

Advent Devotions for the week of December 9th

FEAR

Going to the Advent worship service this Wednesday? Dig into this week's Advent service reading by checking out Isaiah 43:1-7



I keep a nightlight in our downstairs hall bathroom. During the day I barely notice the faint light it emits but at night when I am navigating my way across the family room and through the hall, that tiny light makes a big difference in how safely I make my way through the dark. It becomes even more vital if I have recently rearranged the furniture or the dog is laying in an unusual spot.

- Turn off all the lights—how does it feel to be in complete darkness? Light a candle or turn on a flashlight or switch on just one lamp—how much difference does it make to have even a small light in the dark?
- Talk about things we fear? What makes you afraid? Is there a big difference in the kinds of things that make you afraid versus someone else who is a different age? Do thunderstorms scare you? What about a room of unfamiliar people? In this devotion experiment it may look as if the balloon is being protected by the bottle, but looks can be deceiving...

Gather:

A balloon

Glass soda bottle or plastic 20 oz clear bottle

Insert the balloon into the bottle and stretch the balloon opening back over the bottle mouth. Blow up the balloon while it is in the bottle.

You can't. You are not able to blow up the balloon while it is inside the bottle because the air inside the bottle is trapped by the balloon stretched over the opening. To allow the balloon to

expand, the air inside the bottle would need to escape. At that point the balloon could expand to take up the space left by the departed air.

The glass bottle is strong. Because it surrounds the balloon, it appears as if it protects it. However, it is the air trapped in the bottle that prevents the balloon from being inflated. You look to the people and things in your life for protections. Bicycle helmets, knee pads, shin guards—all these things help to prevent injury. When you were small, your parents seemed strong enough to save you from anything. Dad's strong arms reassured you that it was okay to be in the deep end of the pool. A kiss from Mom instantly healed any ouchie.

God has blessed us with people and things that protect us from the dangers of the world. But just as the glass bottle could do little to protect the balloon without the air pressure, the air bags and shoulder pads are not useful without God.

God loves you and protects you like a father. He doesn't want you harmed and He is with you always. Now, of course, moms and dads and bike helmets are important too. But remember that God is the real protection behind the safety pad.

Prayer: God, You are our Light in any uncertainty. Help us to take Your light into the shadows around us, to rely on You for direction and comfort and to share that with those around us.

Amen



looking to take your Advent a little further?

Go and do: Make a plan this week to do something kind for someone who you fear or find difficult to like- how can you bring God's light to them?