

WEEK FOUR

Supplies:

- Bible
- Pens, Markers or Crayons
- Sacred Candle & Matches/Lighter
- Printout of the Maze for Each Person

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:

Activity: Jonah 3:1-10

Give everyone a copy of the attached maze and a pen, pencil, or crayon. Everyone take a few moments to work on the maze. See if you can get yourself from the "Start" to "Ninevah."

When everyone has finished the maze, set it aside and—

Read: Jonah 4:1-5

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

Jonah 4:1-5

“But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.’ And the Lord said, ‘Is it right for you to be angry?’ Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.”

ENCOUNTERING EACH OTHER:

Say: When the Ninevites repented of their sin and turned back to God, that surprised Jonah. What Jonah was not surprised about was God’s response of choosing to forgive them. As a matter of fact, according to Jonah 4:1-5, Jonah was angry at God for that.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Jonah was so mad at God for forgiving the Ninevites?
- How do you think you might have responded to God choosing to forgive the Ninevites?

Say: It seemed like, when Jonah went to preach to the Ninevites, he might have really changed, but his anger at God shows us that he ends where he started—not wanting anything good for the Ninevites. He essentially tells God: “I knew you would just forgive them! Why did I waste my time?!?”

Look at your maze. What do you notice about when you messed up?

You had to back up a little bit and start again. That’s what Jonah had to do and what he still has the opportunity to do at the end of this story. It’s what the Ninevites did.

As we go through this week, may we choose to back up and start again when we mess up. And may we thank God for giving us the chance to do so.

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.

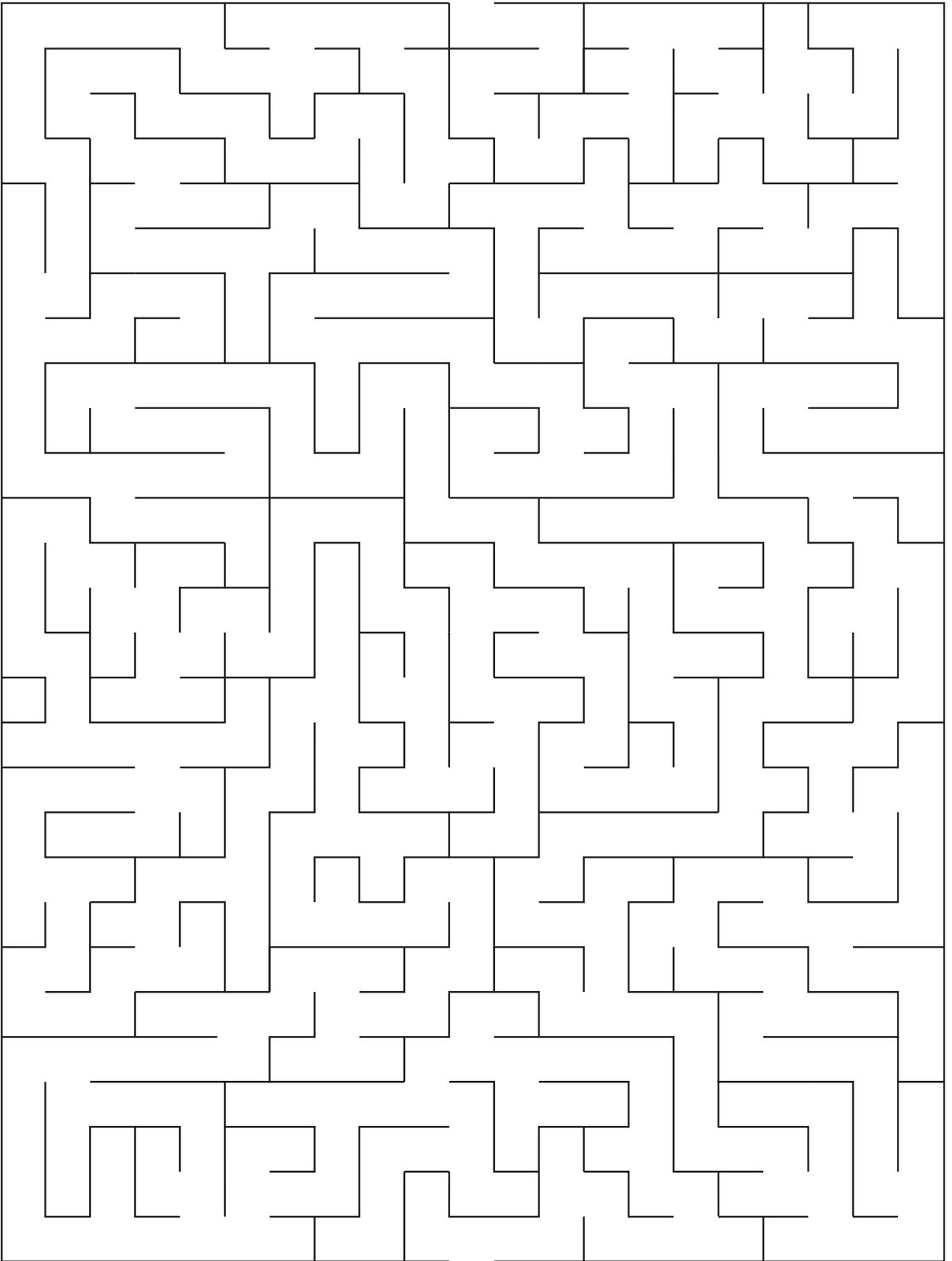
BLESSING ONE ANOTHER FOR OUR ENCOUNTERS WITH THE WORLD:

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.”

Nineveh



Start