

## **Youth Group Devo: A New Year's Prayer: Let There Be Light**

By Barry Shafer

Time flies! But before the idea of the New Year disappears, let's celebrate beginnings. This devo for your group focuses on the first beginning of them all, when God said, "Let there be light." Use this devo to help your students put minds and hearts in reset mode for 2012.

### **The Backdrop**

Let's start at the very beginning. It is, as we all know, a very good place to start. It's at this time of year when we think about fresh starts and beginnings. Jan. 1 is like a cosmic reset button, giving us a chance to clear the slate and start from scratch. So, to reset your mind and heart, let's take a minute to look in on the very first beginning of all time, when God was starting *everything* from scratch.

### **The What**

Read Genesis 1:1-2 below. However, read it slowly and thoughtfully, as if you're reading it for the first time.

#### **Genesis 1:1-2**

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

You'll notice four descriptions of the earth in this passage. You might say these were the raw ingredients God used to create from scratch. Take a minute to write down these four descriptions. In fact, fold a blank sheet of paper into fourths and write one of each description at the top of each quadrant.

### **The So What**

Now meditate on each description. Use the questions and comments below to help you personalize Genesis 1:1-2.

Process what each of these descriptions of earth (formlessness, emptiness, darkness) might look like in people's lives today. We've provided samples below. Copy onto your sheet (the one that's divided into fourths) any of these that ring true with you and be sure to include a few of your own.

- Formlessness: no direction, no plan, no motivation
- Emptiness: no meaning, just a shell
- Darkness: oppressiveness, anxiety/depression, destructive behavior

As you look back on 2011 or the past couple of years, what parts of your life could be described as the first three raw ingredients of the earth: formless, empty, dark? In what ways have you experienced these descriptions this past year? Write down anything that comes to mind under each description.

Here's what's cool: No matter how formless, empty and dark your life has been, just as "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" in Genesis 1:2, the Spirit of God has been hovering over you, which brings us to Genesis 1:3, which says:

**Genesis 1:3**

<sup>3</sup>And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

This same miracle can happen in your life. God is ready to do in you what He did in Genesis 1. His Spirit has been hovering, waiting for you to ask. (God is patient that way.) So, would you like God to do a miracle with any darkness and emptiness you've experienced? If so, let's get started.

Spend a few minutes in a personal retreat with God. The verses below provide more insight on how God creates light out of darkness in our lives. Print the verse references, grab your Bible and go to a place where you can enjoy a little solitude. Before you read each passage, breathe a prayer that says, "God, let there be light." Keep your heart soft to what God wants to show you and teach you and to how He wants to change you.

Psalm 56:12-13

2 Corinthians 4:6

Ephesians 5:8-14

1 Peter 2:9-10

2 Timothy 1:9-10

**Wrapping It Up**

After you've experienced these passages, write a prayer to God asking Him to do in your life what He did in Genesis 1—to take your formless, empty darkness and mix it with His Spirit to create a miraculous beginning. Be sure to put a plan of action in motion for any commitments God has prompted you to make.

Use this upcoming Jan. 1 to let the Spirit of God do a start-from-scratch creation in your life as He did in Genesis 1! Make your New Year prayer: "Let there be light!" and watch God create something incredible out of any formlessness or empty darkness that's been part of your life.