

WEEK TWO

Supplies:

- Bible
- Sacred Candle & Matches/Lighter
- Two Pieces of Notebook Paper
- Crayons, Markers, Pencils

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 has responded that would like to, 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 aloud: Matthew 6:12-15

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

Matthew 6:12-15

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

ENCOUNTERING EACH OTHER:

Activity: Lay out the two pieces of paper on the table.

Say: When we are hurt by others, our heart feels a bit crumpled—sometimes, really crumpled—like paper that someone has wadded up.

Activity: Invite each person to wad up one of the pieces of paper into a ball (as tight or as loose as they would like). Invite everyone to try to straighten out the wadded up paper again.

Say: When we forgive others, we begin the process of healing, but the pain still leaves a mark. Just like the heart, the paper doesn't go back to its original shape. How does it feel, or how do you think it feels, to be on the losing team in a game?

Say: But, when we allow Jesus to enter into our hurts with his love and forgiveness—and when we ask him to help us forgive those who've wadded up our hearts, what was wrinkled (and can never be fully mended on its own) can become something beautiful again.

Activity: Invite everyone to draw an image or design of what forgiveness means to them on the paper.

Say: The paper is still wrinkly, but forgiveness creates space for beauty to enter—even into our pain—as God helps us forgive others and as we accept God's forgiveness when we sin.

Discussion Questions:

- Can you remember a time when someone forgave you for doing something wrong? If so, how did that feel?
- Take a moment to share what you are drawing—what does forgiveness look like, sound like, feel like for you?

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:

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.”