



Leader's Guide - Long Version 6-10 Minutes

Introduction

In Advent, we gather to prepare for the coming of the light into a dark world. Our world is dark due to sin and evil, sickness and despair. The specter of HIV/AIDS haunts every corner of our world. People in our own community are dying. In Africa, a child becomes orphaned every 14 seconds due to the AIDS pandemic.

It is into this darkness that our God comes, giving hope and a future to the least and the lost of our world. As the church, we are called to be the light. Jesus said that we are to be a city on a hill – a lamp on a lamp stand. In the darkness of our world, we are the body of Christ preparing the world for God's kingdom.

One of the ways that our church embodies the light of Christ is by supporting ZOE Ministry – a ministry that feeds and empowers those who are orphaned by this disease on the continent of Africa. ZOE's key scripture is Jeremiah 29:11 which reads: "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

If we are to be the light in this world, we must proclaim a future with hope for all those who are sick and filled with despair. To all those who have HIV/AIDS or to those who are orphaned by this disease, we stand with you to proclaim that God has plans for you, for your welfare and not for harm. Plans to give you a future with hope. Today, we stand as the church in support of people like Purity – a child in ZOE's Giving Hope program – who, thanks to the faithful of the church, has both hope and a future. Listen to her story...

ZOE Video – Show the Story of Purity**

Litany of Prayer and Celebration *(Bulletin insert available for download in ZOE Advent Resources)*

Leader: God, our Father, you chose to enter into a world that is dark and full of sin. Your Son wept, suffered, and died to redeem us from our sins. We pray that those who continue to weep and suffer in our world find comfort and peace in you.

People: **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray especially for those who are suffering from HIV/AIDS. We pray for the mother who is dying and sees no hope for her children. We pray for the children who are orphaned by this dreaded disease. For those who are in need of hope,

People: **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Leader: We give you thanks for those who reach out a hand to the least and the lost of our world. As you ate with sinners and touched the lepers, we give thanks for the church that is reaching out to those who are in desperate need of your loving touch.

People: **We give you thanks for those surrounded by the love and care of Christ and the hope they have because of you.**

Leader: God, your presence in this world ushered in the beginnings of a new kingdom. Help us be a part of that mission. Help us enact the prayer that you taught us to pray, saying:

All: **"Our Father, who art in heaven...." Amen.**

** *The 4-minute "Story of Purity" video details the transformation of a family in the ZOE Giving Hope Empowerment Project. You may order it from ZOE by visiting www.zoeministry.org and selecting the "Litany for World AIDS Day" link. If time does not allow, simply give introduction and move into Litany.*