

# WC ENCOUNTER GROUPS CURRICULUM

## WEEK ONE

Contentment Code: Content > Container

Philippians 4:11-13

## FAMILY ENCOUNTER

### SUPPLIES:

- Bible
- Sacred Candle & Matches/Lighter

### 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 4:11-13

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

### Philippians 4:11-13

Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. <sup>12</sup> I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

### Encountering Each Other:

Activity: Let's take two minutes. In the next two minutes, every family member should go find something that they love—something that has value to them but that might not look valuable to someone else. (Ex: Pastor Kristin's daughter brought out an old, torn up cookbook for this activity.)

When everyone has returned take turns answering the following questions:

#### Discussion Questions:

- What did you bring back?
- What makes this item important to you?

Say: Paul says he's learned to be content with whatever he has—and he writes these words from prison. This is not a place that it seems like Paul would be very happy to be.

Contentment is funny, though. We think of it as happiness, but it's much more than that. Contentment is a mindset, an attitude. It can help us to find value in things that others might not—like some of the things we shared today.

We are content with these things not because we have them but because of how we perceive them. They are special to us for all the reasons we shared earlier.

We learn to be content when we practice perceiving our things and our situations as having value—no matter what.

For Paul, knowing Christ was always with him changed his attitude toward life: this is why Paul could be content in prison.

He knew whether he had a little or a lot, whether he was at home or in a cell, that he

had Jesus with him at all times, and knowing that truth helped him be content.

### Discussion Questions:

- Why do you believe Paul knew how to be content or fulfilled no matter where he was or what he had?
- How can we learn to perceive our situations and things so that we are content?
- What can we do to grow in contentment?

### 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:

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\*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.”