



John 9

(Lectionary Year A, Lent 4)

By Beth Barnett

Opportunity for the gathering to pray for world leaders, and to see situations and people through the eyes of God's love and grace.

You will need:

- A3 posters of world leaders (about a dozen)
- A4 posters of blank 'silhouettes' (enough for roughly one per person) with tagline printed on each poster – *"The Lord does not see as humans see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."* (for an example, download the companion pdf – "silhouettes.pdf")
- Crayons or markers

Time required:

5-10 minutes

Connect

Display the selection of posters of world leaders (political, social, religious, thought, etc) interspersed with the blank posters on walls or display boards around your gathering space. Distribute markers/crayons in containers easily accessible near the posters.

Two of our readings today have included people judging others – in the reading from the Gospel of John, Jesus' disciples and the Pharisees judged a man with a visual disability, born blind, harshly as being punished for sin.

And in the Old Testament reading from 1 Samuel, the prophet Samuel misjudges who will make a good leader for the People, being distracted by outward appearance.

In both readings, we see examples of how God's judgment is so different to human assumptions – even disciples and prophets don't see things rightly, and so we recognise the wise advice that humans should hold back from judging each other.

Context

In our prayers today

- We will ask for help to see things with God's eyes of love and grace.
- Reflecting on the Bible readings we might pray especially for the way people with disabilities are seen and judged
- We pray for the way our leaders are seen and judged
- We pray for our leaders to see things with God's eyes too
- We pray for those with disabilities to help us see Jesus more clearly, as the man in the gospel reading did.

Content

Invite your gathering

- to draw 'godly glasses' on the posters – either of the world leaders or silhouettes representing ourselves, and as they do, to pray any of the prayer suggestions above
- or to sit quietly and pray
- or listen and 'pray along' with the song played

Give several minutes to this activity, playing an appropriate song.
Re-gather and finish with a concluding prayer:

***All-seeing, and All-loving God,
You are not blind to our sins,
but you offer us your forgiveness, grace and love.
You are not blind to our struggles and hurts,
and you offer us compassion and help.
Thank you for your ways of seeing us, knowing us, loving us.
Keep us from judging one-another.
Keep us loving one-another.
Keep us looking to see you more and more clearly
and walking in your ways.
In the name of Jesus,
Amen.***



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Resources

Suggested songs:

Ross Langmead, Lord let me see. ccli1447551 <http://www.rosslangmead.com/>

Paul Baloche, Open the eyes of my heart, Lord. ccli2298355

W.T. Matson, Lord I was blind. ccli 3101609

Rich Mullins, Who God is gonna use. ccli701906

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2Lf04qGB08>

Example of 'godly glasses':



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