

Proposed Agenda for Burning Bush Parties

1) After refreshments, have the guests sit in a circle.

2) Welcome guests

“Thanks for coming tonight to our burning bush party. Our purpose tonight is to do some community building and to reflect about how God calls us to care for others and to further justice. Part of community building involves sharing and getting to know each other better, so let’s first begin with an ice breaker...”

3) Ice Breaker and Introductions

“As a child, everyone had something they wanted to be when they grew up. Many people don't become what they actually aspired to be as a child. Let’s go around the group and have each of you tell your name and share what you once wanted to be when you grew up.”

4) Scripture Reading

“In order to help us think about how God is calling us to care for others and to further justice, let’s read the scripture in which God first calls to Moses.”

Exodus 3: 1-10

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the messenger of Yahweh appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When Yahweh saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then God said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." God said further, "I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Sarah and Abraham, the God of Rebecca and Isaac, and the God of Leah and Rachel and Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then Yahweh said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

5) Discussion

“Have any of you ever had your own burning bush moment? Have you ever felt called by God to take a stand or to care for others who are suffering? You might not have heard a voice from heaven, but you realized that you felt very passionate and full conviction about a particular issue or a cause. You might have experienced an injustice yourself or witnessed something in person. You might have read about an issue in a book or seen a movie. You might have even heard about a particular cause in church. Whatever it was, it sparked something within you.”

“Let me give an example from my own life. I had a burning bush moment when...”

“Let’s go around the circle, so that each of us can share a burning bush moment that you’ve had. You might have had more than one moment, but just tell us about the one that sticks out the most.”

6) Reflect Back to the Group

After everyone has spoken, reflect back to the group whether you heard similarities in their stories or whether you were struck by all the different passions people have. Be positive and appreciative about what was shared.

7) Scripture Reading

“It can be hard to maintain a passion and take a stand if one is doing it all by oneself. Sometimes we need to team up with partners in order to keep our spirits up and become active. In this next scripture reading, we learn about how God gave Moses a partner.”

Exodus 4: 10-16

But Moses said to Yahweh, “Please, my God, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” Then Yahweh said to him, “Who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak.” But he said, “Please, my God, please send someone else.” Then the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Moses and he said, “What of your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he can speak fluently; even now he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you his heart will be glad. You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. He indeed shall speak for you to the people; he shall serve as a mouth for you, and you shall serve as God for him.”

8) Discussion

“In order for our church to have a successful in promoting justice, we need to find our own Aaron. Someone who will be with us and help us in the area where we need help. All of you have received information packets that describe the potential organizations with whom we could partner. What do you think of these organizations? Do you feel like any of them connect with your own passions and sense of calling?”
(Go around circle).

9) Reflect Back to the Group

After everyone has spoken, reflect back to the group in a positive way any commonalities and difference you might have heard.

10) Explain Voting

Explain to the group the voting process. In their informational packets, each will have received cards on which they can vote for their three favorite organizations in order of preference. They will vote that upcoming Sunday in worship. The results will be announced at a potluck afterward. If they cannot vote in person, they can bring their vote to the main office or mail it to the church.

11) Closing Poem

To the New York West Side Jesuit Community

by Daniel Berrigan

*Some stood and stood and stood.
They were taken for dummies
they were taken for fools
they were taken for being taken in.*

*Some walked and walked and walked.
They walked the earth
they walked the waters
they walked the air.*

*Why do you stand?
they were asked, and
why do you walk?*

*Because of the children, they said, and
because of the heart, and
because of the bread.*

*Because
the cause
is the heart's beat
and the children born
and the risen bread.*