. Reflect on the hands of Christ, wounded yet whole. Remember that Jesus comes to heal, to make us whole, to soothe, and to cleanse. Feel the soothing presence of Christ. Sense that you are part of his body, and be thankful.

Jesus Gave Them Bread [John 21:11–12]

(Items: bread, cooked fish or tuna salad, and someone to serve them)

After the Resurrection, some of the disciples returned to their old lives, unsure of what to do next. Jesus appears and reminds them that they are called to fish for people. He shows them where to cast their nets to bring in a full catch. He feeds them the bread of life.

Take some bread and fish. Eat and enjoy! Remember that the risen Christ nourishes your spirit. Remember that he calls you to go and make disciples. And trust that he will direct you to the place where your life will be fruitful.

Peace Be with You [John 20:19–22]

(Items: votive candles and matches)

The risen Christ brings the promise of peace—not a trouble-free life but peace and hope in the midst of trouble. As we receive the gift of peace, Christ sends us to be peacemakers.

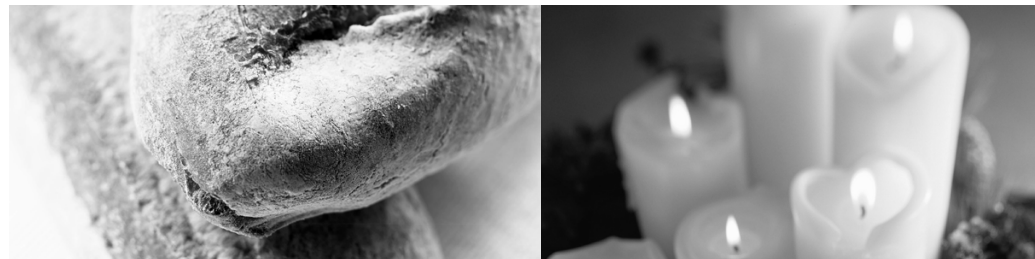
Light a candle and say a prayer for peace for our world, for a particular person or situation, and for yourself.

He Has Given Us New Life and a New Hope [1 Peter 1:3–5]

(Items: construction paper, glue, scissors, markers, magazine pictures)

Jesus Christ is risen. Evil and death could not hold him. He resisted evil with the power of love. God did not abandon him even in the tomb. God never abandons us, even when the way seems dark and hope has died.

Make a card for someone in need of hope. Write a message of hope or include a scripture verse. Deliver the card and the promise of resurrection hope during the coming week.



He Saw Only the Linen Wrappings [John 20:4–8]

(Items: strips of white cloth, markers, safety pins)

When Jesus' followers went to the tomb, they found Jesus' burial clothes lying on the ground. The cloth that once held death now held a promise: Nothing can destroy the love of God.

Write on a strip of cloth a word that represents freedom. Tie or pin the cloth to your clothing as a reminder that Jesus comes to free the whole world from the power of evil and death.

Jesus Spoke Her Name [John 20:16]

(Items: a large picture of a young woman's face, marker)

To children who have never heard a sound, the world is new when they first hear their name. Imagine Mary's face as she hears her name and a voice she thought she would never hear again. Death, cynicism, and fear cannot silence the voice of love.

Write your name on the picture. Know that God whispers your name with abiding love—right now.

If a Seed Dies, It Bears Fruit [John 12:24–26]

(Items: small pots filled with dirt, flower bulbs, markers)

God's love will not be stopped by death.

We can live either by love or by death.

God's hope will not be redefined by cynicism.

We can live either by hope or by cynicism.

God's promise will not be constricted by fear.

We can live either by promise or by fear.

Write on a bulb a word describing how you choose to live. Plant the bulb. Let God bring it to blossom.

CLOSING ACTIVITIES

As people complete the stations of hope, invite them to sit quietly in the room lighted by candles. You may also want to have available quiet activities such as these:

- > word magnets and instructions for writing an Easter poem
- > various stories and poems about Easter to read
- > a tape recording of the Easter story (use earphones).

When everyone has finished the stations, offer prayers of thanksgiving for God's gifts of hope and love through Jesus Christ.

Place a bowl of Hersheys Hugs™ and Kisses™ in the center of the group. Then SAY: "God has been with you on this pilgrimage of hope, listening to you and loving you. As you leave, take a piece of chocolate as a reminder that God loves you and accompanies you always. And take one of the Hugs™ or Kisses™ to give to someone else this week. Let them know that they too are loved. Go now in love—today and every day. Amen." ◀

