

WC ENCOUNTER GROUPS CURRICULUM

WEEK ONE

Contentment Code: Joy > Happiness
Philippians 4:4-8

FAMILY ENCOUNTER

SUPPLIES:

- Bible
- Sacred Candle & Matches/Lighter
- Pen, Pencil
- Paper

WELCOMING GOD:

Gather together, and welcome God into this time and space through the lighting of a candle. Take this moment to pause briefly and sit quietly in this light for a few moments allowing time for everyone to relax their body, mind, and spirit for this time. In these moments, the invitation is to become aware of God's presence with and amongst you as a family.

Sharing with God and One Another:

Say: "If anything is on our minds that makes it difficult for us to focus, let's share it now and then let it go."

-Whoever leads this portion might share what is on his or her mind to model this. Give time for each person to respond. When everyone who desires to has responded, invite everyone to place their hands out and lift them up as we give these distractions to God

OR

you can invite the family to pray together as one person leads saying the following:

Dear Loving God,

The One who knows our hearts, celebrates our victories, grieves with us during our losses, and gives us the strength to overcome our challenges. Please help us to let go of the distractions we name now, so that we can openly share with our family and may encounter you in a special way today. Our distractions are: (let there be silence here, so everyone has an opportunity to name aloud what is distracting them).

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Encountering God:

Read: Read aloud Philippians 4:4-8

-Take turns reading the scripture or have a different family member read the scripture each week.

Philippians 4:4-8

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Encountering Each Other:

Say: Paul tells the Philippians to “rejoice in the Lord always.” Then, he tells them how to do it: always pray with thanksgiving. Paul understood that giving thanks for what we have helps us appreciate it and others more.

Discussion Questions:

- What brought you joy today?
- What can you say “thank you” to God for today?

Activity: Get out your pen, markers, or crayons and your paper. For each family member gathered with you, take the time to think of and write or draw two things about them that you are thankful for, things that bring you joy!

Once everyone has finished writing or drawing what they are grateful for, take turns going around the table sharing what you wrote down about each person. Say to each person: “ _____, I give thanks for you because _____.”

Discussion Questions:

- How does it feel to share what you are grateful for in others?
- How does it feel to hear why they are grateful for you?
- What is one thing we can do to remember the good in one another?

Say: Let's keep these lists near us this week and try to remind each other—and ourselves—of why we are thankful for each other throughout the week.

Encountering God Together:

Say:

May we pray together as a family...

- Let us share our prayers for the world: for our country and leaders, for other countries and their leaders...
- Let us share our prayers for the church, ministers, and spiritual leaders...
- Let us share our prayers for our teachers, first responders, friends, and others in the community...
- Let us share our prayers for our family and our own specific needs...

If you would like to record the people for whom you pray, use the next few lines to do so:

*You can also record these requests in a family prayer journal if you are using one.

Encountering Transformation Together:

Pray aloud together:

God, we welcomed you here and read Your Word,
we prayed and we spent time with you,
we rested in your love for us,
and we did this all together.

Now, we promise to love one another and others as you love us.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Blessing One Another for our Encounters with the World:

Invite family members to bless one another using any of the examples below or their own blessings.

Examples:

“I love you. God loves you. I pray God blesses you.”

“God loves you exactly like you are—and so do I.”

“I love the gifts God has given you and how you bless the world with them.”