

Synod Journey Reflections



(This resource uses the Story Kit used in preparation for, and programming on the Journey.)

Candle: “Be still and know that I am God”

(Have your group gather in a circle where they can all see each other. Welcome them to family time, light the candle and then invite people to take a short minute to “Be still and know that I am God”.)

Flip Flop: Holy Ground

(Pass the flip flop around the circle and invite people to share responses to the below questions.)

- **When you look back on the Journey, what do you hold onto as your high? Your low?**
- **Where on the Journey did you experience Holy Ground – an awareness of God’s presence with you?**
- **How have you been feeling emotionally/physically/spiritually since you returned home?**
- **Who have you shared your Journey experience with? What have you shared?**
- **Holy Ground is all around us. Where have you experienced Holy Ground since returning home?**

Letter Tiles:

(Lay out all of your letter tiles. Ask youth try to remember the five words spelled out during the Journey. As youth remember a word, have them spell it out and share what it is they remember about the learning around that word.)

(Flip over four of your letter tiles and write one letter on each of the tiles to spell T-H-I-S)

The Journey and Gathering theme was “THIS Changes Everything”.

- **Daily themes were God’s CALL, LOVE, GRACE, HOPE and JESUS Change Everything.**
- **As you reflect on what you learned and experienced how would you define “THIS”?**
- **What is the “THIS” that changes everything?**
- **What has changed for you? How?**

Word:

GAME:

(Put one large hula hoop (or circle made out of rope) in the center of the room. Inside the large circle put a large number of balls (or wads of paper). There should be at least 4 times as many balls in the center as there are members in your group.

Put a hula hoop (or smaller rope circle) for each group member around the edges of the room. Have the youth begin by standing in their hoop.

When you say go, youth must run to the large center hula and grab a ball and return it to their hula. They may only carry one ball at a time. They may not move the hoops. Once they have dropped off that one ball in their hula hoop they may return for another one. The goal is to have the most balls in your hula hoop by the end of the game. Do not clarify any questions they may have. Inevitably someone will start stealing balls from other hula hoops.

After all the balls have left the center circle, wait until you see at least one person begin stealing from another hoop and then call freeze. Tell all youth to return to their hulas. See which person has the most balls in their hula hoop. Have them sit in their hula hoops and slide closer together for the discussion.)

Discuss:

Often we go on a trip hoping to bring something back with us, whether this be souvenirs, memories, lessons learned, new friendships, etc. We may have entered into the Journey/Gathering the same way. We looked forward to the big event and hoped to come back home with something from the experience.

We talked about some of the things you brought back with you from the Journey/Gathering. Allow youth to name these again if you choose.

Ask: Think back to the game. Who did not keep as many balls as you wanted? Who had some of their balls stolen out of their hoop?

Sometimes when we return to life at home, it doesn't take long to feel like our renewed energy, faith, friendships, etc. are being stolen away and lost in the routine of regular life.

Ask: Have you felt able to hang onto what you received on the Journey? Do you feel like anything is being stolen away?

Sometimes we return home and things begin to seem empty. We long for another big trip or faith experience. We wish every day could feel as exciting or as challenging as the days on the trip and immediately afterwards. We need to change our way of thinking. Often we think of big events such as the Journey and the Gathering as being the mountain top experience. We have a “ball” being filled with God’s presence. We try to carry this back with us. But it was never about “having a ball.” Rather it was about recognizing that you have always been held by God, you have always had the hula. You stood on holy ground there and returned to holy ground back home. This is good news that we can “base our life on.” We base our life not on the “have a ball moments and memories” but on the constant good news that God is with us.

Read: I Corinthians 15:1 (ERV)

Now, brothers and sisters, I want you to remember the Good News I told you. You received that Good News message, and you continue to base your life on it.

Ask: What will it look like for you to “base your life” on “THIS” Good News?

Question Mark:

What questions has the Journey stirred up within you?

The Cloth: Bring your Prayers to Jesus

We reach out to Jesus. What prayers do you reach out to Jesus with today? Who did you encounter on the Journey that you want to continue to hold in prayer? What organizations or ministries did you learn about that you want to pray for? What are your prayers for yourself as you journey forward in faith?

Water Bottle: Blessing

Stand holding hands in a circle. Keep one adult leader in the center of the circle. Once everyone is linked into your circle, have two people let go of their hand hold to hook a hula hoop (or rope tied to make a large circle) into the circle, having them link their hands again so the hula hoop is trapped in the linked circle. Without letting go of hands, pass the hula hoop over the head of one person at a time. As the hula hoop sits over each person have the adult leader use the water bottle to make the sign of the cross on their forehead and bless them saying:

Child of God, you are on holy ground, held by God – always called, loved, given the gift of grace and hope, and marked with the cross of Christ forever. Amen.