

WEEK THREE**JONAH: REVIVAL
FAMILY ENCOUNTER**

Supplies:

- Bible
- Sacred Candle & Matches/Lighter
- Pens & Paper (or a Prayer Journal)

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: Jonah 3:1-10

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

"The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, 'Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.' So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, 'Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: 'By the decree of the king and his nobles: No human being or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall they drink water. Human beings and animals shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish.' When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it."

ENCOUNTERING EACH OTHER:

Say: The people of Ninevah were people Jonah despised. They were the enemy of the Jewish people, and God sent Jonah to them. His message was simple: "Forty days more, and Ninevah will be overthrown!" The Ninevites were "those people," "them," and "other" to Jonah. Do you have anyone in your life who is a "them—" someone (or even a group of people) that you dislike?

Activity (Part One):

Write the names of the "thems" in your life on the paper.

Say: A funny thing happened when Jonah preached his eight-word sermon: the Ninevites believed God. They changed their minds about how they lived, grieved their sin, and began serving God. They didn't know what God would do, but they worshipped God anyway! The same can be true for the "thems" in our life. That's how revival begins, after all. We believe God and worship God in response to that belief. It begins when we change our minds and hearts—like the Ninevites did.

Activity (Part Two):

Look at the list of "thems" on your paper. Spend some time reminding yourself that God loves them by drawing a heart around each of their names individually. As you do, say "God loves ____."

Say: Jonah might have had a hard time with this activity. Let's talk about how we responded to it.

Discussion Questions:

- How did you feel drawing hearts around the names of people you don't get along with?
- How does it change the way you feel when you remember and remind yourself that God loves them?
- How do you think God asks you to share love with those people?

Say: Throughout this week, look back at your list and work through the names reminding yourself “God loves ____.” Let’s pray for revival—that we and our “thems” would believe God and worship God.

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.”