

WEEK THREE

XL: Numbers 13:25-30

FAMILY ENCOUNTER

SUPPLIES:

- Bible
- Sacred Candle & Matches/Lighter
- Blindfold (or bandana, scarf, etc. that can be used as a blindfold)

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 Numbers 13:25-30

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

Numbers 13:25-30

“At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land. And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the Israelites in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, ‘We came to the land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Yet the people who live in the land are strong, and the towns are fortified and very large; and besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the land of the Negeb; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea, and along the Jordan.’ But Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, ‘Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.’”

Encountering Each Other:

Say: When spies that Moses sent to the Promised Land returned with news, they told Moses and Aaron two things about the land:

1. It was full of milk and honey. In other words, it was rich with everything they would need to live there, plus extras!
2. The people who already lived there were many, and they were big.

The Israelites had some giants to face before entering this land. Though the land contained everything they needed and wanted, the obstacles before them were great. The spies simply didn't think the Israelites would be welcome there. All they could see were the things standing in their way.

Discussion Questions:

- Can you share a time when you thought the odds were impossible? A time when you didn't think you could accomplish a goal? Take turns sharing that story with one another.

Say: Caleb reminded the Israelites that they could live in the land. He had faith that God was still with them, that forty years of wandering and forty days of spying on the Promised Land were not for nothing. God would lead them through even when they didn't see the way.

Activity: Let's practice our trust-walk! Choose a family member who is willing to be blindfolded. Choose a starting location and an ending location. Don't make it too easy, and don't make it too hard. Once blindfolded, choose another family member to guide them through the house from the starting point to the end point. (Be nice as you guide!) Other family members should make noise, call out, etc. (You can take turns until every member has

been blindfolded and guided through the house.)

Discussion Questions:

- What was it like to be blindfolded trying to make it through the house?
- How did people making noise make it harder to walk through the house blindfolded?
- Was it difficult to tell which voice to trust?
- Why is knowing the voice of your guide and following it important?
- How do you think this might relate to what the Israelites faced in our Scripture today?

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.”