

World Vision



Advent Three

Breaking Silences: Joy and Anxiety

Call to Worship (Isaiah 45)

Use introductory statistics and prayers on child violence for each week in Advent and Christmas Day, with choice of three different kinds of sung response.

Song: Let it rain

Artist: Michael W Smith

Lament

This is a troll (*Display an image of the mythological creature*)

And this is a troll (*Display an image of an unidentifiable person behind a computer*)

A troll isn't the thing of fairytales anymore.

Trolls live on our streets and spend hours looking for their victims.

Driven by malicious intent, they vent their hate in any online forum in which they will not be called to account.

We may not be trolls, but each day of our lives we have the choice to harm or heal, and sometimes the difference between being a troll or not is the short distance between the beginning and end of a single word.

Project words on screen or have people stand up with words written large on card:- stupid, clumsy, ugly, weird, dumb, idiot, careless, ill-informed, revolting, gawky, loser... (these are not typical of the words used in bullying, they are usually much stronger, use words appropriate to your culture and context).

This is a hero (*Display fairytale/comic image*)

And this is a hero (*Display image of person reaching out to assist another*)

We are imperfect, we do foolish things; we hurt and seek to hit back at those who hurt us. Cruelty is as much a part of our nature as kindness. What we choose to do and say makes us cruel or kind. The difference between a troll and a hero can be a word or a gesture.

As above:-

sorry, good job, terrific, yeah!, marvellous, splendid, smart, well done, courageous, exciting, lovely, amazing, superb...

Pray these words from Psalm 51

Have mercy on us, O God,
 according to your steadfast love;
 according to your abundant mercy
 blot out our transgressions.

Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity,
 and cleanse us from our sin.

Create in us a clean heart, O God,
 and put a new and right spirit within us.
 Do not cast us away from your presence,
 and do not take your holy spirit from us.
 Restore to us the joy of your salvation,
 and sustain in us a willing spirit.

Or this prayer based on Psalm 51

God, cast your loving gaze over us,
and please, act mercifully toward us,
for we know we have done some things terribly wrong
and these things need putting right.

Open our hearts, God,
disturb our thinking until we become wise and start thinking right.
Though the burden of our wrong doing might make us feel distant from you
reassure us of your eternal presence in and with us.
Restore us into the proper way of being ourselves, with you and in the world,
urge us to stop our cowardly acts
and gather us into a community willing to work for justice
wherever justice needs to be done.

Finish with these words:

God,
It takes a restored and courageous people of faith to stop our children from being bullied:
we will be those people, we will be that church.

Hymn: *Lord Listen to Your Children Praying*

Artist: Ken Medema

Silent Reflection and Prayer

Look at the art carefully.

What emotions do you see in the child?

What feelings arise in you as you look at the painting?

What event has led to this situation?

What do you think comes next?

Light a candle as a symbol of your prayer for children in your community for whom the light of joy has been extinguished.

Blessing

The Lord bless you
and keep you calm in the midst of anxiety;
the Lord make his face shine on you
and bring the joy you need;
the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you joy.

(Adapted from Numbers 6:24-26)