

Notes For Preparing the AIDS Vigil

Prepared by PWRDF staff based on coordination experience in the Church House chapel.

- Prepare the 2 Memory Boxes. Shoe boxes are best but any small box that can hold the 12 letters or a Bible and a flower will do. We were lucky enough to actually have some African cloth that could spare a couple of feet cut off it, and we wrapped the boxes in this. But many other kinds of wrapping would be appropriate. I think it would be a great way to involve the children in church school decorating paper or fabric to wrap the boxes.
- If you have time, take 6 Leader's Guides and label one for each: Host, Guest, Reader 1, Reader 2, Reader 3, and Drummer. Highlight the appropriate lines and actions in each. (Participants may not take the time to do this and it is amazing how a line will disappear from sight and an uncomfortable hiatus happens!
- Make a list of things you need: Bible, candles, Advent wreath, matches, flower.
- Have a rehearsal for the 5 major players and take the time to run through the whole thing. This makes the participants (Host, guest and readers 1, 2 & 3) feel more comfortable but also (and perhaps more importantly) it will give them a chance to experience the powerful, emotional words out loud. Tell them to be prepared for tears, theirs or others, and not to be ashamed to take a moment to compose themselves. Also it really pays to make it clear to the participants that many of their words are not written in the Order of Service, so the words must be delivered audibly and slowly. Also the rehearsal is a good opportunity to decide the small but important details, e.g., how will the single candle in the Advent Wreath be lit? Can you fiddle with matches? (here we decided to have a candle burning by the statue of Mary and the reader simply removed the candle from the wreath and went over to light it there and then returned it to the wreath. But in doing it the reader realized she really needed to leave her booklet at her seat so she could shield the candle from drafts with her hand.)
- You and the principal speakers may find it useful to paper clip the introductory pages 1-8 of the Leader's Guide. The co-ordinator might bring paper clips to the rehearsal.
- Having a box of Kleenex available is not a bad idea!
- Here we decided to do the vigil in the context of the Eucharist. We decided the vigil up to the Mothers' Union Prayer (p 22 Leader's Guide) would be used instead of the Liturgy of the Word (so no collect, readings, Gospel or Prayers of the People). We thought the vigil contained enough to substitute. The Host changed the speech at the top of p. 23 in the Leader's Guide to have the altar candles be lit from the Advent Wreath and during this lighting people could speak out the names of people living with AIDS or those who had died (instead of as planned having everyone with a candle. Then the Host read the names of the women of Etwatwa. Take a moment for silence. Then the Peace was exchanged and we moved into the Eucharist proper.