

**WEEK ONE****FAMILY ENCOUNTER**

Supplies:

- Bible
- Sacred Candle & Matches/Lighter
- Pens, Markers or Crayons
- Seeds, Dirt/Potting Soil & Flower Pot

**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: Read aloud Galatians 5:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

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

**Galatians 5:22-23**

“By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.”

### **1 Corinthians 3:1-9**

“And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? For when one says, ‘I belong to Paul’, and another, ‘I belong to Apollos’, are you not merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

## **ENCOUNTERING EACH OTHER:**

Activity: Pour the soil in the pot.

### Discussion Questions:

- What do you think happens if we add seeds to this pot and never add water or place the pot in sunlight?
- What do you think happens if we add water to this soil and put it in sunlight, but never add seeds?
- What do you think would happen if we add the seeds and the water, but never put the plant in the sunlight?

Activity: Add the seeds to the pot with some water, and place the pot in a window or somewhere it will get some sunlight.

Say: Paul writes that we are God’s servants working together, and he shares that he plants, and Apollos waters, but God gives growth. It’s like with this plant: if we plant a seed and never water it, the plant won’t grow. And, if we water the soil in the pot without ever putting seeds in there, nothing will grow. It takes all of the parts—water, seed, soil, and sunlight—to help the plant grow. When he uses this example, Paul points out that neither he nor Apollos—nor any of us—can bear fruit on our own, without one another and without God. We need God, and we need one another to bear fruit.

### Discussion Questions:

- Now that we’ve added seed, water, soil, and placed the plant in the sun, what do you think happens next? When will we see a flower?
- How do you think your life might be like this plant?

Say: Throughout Lent (and even beyond), take turns caring for the plant. Water it. Ensure it has the proper amount of sunlight. Watch for its growth, and know that there is a fourth ingredient that will help this plant grow: time.

It takes time for seeds to transform to sprouting greens and for those sprouts to transform to flowers. As you go throughout this week, and through Lent, give God thanks for the people placed in your life who help you live in the 'Son-light' of God's grace, so that over time, you will become more and more like Jesus.

## 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."