

## WEEK FOUR

Supplies:

- Bible
- Sacred Candle & Matches/Lighter
- Pens or Pencils
- Paper

## 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 1 Timothy 6:9-10:

"But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains."

## ENCOUNTERING EACH OTHER:

Say: Today, we are going to read a story from another faith tradition that pairs with the Scripture for this week. It goes like this:

Once, a wise woman who was traveling in the mountains found a precious stone in a stream. The next day, she met another traveler who was hungry, and the wise woman opened her bag to share her food. When she opened her bag, the hungry traveler saw the precious stone and asked the woman to give it to him.

She did so without hesitation.

The traveler left, rejoicing about his good fortune. He knew the stone was worth enough to give him security for a lifetime, not just feed him for a day.

A few days later, he came back to the wise woman to return the stone to her. "I've been thinking," he said, "I know how valuable the stone is, but I give it back in the hope that you can give me something even more precious: Give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me the stone."

### Discussion Questions:

- What do you think was in the woman that helped her give the man her precious stone?
- Do you think the man gained what the woman had that enabled her to give the stone away? Why or why not?

Say: The wise woman in this story appears to love something other than money. She appears to love serving others. She was willing to feed the man, then to give him her most valuable possession. But, here's the thing: the stone wasn't even hers to begin with. She didn't love the stone because she understood her relationship with it: she was caring for it. And, she understood her relationship to the traveler she met: she was caring for him. What within the woman enabled her to give the man her stone? Maybe, it was the generosity that comes with knowing that we are made to care for the things and people that surround us.

In these days of social distancing, we have people in need around us: some need a kind word; some need food; some need a friend; some need their lawn mowed.

### Activity:

Brainstorm as a family: what is one way you can care for and give to a neighbor, a loved one or a stranger in need? If you need a jumping off point, maybe write an encouraging note or make an encouraging card for your neighbors this week. Then, go on a family walk and drop those notes off as you walk the block. Or, offer to weed a neighbor's flowerbed. With your paper and pen/pencil, write this list down. As a family, decide which act of generosity you will share this week. Then, go do it!

## 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.”