

There is a video series that explains religions, and those segments can be used, if needed/wanted, or some ideas are also linked in this document.

Ideas for long-term “extras”:

The *I Need Box*: At the beginning of each Youth Group, every kid writes a need on a sheet of paper and puts it in the box-if it says they need a hug, someone can reach out to their parents, if there’s a monetary/item need, we try to figure out how to help, if they need to talk to someone, we arrange it, if they need a friend to go see a movie with, we try to find someone who wants to go, if they need help with school, we try to find them help....just a way of giving the kids a safe way to say what they need and trying to help with that. Or, maybe use Rose, Bud, Thorn weekly?

The College Connection: Each month the group gets the name of a college student and brings in things to put in a box to send to them, write notes to them, etc. and then send the box as a little pick me up from the Youth Group.

### **While each can stand on their own, here’s an idea of how to order:**

#### **September:**

- #1 Mary Oliver—summer, senses activity, poetry, cake to kick off the new Youth Group year
- #2 Danilo Cortez – Walk in My Shoes or Photo Scavenger Hunt to create community
- #3 Ani Zonneveld—Youth group shirts tie-dye

#### **October: Pumpkin Patch this month**

- #4 Thich Nhat Hanh – Labyrinth or desktop Zen gardens
- #5 Florence Nightingale —Tattoos expression of faith
- #7 Brian McLaren – Intergenerational Youth Group, sharing stories

#### **November: Meal Packing this month and Thanksgiving**

- #7 Rachel Held Evans –A place at the table, make a meal/Friendsgiving \*\*\*Do this the week before meal packing, perhaps
- #8 Mr. Rogers - Appreciation, Thanksgiving, being a good neighbor (World Kindness/Cardigan Day is November 13)

#### **December:**

- #9 Danya Ruttenberg—light, create luminaries for Christmas or play glow games
- #10 St. Francis – giving to others or pets —combine this with the Christmas party theme
- #11 Christmas Party


## Holy Troublemakers and Unconventional Saints

Topic	Summary	Devotion Idea	Activity Suggestions	Other Ideas?	Notes
Mary Oliver, pg. 148	<p>Attention is the beginning of devotion—Mary was at a party and was listening to the world—she misses part of the birthday party because she is watching a grasshopper. However, her attention helps her to create her poetry.</p> <p>Poetry saved her life—she had an abusive father and a neglectful mother. She would escape to the woods and read/write poems. She left home at 17 and met her partner when she was in her late 20s where Mary wrote many poems including ones about God and spirituality.</p>	<p><a href="https://stpaulsumctucson.org/a-theology-of-paying-attention/">https://stpaulsumctucson.org/a-theology-of-paying-attention/</a> : “In order for this to happen, we have to pay attention to the people around us. In the book <i>The Ministry of Ordinary Places</i>, author Shannan Martin said ‘This mission humbly asks that we devote ourselves to the overlooked spiritual practice of paying attention to wherever God has placed us. That’s where we begin, and, though it’s not terribly complicated, it will ask more of us than we ever imagined.’”</p> <p>This has some good ideas one could use: <a href="https://chronic-joy.org/harvest-of-grains/">https://chronic-joy.org/harvest-of-grains/</a></p>	<p>Attention to one’s senses—have the kids each pick a station to experience:</p> <p>Taste-mystery candy</p> <p>Smell- unlabeled different candles</p> <p>Sight- those pictures where there are two pictures in one: <a href="https://www.artofplay.com/blogs/stories/fun-with-ambiguous-images">https://www.artofplay.com/blogs/stories/fun-with-ambiguous-images</a></p> <p>Touch-what’s in the box?</p> <p>Hearing-nature sounds or maybe contemporary Christian music lyrics or instruments in it?</p> <p>Take the experience and create a Poem</p>	<p>Cake—beginning of a new Youth Group celebration</p> <p>Nature</p>	<p>Summer Devotion Tie-in</p> <p>Speaks of dying</p> <p>Grew up in Ohio</p> <p>From the book: <i>Take a moment to notice something -what do you notice when you actually pay attention? Might you write a poem about it?</i></p>

## *Holy Troublemakers and Unconventional Saints*

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		<p>This also has some good thoughts about paying attention when reading the Bible, but I'm not sure about the views of the source (Free Grace International???), the content of this has some good ideas that could be used:</p> <p><a href="https://freegrace.in/paying-attention-proverbs-420/#:~:text=Speaking%20as%20a%20father%2C%20King.God%20to%20you%E2%80%94pay%20attention!">https://freegrace.in/paying-attention-proverbs-420/#:~:text=Speaking%20as%20a%20father%2C%20King.God%20to%20you%E2%80%94pay%20attention!</a></p>			


## Holy Troublemakers and Unconventional Saints

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<p>Ani Zonneveld, pg. 12</p>	<p>People are more alike than they are different, even when they pray to God using different names.</p> <p>Muslim going to school in Germany and was expected to pray to Jesus, which made her feel guilty. Her mom told her to just replace "Allah" in her mind when she said "Jesus" as we all worship the same God.</p> <p>Today she is an imam and a spokesperson for religious tolerance and human rights.</p> <p>She was a musician, too and received a Grammy nomination.</p> <p>After 9/11, she started several</p>	<p>A verse that speaks to people being more alike than different is Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This verse highlights that in Christ, all distinctions are erased, and believers are united.</p> <p>Another idea: Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.</p> <p><a href="https://um-insight.net/perspectives/open-hearts-open-minds-open-doors/">https://um-insight.net/perspectives/open-hearts-open-minds-open-doors/</a> :</p> <p>"Openness implies a posture of welcome. An open heart is willing to embrace your neighbor, maybe</p>	<p>Video about Islam?  Muslim – World...</p> <p>Kids wanted to learn about different religions</p> <p>Tie-dye: Give the kids the same t-shirt (BUMC Youth Group shirt?) and have them tie-dye—the shirts started the same and have the same base, but we all added our own unique colors/ideas to it—we can be alike and still let our differences shine</p>	<p><a href="#">Kids describe their God:</a>  <a href="#">Kids Of Different Religions Describe God</a></p>	<p>Muslim, women, equality</p> <p>From the book: <i>What could you do for the sake of love and equality?</i></p>

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	organizations to remind Muslims of the values of the Quran, including forward-thinking initiatives supporting women.	even when it is complicated. An open mind is willing to listen and consider new ideas or opinions without shutting down or tuning out. An open door is an often very literal willingness to let anyone, no matter their identity or station in life, walk through your door. And in each of these cases, being open means we should be ready for how God is calling us to change.”			

## Holy Troublemakers and Unconventional Saints

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St. Francis of Assisi, pg. 62	<p>Known for his love of animals and advocacy for the poor.</p> <p>Catholic saint who gave up all of his worldly riches. He went into battle several times and questioned why. He felt that Jesus preached non-violence and it made no sense to fight. He had a vision and gave his life to God by serving the poor. His father wasn't happy about this.</p> <p>He started a religious order, and also had a special relationship with animals—said to have created the idea of a live nativity.</p>	<p>Prayer of St. Francis: Song?</p> <p>Social Principles—Community of All Creation? Is there a devotional based on this?</p> <p>Prayer: <a href="https://www.westohio.umd.org/caring-gods-creation">https://www.westohio.umd.org/caring-gods-creation</a></p> <p>Maybe ideas here: <a href="https://www.umd.org/en/how-we-serve/social-issues/creation-care">https://www.umd.org/en/how-we-serve/social-issues/creation-care</a></p>	<p>Video about Catholicism:    What is Catholi...</p> <p>Make unhoused care kits?</p> <p>If around Christmas, purchase gifts to donate to kids their age either online shopping or go to a store (?)</p> <p>Or, donate to pet shelter?</p> <p>Make some bird, butterfly, or bee feeders for home or church?</p>		<p>From the book: <i>People love Francis for many reasons—what do you love best about his story?</i></p>

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Brian McLaren, pg. 30	<p>17 yrs. old planned to leave the church—curious, loved science, doesn't believe men are better than women (this is the '70s...). Not allowed to question church beliefs or leadership.</p> <p>Became a pastor and preaching includes science, equality, love of all especially those some churches leave out—LGBTQ+ “...I realized that religion wasn't just what other people told me or what a book told me. I was an active participant in faith. And love was at the center.”</p> <p>“The starting point of a progressive Christian is that I love you, I accept you, and I'm interested in learning your story.”</p>	<p>I'd like to see if we can tie in a picture book or something—or the Love Your Neighbor Veggie tales—I find that older kids like to do a picture book or kids' show sometimes!</p> <p>Galatians 5:13-14 “For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’.”</p>	<p><a href="https://ministrytoyouth.com/youth-group-game-loving-others/">https://ministrytoyouth.com/youth-group-game-loving-others/</a></p> <p><a href="https://youth-group-games.com/blogs/free-games/youth-group-game-on-loving-others">https://youth-group-games.com/blogs/free-games/youth-group-game-on-loving-others</a></p> <p>How can we learn the stories of others? Intergenerational “Youth Group” for the day? Pair each kid with an adult and share stories? Go to the Assisted Living building by the church and do an activity? Is that Chippewa Place?</p>		<p>From the book: <i>When have you felt seen and loved by God?</i></p>

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Danilo Cortez, pg. 44	<p>Pastor at a conservative church which doesn't support LGBTQ+ people. He used to agree, and was born in the Philippines to a Catholic family, but he became a Southern Baptist Minister. He began to feel bad about telling LGBTQ+ people that they had to live life alone or to live a lie. He began to research and changed his thoughts.</p> <p>"Jesus wasn't afraid to take a religious rule and offer a new teaching. He especially cared about the people who were most rejected by the religious leaders of his time."</p> <p>After God had changed Danny's heart, his son Drew</p>	<p>Danny embraced the story of the lost sheep in Luke 15:3-6:</p> <p>3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'</p> <p>From the book: <i>"It's about God caring so much about one person who might not be safe that he'd go after just that one</i></p>	<p>Photo scavenger hunt throughout the church for specific items such as a sheep, a rainbow or rainbow item, a heart, the word love, etc.</p> <p>Walk in my shoes activity (might be nice to open up to the church in general and display—a way to show off our unique qualities and better understand each other and think outside their own perspective:</p> <p><a href="https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Walk-In-My-Shoes-Empathy-Display-Lesson-Activity-Back-to-School-8093110">https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Walk-In-My-Shoes-Empathy-Display-Lesson-Activity-Back-to-School-8093110</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Take-A-Walk-In-My-Shoes-Student-G">https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Take-A-Walk-In-My-Shoes-Student-G</a></p>		<p>From the book: <i>When have you decided to risk something big for love?</i></p> <p>The story correlates this idea to slavery: "Maybe in the same way lots of churches had supported slavery for hundreds of years and then had to change their theology when they realized that had never been God's idea, this situation was similar."</p>



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	<p>at 15, told Danny he was gay. Danny gave a sermon to explain his new convictions and his congregation voted to become fully inclusive.</p>	<p>person,” Danny says.</p>	<p><a href="#">et-to-Know-You-4765900</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Walk-in-My-Shoes-SEL-Activity-for-Self-Awareness-and-Self-Expression-10042258">https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Walk-in-My-Shoes-SEL-Activity-for-Self-Awareness-and-Self-Expression-10042258</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/WALK-IN-MY-SHOES-Art-Project-Back-to-School-Get-to-Know-You-Empathy-10308169">https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/WALK-IN-MY-SHOES-Art-Project-Back-to-School-Get-to-Know-You-Empathy-10308169</a></p>		

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Danya Ruttenberg, pg. 50	<p>"Judaism teaches that our job is to show up to help people. What we do matters."</p> <p>Danya's mother passed away when she was young (college) she began to notice the moon, take walks and talk to the moon. She began to notice things in nature and realized eventually that she was starting to believe in God, as she had been an atheist since the age of 13. (Her family was Jewish.)</p> <p>She struggled with the "bearded white man" image of God, but came to realize that is just how people try to explain the idea of God. She became a Rabbi, a mother, a writer and</p>	<p>A good tie-in might be: Matthew 5:14-16: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.</p> <p>Not sure about this school, but some good thoughts are here:  <a href="https://www.warmi">https://www.warmi</a></p>	<p>For fun, Glow Games as we focus on shining our light onto others:            Glow Jenga, glow tic, tac, toe, glow tag, glow corn hole, glow bowling, etc.</p>	<p>Judaism video:    Judaism for ...</p> <p>This might also be a good time to do the College Connection? College can be lonely and it would be nice to reach out. Or, maybe cards to church members who have moved away? Or, so many other opportunities to reach out and help people!</p> <p>Or, if it's around Christmas we can make luminaries with battery candles that we line up going into the church (off of the square) that turn on at dusk and use them as a reminder that we are the light and lead people into the church.</p> <p>Or, this link has some</p>	<p><i>From the book: What is one way you can love God's creation?</i></p>

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	an activist. She works to make society more just and fair.	<a href="http://nghanmce.cheshire.sch.uk/page/let-your-light-shine-matthew-516/97260">nghanmce.cheshire.sch.uk/page/let-your-light-shine-matthew-516/97260</a>		more ideas about light and a video combining light and salt: <a href="#">Salt and Light ~ Ideas, Activities, and Resources   Rotation.org</a>	

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Florence Nightingale, pg. 56	Founder of modern nursing. Crimean War 1854—improved sanitary conditions when they didn't know much about sanitation. At 17 felt a call from God to be a nurse. Had to convince her wealthy parents—having a job wasn't the norm and nursing was not respectable. She also had a lot of religious questions and convictions which weren't very popular. She believed all religions deserved respect and that God would save all people.	<p>“...her expression of faith was unconventional at the time...”</p> <p>A verse which could correlate with this could be Luke 7: 1-10 The Faith of the Centurion as it has both healing and faith: When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. When they came to Jesus, they pleaded</p>	<p>“Tattoos”—with tattoo markers</p> <p>Florence's expression of her faith was unconventional—design/choose an expression of your faith, and create it into a tattoo</p> <p>(It can be conventional—a cross, a dove, etc. but encourage the kids to come up with something unique.)</p> <p>Idea for markers to purchase: <a href="#">Markers</a></p>		<p>From the book: <i>“God called me in the morning and asked me if I would do good for him.”</i> <i>How can being unconventional in life lead to breakthrough and new ideas?</i></p>

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		<p>earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." So Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."When</p>			

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		<p>Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.</p> <p>Thoughts about this verse: <a href="https://truewaykids.com/roman-centurion-teen/">https://truewaykids.com/roman-centurion-teen/</a></p>			

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Thich Nhat Hanh, pg. 180	In Vietnam, an 8 year old boy sees a picture of Buddha sitting serenely in the grass and wants to feel the joy and peace that was shown in the picture. He grows up to become a Buddhist monk. His followers called him Thay (Teacher). He taught the principles of Buddhism and developed "engaged Buddhism," which was meant to help those who were suffering. He was against the Vietnam War and sought asylum in France. He worked with Martin Luther King, Jr. and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by MLK. He helped those who fled Vietnam and	<p>A bible verse which incorporates many of these ideas is: Colossians 3:12. "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."</p> <p>Or, for being in the moment: Matthew 6:34: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."</p>	<p>Rent a labyrinth for the kids to walk. (This is pricey, but could be open to the church, too. We did it at my school once and the kids loved it.) There might be places closer, but I found this website to rent: <a href="https://www.canvaslabyrinths.com/rentals">https://www.canvaslabyrinths.com/rentals</a></p> <p>Why it works: From Google AI(!):</p> <p>Thich Nhat Hanh emphasizes the practice of breathing and walking meditation to cultivate mindfulness and awareness in everyday life. While not directly a biblical verse, the connection</p>	<p>Another mindfulness idea would be to have everyone create their own Zen gardens. We (the Carters) have plenty of to-go containers which can be filled with sand, they sell small rakes, and can add rocks, air plants, etc. The kids can keep them at home and use them when they need to focus in the moment.</p> <p>Also, to learn more about Buddhism, use the video series on World Religions.</p>	Question from the book: <i>What do you think it means to "be a Buddha?"</i>

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	started a place for people to live and work in community and focus on the moment they were in. He also focused on compassion.		between the <i>practice</i> of mindfulness and verses that encourage a life lived with intentionality and awareness, as in Proverbs 4:26 "Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways" is worth noting.		






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Rachel Held Evans, pg. 166	As a young girl, Rachel suffered from eczema which caused her to miss sleep, miss PE class, be in pain, etc. She wondered why Jesus let this happen to her. She asked her dad, a pastor, and he didn't know, which was a strange idea because at 10 she thought her dad knew everything. She learned that it is o.k. to not know everything. She became an author of books about faith and her words comforted others, focusing on love and the truth and inclusion.	<p>Luke 14:13 says, "But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind." God has a big table and a place to share his love.</p> <p>Talk about sharing a meal and all of the things it symbolizes. You share a meal with your family at night, or all of your relatives at a holiday, or your friends at school...do you remember to look around and see who needs to be included? Do you say a prayer for those who need food and can you help to support the food banks? Is God's table a metaphor for something bigger? How can you share</p>	<p>Combine these two ideas from the book: "The essence of the Divine is love. In the midst of your questions, you are fully loved right now, just as you are."</p> <p>"This is what God's kingdom is like: a bunch of outcasts and oddballs gathered at the table, not because they are worthy or good, but because they are hungry, because they said yes. And there's always room for more."</p> <p>Share a meal together by cooking it and then eating together (a type of Friendsgiving) while talking about the ideas above. You will want to have some</p>	<p>"Big House" by Audio Adrenaline talks about the Father having a big table with lots of food  <a href="#">Audio Adrenali...</a></p> <p>And/or play the song/video "Come to the Table" by Sidewalk Prophets  <a href="#">Sidewalk Proph...</a></p>	<p><i>From the book: Do you have questions that cause you to wrestle with God?</i></p> <p>Rachel passed away unexpectedly in 2019 at 37 years old after a short illness.</p>

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		what you have, comfort and include others? ***Do this activity the week before the meal packing.	Q&A cards prepared to facilitate the conversation.		

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Mister Rogers, pg. 68	Mr. Rogers had a kids' show on PBS and it was also the inspiration for <i>Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood</i> and <i>Donkey Hodie</i> . He was a Presbyterian Minister and believed that he could reach people through the television and help to change the world. Mr. Rogers quietly in his own way taught kids about Civil Rights, the Vietnam War, etc. and showed a love for everyone.	<p>"I believe appreciation is a holy thing-that when we look for what's best in a person we happen to be with at that moment, we're doing what God does all the time. So in loving and appreciating our neighbor, we're participating in something sacred."</p> <p>Showing appreciation is a form of thanksgiving. It can be tied to the bible verse: Colossians 3:17: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."</p>	<p>Show appreciation and thanksgiving for someone who has helped you by writing them a note.</p> <p>Or, write notes to those in our church that you appreciate.</p> <p>"Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."</p> <p>Mr. Rogers has a lot of different great quotes. Have the kids find a quote that inspires them, create mini-posters with the quotes on them and place them around the church for others' to see.</p> <p>Mr. Rogers wore a sweater (red is the signature color, but</p>	<p>Show a clip from Mr. Rogers. Here's an idea:</p> <p> Mister Roger's ...</p> <p>Also, a blast from the kids' past might be an episode of <i>Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood</i> on while they are working on their letters.</p> <p> Celebrate Than...</p> <p> Daniel Tiger's ...</p>	<p><i>From the book: Why do you think it's so important to let people know that we like them just the way they are?</i></p> <p>Good book for you to do more research:</p> <p><a href="#">Who Was Mister Rogers? - Who HQ</a></p>

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			<p>any cardigan will do),  have a cardigan  Sunday where  kids/congregation  wear cardigans and  talk about loving  one's neighbor. Have  the kids plan that  Sunday during Youth  Group.  World Kindness  Cardigan Day is  November 13th:</p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/MMSdecatur/photos/did-you-know-that-world-kindness-day-is-just-around-the-corner-its-coming-up-on-1098026212329911/?_rdr">https://www.facebook.com/MMSdecatur/photos/did-you-know-that-world-kindness-day-is-just-around-the-corner-its-coming-up-on-1098026212329911/?_rdr</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.wqed.org/cardiganday/">https://www.wqed.org/cardiganday/</a></p>		

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Christmas Party	The Herdman family is different and makes everyone uncomfortable and uneasy, especially when they decide to come to church.	<p>Jesus didn't hang out with just the "most holy" people—the Herdmans would have been welcomed and included by Jesus.</p> <p>Maybe: Micah 6:8 says "What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with the Lord."</p>	<p><i>The Best Christmas Pageant Ever</i> movie</p> <p><a href="https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2347285/">https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2347285/</a></p>	<p>The Herdmans receive gifts/gift basket for Christmas only through the charity of others.</p> <p>Collect and wrap gifts for kids their age—look into where we could donate, tie into previous weeks of shopping, if that was an activity.</p>	Also an amazing book, and there's a movie from the '80s, too, but the new one is good!