



Week 1 - Hope



*Listen in the silence. Listen in the noise.
Listen for the sound of the Spirit's voice.*

Before we begin: This is the first week of Advent and there are four candles! We are focusing on the work of quieting and silencing in order to listen for God's voice. We begin with all the lights lit, the four candles of the Advent wreath, the four candles in our illustration, then each week quiet another candle to our goal of focusing and listening only for God-with-us: Emmanuel. Listen to the God who brings HOPE!

Invocation

God of hope, we are going to listen for you as we start this new church year. Help us to quiet all the other sounds and commotion around us and listen only for you as we wait in hope for the day when we will celebrate your incarnation.

Confession

God, it seems like it started even earlier this year. All the ads and the decorations, the special songs and the movies on tv. The sound of the season is deafening. This year we want to quiet the input a little more each week until we can hear your Word speaking to us. Please be patient with us as we try to listen for your Spirit's voice.

Psalm 80:1a, 19

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!
Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine, that we might be saved.

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind - just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you - so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer

Creator God, restore our hope even when we can't quite hear you. Sometimes it seems like you are far away. Give us hope that you are present in every bit of your creation, every flower, animal, every single person.

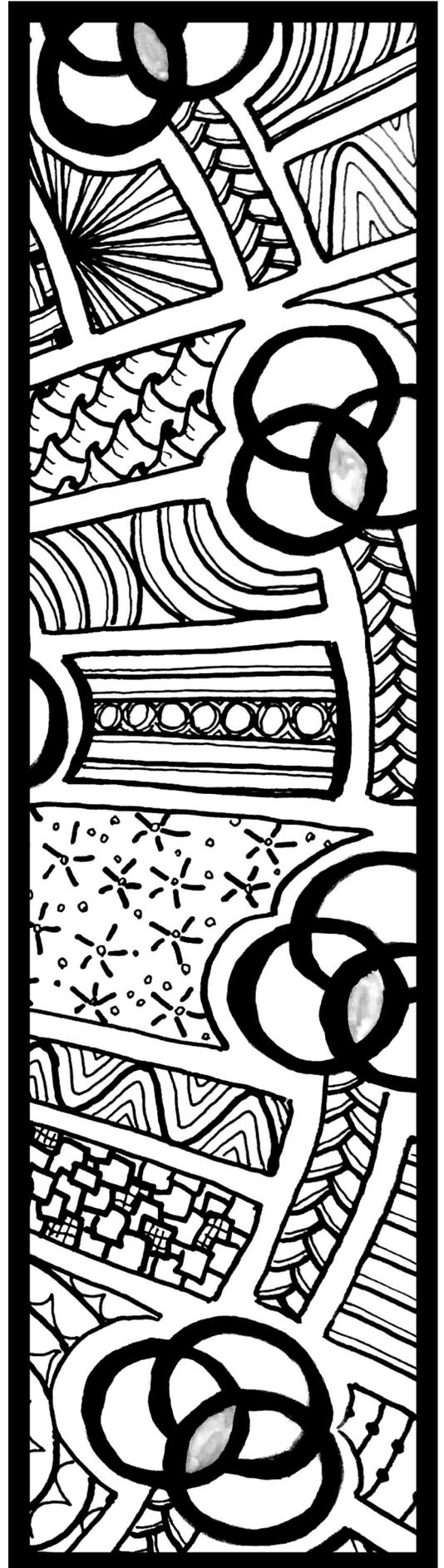
Help us to listen in the silence.

Christ, restore our hope even when there is so much chatter that we struggle to hear which voice is yours. Give us hope that we can help one another. Give us hope that we will find ways to feed and care for all people and, above all, treat everyone with respect.

Help us to listen in the noise.

Holy Spirit, restore our hope that you are with us and will help us. Give us the ears to hear those who are speaking out in love. Give us wisdom to know your voice when we hear it.

Help us to listen for the sound of your voice. Amen



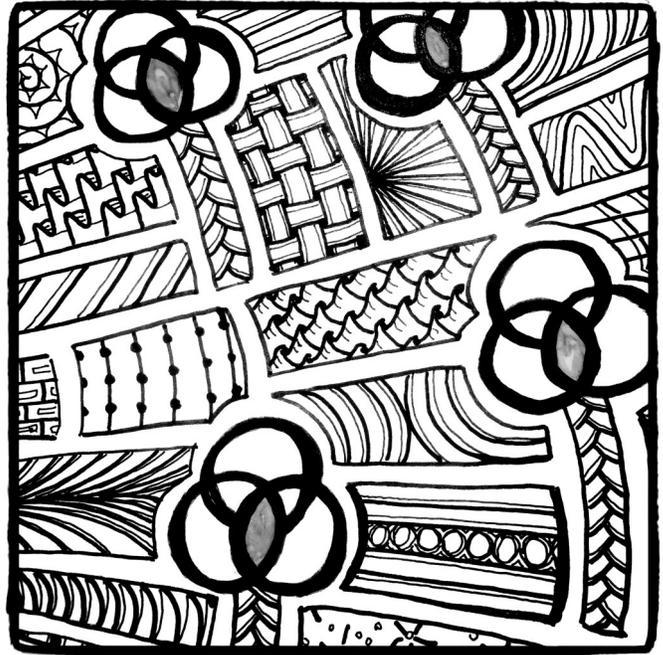
A time to be still

You are invited into a time of silence. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly. **Where do you see the God of HOPE?**

Poetry is the practice of silencing the extra words so that feelings can shine. This year we are exploring poetry as a spiritual practice. By slowing down, pondering, and picking words, we can better hear what God is saying to us.

Here is an easy way to start a 5-line poem:
When you are calm and ready, use the space below to write one word (a noun) that stood out for you from the Bible verses. Beneath that word (Line 2) write 2 words that describe the title. For Line 3 think of 3 action words that end in "ing". Line 4 is a 4-word phrase or sentence that tells more about the title word. For the last line, Line 5, think of a single word that refers back to Line 1 – a word that gives meaning for you. For example:

*Ear
Alert Eager
Listening, Yearning, Anticipating
Waiting for God's voice
Hope*



Remember that this is not a contest. There is no grade. It is just a time to hang out with God and write down what comes to mind.

Read over your poem and then sit quietly with it, or colour the illustration.

[Empty rectangular box for writing a poem or coloring the illustration.]

A blessing

May God speak to us in the silence.
May God speak to us above the noise.
May we always listen for the sound of the Spirit's voice.



The call of Advent is a call to live wide awake so that we can be alert to God working in us and in our world to bring about the Kingdom.

Awareness is another way of talking about being awake.

Work today to be aware of the needs of people around you

Prayer for Families

Loving God,
During this holy season of Christmas, we ask for your blessing on all families.
Let Mary's openness to your wondrous ways be an inspiration to place all trust in you.
Let Joseph's courage provide hope during times of anxiety and uncertainty.
Let Jesus' life ignite all families with a spirit of light and love.
May the grace that encircled the Holy Family widen to embrace all families.
For this we pray.
Amen.

