



Hopes and Fears

Mentor Information

Parents enter the journey of parenthood with a myriad of hopes and fears. Planning for the birth with hope and great expectation while living in a world where fear often plays louder than hope, parents may be challenged to focus on hope. Innumerable articles alert parents to all of the potential dangers that await their infant. SIDS, suffocation, food, clothing, water, air, etc. are all highlighted every step of the way. This meeting will give parents the opportunity to reflect on the hopes and fears they are pinning on their babies and themselves. Hopes and fears are not opposites, and an acknowledgement that uncertainty is present in life, are key for parents as they begin this journey. A trust in God is essential as hopes and fears are often revealed during transition.

Purpose

To understand how hopes and fears are natural parts of the advent seasons of life

Child/Family/Faith Formation

- The more there is to know, the more important it is to remember what is already known
- The unfolding mystery of welcoming a child is shared with a God who dwells in mystery
- In faith, we can entrust our hopes and fears into God's keeping

Word

The context, connection and related conversation in this meeting are found in the scripture of Romans 8:19, 24-25

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Context

- Paul is speaking to the church in Rome and times are uncertain as the church unfolds
- As people begin to doubt hope and fear are present
- Hope is always holding an unseen future in faith

Connections

- Most things are uncertain in a time of unfolding
- We want tangible proof that everything will be okay
- Proof does not sustain hope

Conversation

- What sustains your hope?
- When have you had to take a leap of faith as individual or couple?
- Think of a time when you hoped. Was it in vain?



Hopes and Fears

For this meeting you will need:

- ☐ Flipchart
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ One small package of Post-It Notes for each parent
- ☐ Pencil/Pens
- ☐ One copy, for each parent, of a hymnal with the song: Oh Little Town of Bethlehem.



Hopes and Fears

Gathering

Read the chosen scripture: Romans 8:19, 24-25

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Allow 15 minutes
for the Gathering.

Use the questions below to begin the meeting.

- Are there any milestones that took place for your family that you would like to share?
- How has faith been a part of your life since we last met?

Engaging the Word

Ritual

Introduce the families to the ritual activity for the meeting by saying:

Hopes and fears are not opposites. When you allow yourselves to hope, you step out in faith and faith always must acknowledge that uncertainty is present. The pairing of hopes and fears is present during every pregnancy and birth; even the birth of Christ. God often reveals these hopes and fears during times of transition.

Allow 15 minutes
for the ritual.

Pass out the Post-It Notes to each parent and say:

Think of the hopes and fears that have been revealed to you during this pregnancy. Write your hopes and fears on the Post-It Notes. Write only one fear and one hope on each note.

When everyone has finished say:

Do you remember playing, Pin the Tail on the Donkey? You are now going to play a version of that childhood game and play, Pin Your Hopes and Fears. Take a moment now to place your notes on the stomach where the baby is growing, or on the baby who has been born.

When everyone has finished ask:

- ***What hopes and fears have you pinned on your baby?***
- ***What balance is there between the hopes and fears?***



Hopes and Fears

Connecting the Word

The expectations you bring to parenthood are often based on your experiences, as children, growing up in your family. Your perception of these experiences will influence your approach to parenting and often highlight your hopes and fears. The imagined life of your children begins during pregnancy. Parenting involves a continuum of reflecting on hopes and fears. Sometimes while God asks for patience, you often ask for answers.

Celebrating the Word

Large Group Discussion

Begin the discussion by saying:

The ritual highlighted your hopes and fears. Hopes and fears are often transitional, while others are constant.

- *Which of your hopes and fears do you believe are transitional?*
- *Which do you believe are a constant in your life?*
- *What do you believe is God's message to you?*

Allow time for everyone to share.

Ask the group to stand and form a circle and continue by saying:

We think of the song Oh Little Town of Bethlehem as a Christmas song. It is an Advent song—one that speaks of waiting for the coming of the promised child. Let's sing it now as a reminder of this coming of your promised children.

Pass out a hymnal to each parent.

Sending

God of all hope, as we gather together, we give thanks that you came to us as one of us and you know our hopes and our fears. Hear now our hopes and our fears. Loving God, all these are met in you and are held by you. Hold us in this time of wonder and worry, and bring us your peace. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.