

Handouts for All Souls Session

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Opening Prayer

Opening Song

Opening Prayer

Leader

Merciful God, guide us in our learning about death, so that we will place our hope in the resurrection of your son, Jesus. Help us to remember that his resurrection is the gateway to eternal happiness for us and for those whom we love who have already passed through death. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Proclaim the chosen Scripture to the assembly.

Intercessions

Light a candle/the Easter candle.

Leader

Let this candle be a reminder that the light of Christ overcomes the darkness of death. The Response to our intercessions is, Light of Christ, dispel the darkness of death.

All

Light of Christ, dispel the darkness of death.

Leader

That our faith in Christ will give us the courage to overcome our fear of death, we pray...

All

Light of Christ, dispel the darkness of death.

Leader

That our family members and friends who have gone before us in faith may enjoy eternal life with Christ, we pray...

All

Light of Christ, dispel the darkness of death.

Leader

For all who have died, may they be open to God's mercy as a guide to eternal life, we pray...

All

Light of Christ, dispel the darkness of death.

Leader

Let us pause silently for a moment to bring to mind a family member or a friend who recently passed away... (Pause)... we pray...

All

Light of Christ, dispel the darkness of death.

Closing Prayer

Leader

Merciful God, we thank you for the gift of Christ's resurrection. It is our hope in times of darkness. We pray in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Song

Halloween Guessing Game

Directions: The people at your table must not see the items on this list. They will each ask you yes/no questions about the items on this list beginning with the first item and proceeding to the last item in order. The first one must be guessed correctly before proceeding to the next one. Each person has a chance to ask one question and to take one guess if desired. Each question adds a point to the score and each incorrect guess adds a point to the score. Tally the points as you go.

Thing you might

see on Halloween:

| Number of Questions | Number of Incorrect Questions |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Candy | |
| 2. Dracula | |
| 3. Jack - O - Lantern | |
| 4. Trick or Treaters | |
| 5. Scooby Doo | |
| 6. Skeleton | |
| 7. Frankenstein | |

Total Score: _____

Holy Card Scripture Options

Wisdom 3:1 "The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them."

Wisdom 3:2-3 "They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead.... But they are in peace."

Wisdom 4:7 "The just man, though he die early, shall be at rest."

Isaiah 25:8a "...he will destroy death forever."

Isaiah 25:8b "The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces."

Lamentations 3:26 "It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord."

Romans 5:5a "Hope will not leave us disappointed."

Romans 6:8 "If we have died with Christ, we believe that we are also to live with him."

1 Corinthians 15:54b-55 "'Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?'"

Philippians 3:21 "He will give a new form to this lowly body of ours and remake it according to the pattern of his glorified body."

Psalms 23:4 "Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side with your rod and your staff that give me courage."

Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you."

Luke 7:14b-15a "Jesus said, 'Young man, I bid you get up.' The dead man sat up and began to speak."

John 6:40 "Indeed, this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks upon the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life. Him I will raise up on the last day."

John 6:51a "Jesus told the crowd: 'I myself am the living bread come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread he shall live forever.'"

John 11:23 "'Your brother will rise again,' Jesus assured her."

Holy Card Activity Instructions

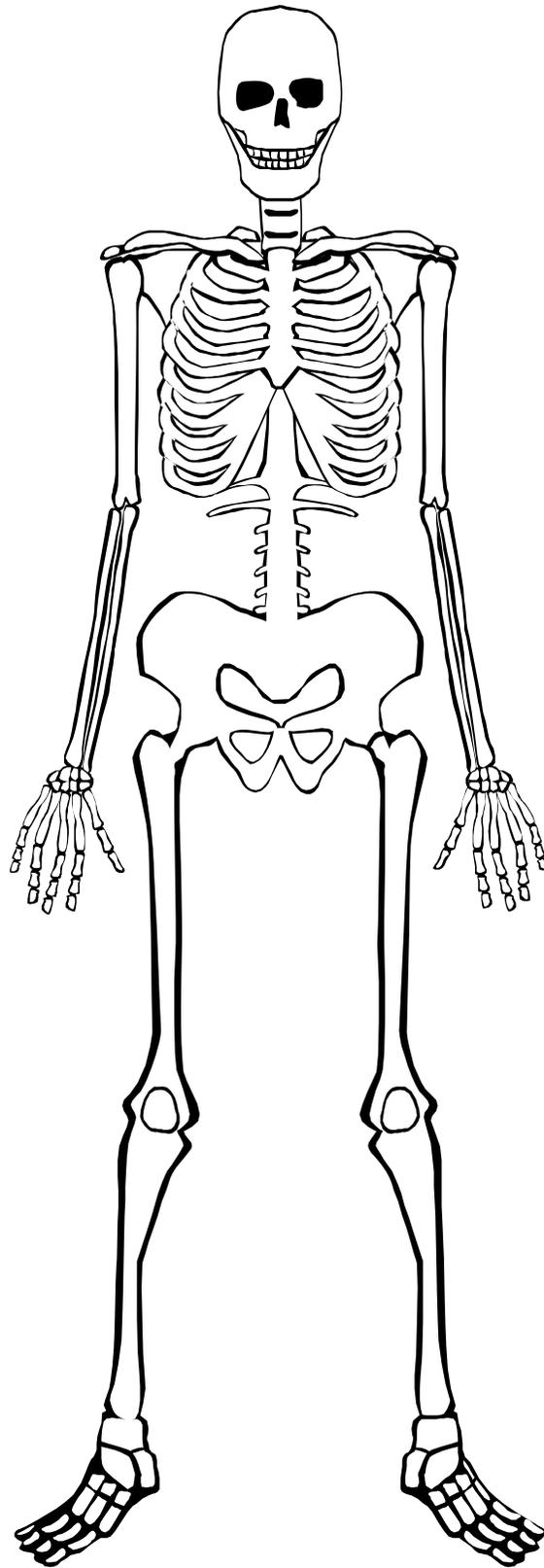
- Each person is invited to make a holy card for a friend or family member who is deceased.
- The holy card should consist of pictures or symbolic representations of things the person enjoyed or things that express the person's gifts.
- The person's name should appear on the holy card.
- The date of the person's birth and death (if known) is appropriate for the holy card.
- Each person may select one of the scripture quotes from the *Holy Card Scripture Options* handout for the holy card.

Skeletons—Alive or Dead!

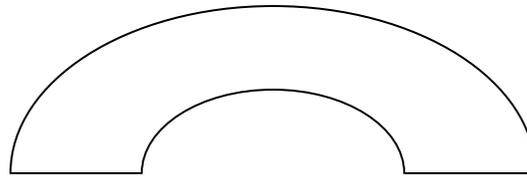
Death is something that happens all around us all the time, but we tend to think about it a little more at this time of year because of Halloween and All Souls Day. One of the benefits of All Souls Day is that it helps us to know that in death we have nothing to fear because Christ will raise us to new life.

Death can be scary for many people, and skeletons, a symbol of death, can also be a little frightening.

1. Pass this skeleton around your table with a pack of crayons. Give each person at your table an opportunity to add one thing to the skeleton. You can draw something on the skeleton or draw something in the background. Continue passing the picture around the table until the skeleton is all dressed up and you're satisfied with the background. Silly additions are welcome. Have fun with this!
2. Notice how the picture is not as scary as it was before we added things to it. We've added things that are normally associated with the living, not the dead. For example, dead people don't need clothing, but living people do. We have overcome the fear associated with death by putting life into it.
3. Review the skeleton poster and discuss specifically the various things added to the poster and how they indicate signs of life.
4. The point of this activity is to show that we can take the fear out of death by putting life into it. If you believe that eternal life is beyond the realm of death, then there is no need to fear death. All Souls Day helps us to express our faith that in death we have nothing to fear because Christ will raise us to new life. Eternal life conquers death and dispels our fear. We do not have to be overcome by fear when someone dies or when we think about our own death because our faith tells us that death is not the end of life; rather, death is simply one more change on the path of life, a path that does not end.



Excess Baggage

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border. The corners are smoothly rounded. The interior of the box is completely blank, intended for writing or drawing.

Purgatory—Path to Purity Skits

Skit #1: An Unblemished Offering

Setting: A family's kitchen
Characters: A mother and her daughter, Sasha, and a narrator
Props: No props are necessary.

The scene opens with the mother and the daughter sitting at the kitchen table.

Mother: *Sasha, I've been thinking about Mr. and Mrs. Rodriguez next door. Their kids are all grown and have moved away, and both of them retired last year. I think it would be nice if we baked them a pie and took it over to them today.*

Sasha: *Why don't we bake two pies? And then we could keep one for our family dinner tonight.*

Mother: *That's a great idea. Let's get started.*

Mother and Sasha mime the actions of rolling out and shaping pie crusts. They fill the pans with fruit and put the pies into the oven.

Mother: *Sasha, I have to run a few errands. I'll be back in an hour or so. Watch the pies as they bake, and take them out of the oven when they're finished. After they cool, wrap one up nicely and take it over to Mr. and Mrs. Rodriguez. Thanks for doing this sweetheart, it's really going to make their day.*

Mother exits. Sasha sits down and begins to read. Time ticks away and the narrator makes a bell sound from off stage indicating that the pies are finished. Sasha walks to the oven and takes out the pies. She faces the audience while holding one pie in each hand and thinking out loud about which pie to give away and which pie to keep for her family.

Sasha (Thinking out loud): *Hmm. These pies don't quite look the same. (Looks to her right hand and smiles) This pie looks perfect. The crust is browned beautifully, and it has such a nice shape. (Looks to her left and frowns) This pie looks okay, but the color is uneven. It's a lot darker on one side. It looks a little caved in over here, too. But, if I never saw the perfect pie, I would be happy to see this blemished one. The Rodriguez's will never see the perfect one. I'm sure they'll be happy with this one. (Sasha puts down the perfect pie and begins wrapping the blemished pie. Then she stops and looks pensive.)*

Narrator: *Sasha is having a Purgatory moment. She needs to purify her motives and her actions.*

Sasha: *Wow! This is a real Purgatory moment. I need to purify my motives and my actions. The whole point of this pie-baking day was to give a nice gift to our neighbors, the Rodriguez's. My gift should be my best effort. I should be thinking about them, not myself. (Sasha, smiling, pushes the blemished pie aside and begins wrapping the unblemished pie. She exits with pie.)*

Skit #2: Purging Preparation

Setting: High school track
Characters: Two friends, Jared and Skip
Props: No props are necessary

The scene opens with Jared and Skip jogging side by side. (The two actors can pretend to be jogging by running in place.)

Skip (out of breath and working hard to keep up with Jared): *Jared, why are we working so hard here, buddy?*

Jared: *Soccer tryouts are only two weeks away, man. We've got to be ready.*

Jared and skip both turn their heads as if they are seeing a girl walking in the opposite direction.

Skip: *Did you see that?*

Jared: *Yeah, she's actually a very nice girl.*

Skip: *Forget nice girl; she's nice lookin'!*

Jared (determined): *Skip, stay focused.*

Skip (composing himself): *Yeah, right... focused. I'm with ya, buddy. (Out of breath again) Look, Jared, you've got to slow down. Running into the wind at this speed is really going to mess up my hair. It might dry out my skin, too.*

Jared (rolling his eyes): *Skip, you know Coach Harris won't tolerate slackers. He told us to come to tryouts in shape. If we're not ready, we'll end up being cut from the team. We won't have anyone to blame but ourselves.*

Boys run together in silence for a few seconds.

Skip turns his head again as he sees another girl pass by in the opposite direction.

Skip: *Sorry, buddy! I've got some business to attend to.*

Skip turns around and both boys run offstage in opposite directions.

The end

Purgatory – Path to Purity

Scripture Readings & Discussion Questions

Skit #1 - An Unblemished Offering

1. The experience of Purgatory is an experience of change. We experience something of Purgatory when we purge, or get rid of, our self-centered plans and open ourselves to God's plan for us. We move from selfishness to love. How did you see this happen in Sasha's situation?

Purgatory is the experience of being purified so that we can offer to God the gift of our lives in a perfect way. In the skit, it was clear that the Rodriguez's would be happy with either pie. Why was it important for Sasha to give them the unblemished pie?

2. Listen to Leviticus 22:17-20.
 - When you hear this passage, what strikes you as more important: the gift or the giver? Why?

Skit #2. Purging Preparation.

1. The Bible often presents physical purity as a metaphor for spiritual purity. If we pay attention to the process of becoming physically pure, we can learn something about becoming spiritually pure; the experience of Purgatory is actually about both physical and spiritual purity.
2. Listen to or read together Leviticus 21:16-21.
 1. What is your first impression about this passage? Why do you have that impression?
3. Why was Jared, in the skit, working out with so much intensity?
4. Listen to or read together Jude 1:20-25.

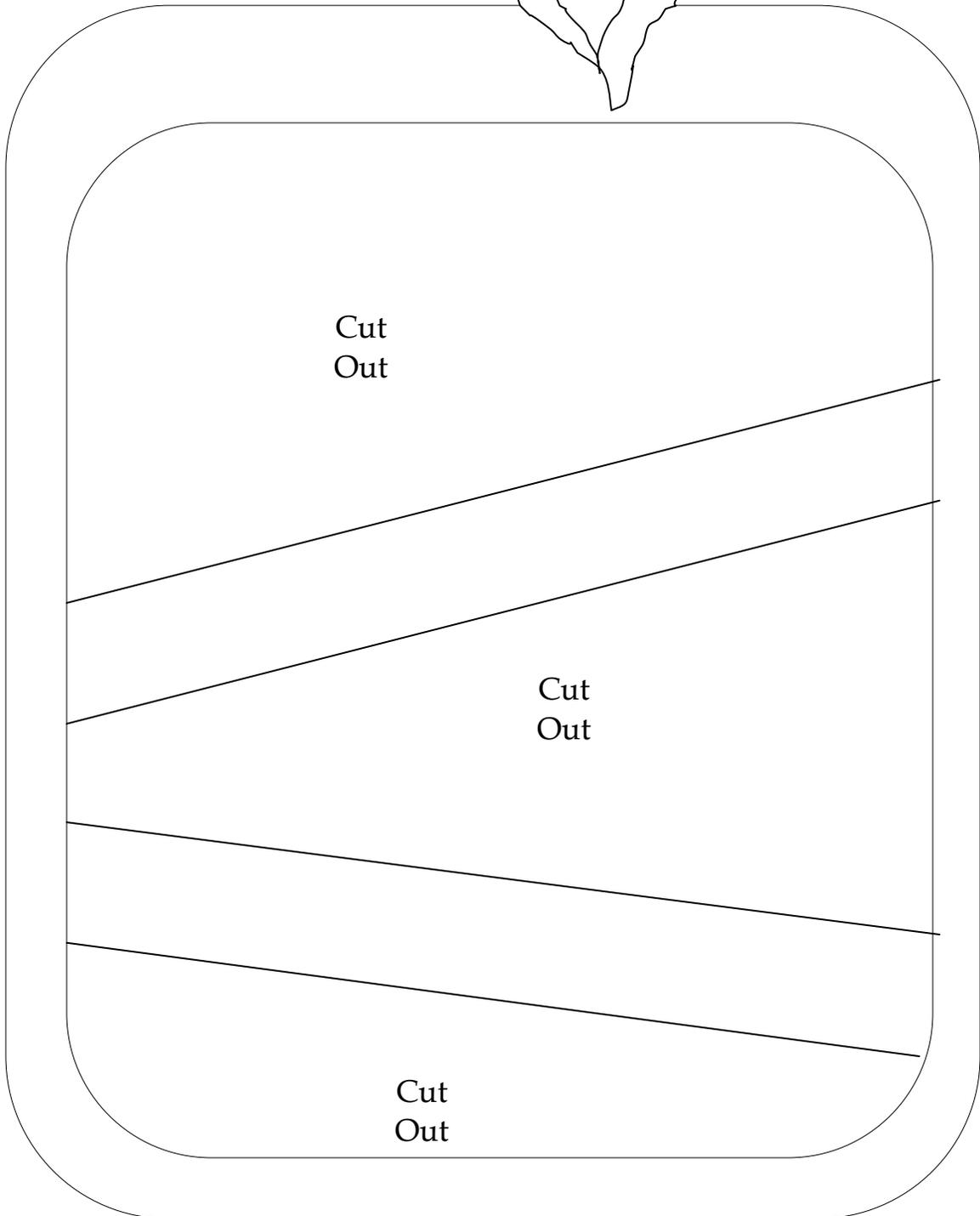
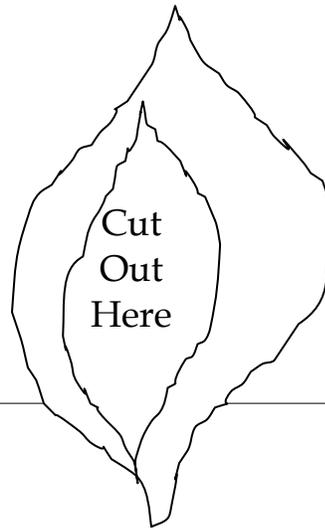
Verses 20 and 21 of this passage tell us to have faith, to pray, and to remain in love as we await the mercy of Christ. Verses 24 and 25 make reference to Christ presenting us "unblemished" to God.

Love Conquers Fear Candle Reflection

1. Write "God's fire purifies" on the top diagonal bar going across the candle.
2. Write your family name on the bottom diagonal bar going across the candle.
3. Cut out pieces of cellophane and glue them to the backs of the candles to give them a stained glass look.
4. When complete, put your candle in the Take Home kits and display them at home as reminders of God's purifying fire of love.
5. At home, pray:

Lord God, each one of us needs your grace to purify our hearts. Release the fire of your love within us so that our transformation will change our individual lives, our families, and our communities. We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Love Conquers Fear
Candle Reflection



Purgatory in Scripture and Liturgy

Purgatory in Scripture

1. Open your Bible to 2 Maccabees 12:38-46. This passage follows stories about military victories of the Jews under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus. It explains why some of the Jews died in battle and how Judas Maccabeus responded to the circumstances of their deaths. Read 2 Maccabees 12:38-46.
 - *What are some of the elements of this reading that relate to the things we have learned so far about All Souls Day and Purgatory?*
2. Read the following passages and cite how they help us to understand Purgatory and the practice of praying for the dead.
 - 2 Timothy 1:16-18
 - 1 Peter 3: 18-20
 - 1 Corinthians 3:13-15.

Purgatory in Liturgy

Read and study the Eucharistic prayer your group has been assigned and underline all of the references to the faithful departed in the prayer.

Circle any wording that seems to refer to Purgatory.

Closing Prayer

Gather

Leader

I invite you to silently ponder the gift of God's presence here with us now.

As we gather in the presence of God, we call to mind that our departed loved ones are with God. As we become aware of God's presence, we also become aware of their presence with God. Think for a moment of someone you love who has died and is with God.

Opening Song

Play a song for reflection, preferably a song that will be used during the All Souls liturgy on November 2nd.

Opening Prayer

Leader

Merciful God, we entrust our beloved family members and friends into your care. We ask you to grant them eternal rest and let perpetual light shine upon them. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Choose a scripture reading, or a portion of a reading, that will be used in the All Souls parish liturgy. (All Souls readings are taken from the Lectionary section entitled *Masses for the Dead* #789-#793.) You may also use a scripture quote from that handout *Holy Card Scripture Page* for the reading – all of the quotes on this handout are from the *Masses for the Dead*.

Prayers for the Dead

Leader

Light a candle.

Let this candle be a reminder that the light of Christ overcomes the darkness of death.

Explain to the participants that you will now pass a candle from group to group. When the candle reaches your group, anyone at your group may speak the name of a departed family member or friend, perhaps the person on the prayer card that was made earlier in the session. After each name is spoken, we will all say the following response: *May God's mercy embrace you into eternal life.* If no one at a particular table offers a name for prayer, simply pass the candle on to the next table.

Closing Prayer

Leader

Merciful God, we offer to you the names of those we love, and we also offer to you our own lives as signs of our love for you and for each other. Eternal rest grant unto them Oh Lord.

All

And let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen