

## WEEK TWO

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 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: Micah 5:2

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

Micah 5:2

“But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.”

## ENCOUNTERING EACH OTHER:

**Say:** This verse from Micah often makes us think of Jesus — and of God’s promise. This verse set an expectation that a ruler would come to Israel from Bethlehem. Bethlehem was small. And “Ephrathah” was a small clan within Bethlehem. Everything about where the ruler would come from was surprising: small family, small town. Yet, that’s what God chose to do: use the smallest, the least likely and the most unexpected. And, God does this over and over in the Bible — God does something great and deliberately chooses someone the rest of us don’t expect.

The smallest of the brothers is going to be king (David). The greatest judge of Israel comes from the weakest family (Gideon). Our savior comes as a baby (Jesus), related to the smallest clan (Ephrathah) and the smallest town (Bethlehem).

### Discussion Questions:

- Take turns describing a time when you felt too small, too weak, too \_\_\_\_ to make a difference.
- What does it feel like to hear that God chooses and uses the unexpected intentionally?

**Activity (optional):** Take turns sharing our last blessing with one another.

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

Think of specific gifts each person around the table blesses you with — one that might surprise them, something they might consider too small, etc.

Share that gift with each person. (Ex: “Mom, I love that God made your voice quiet because it calms me down when I feel mad.”)

## 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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## 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.”