

Handout 5: A Process for Using Seeing the Word at Home with Families

Choose a consistent time that becomes “family church” for you—perhaps one evening a month or a Saturday afternoon before a special family dinner.

Gathering Ritual:

Create a sacred center on a coffee table or kitchen table. Have crayons, markers, colored pencils, or a pen for each person. Place the Reflection Guides in a central place for each person. Place other sacred items—such as a candle, a bowl of water, baptismal garment, seasonal ornament, or a flower—on the table as well. Use a gesture to begin prayer, such as the sign of the cross, folding one’s hands, or bowing one’s head. Play music and/or light a candle, reminding the family that Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (Matt 18:20).

Listening:

Read the Scripture passage aloud, inviting each person to listen for the word that God has for them. Children often enjoy reading the Scripture aloud. Encourage children to choose their own sacred words—one that reminds them of God. When everyone has a word, have each person simply say the word aloud. Remind your child that God gave him or her the gift of this word so they could connect with God. Give each person time to “digest” the word or write the word in their journal section of the Reflection Guide, decorating it with color.

LISTENING

Listen for God’s word or a passage that touches the heart.

Meditating:

Share with one another what this particular word means to you today; why is it special to you? The passage may take you deeper into the Scripture. Take time to talk about the Scripture. What does the word mean in the Scripture passage? Do you find yourself in the passage in a particular way? Read aloud the first paragraph on page 3 in the Reflection Guide.

MEDITATING

Ruminate on the word. Allow the word or passage to dwell within you. Allow this pondering to invite you into dialogue with God and then, in the spirit of Pentecost, share the word with the group.

Seeing:

Have another family member read the Scripture aloud, while the rest of the family looks at the illuminated Word in the Reflection Guide. Have each person share what they see. Some family members may

SEEING

Return to God’s word for the purpose of “hearing and seeing” Christ in the text. Fix your gaze on the illumination. Ask God to open the eyes of your heart and enable you to see what God wants you to see. Be open to images, thoughts, impressions, and feelings that come into your awareness.

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see more literally; for example, in the Sower and the Seed illumination, a literal person will notice the bird or the blue jeans on the man. Some will be able to move into a symbolic interpretation, for example, noticing that the sky is yellow and the sun is blue or that a crown of thorns is choking the weeds. You may find yourself in one of the four mounds of soil or see yourself outside or inside the frame. Others may imagine being wildly scattered as seeds by God. Others may notice what kind of soil they are or what kind of soil they want to be. Allow the answers to be both serious and playful. Invite people to wonder aloud why the artist might paint this illumination like this? Another may move to reflecting on the morning sky—seeing the sun peak through the clouds and noting that God is trying to brighten our day early this morning. Discuss what this picture tells you about Jesus.

PRAYING

Pray to God, allowing for the transformation of your being and feelings. Give to God what you have found in your heart.

Praying:

Invite family members into their heart for a quiet prayer, bringing their needs, concerns, and joys to God in their own words. Then invite people to pray aloud. This may also be a time to teach children and youth traditional prayers of the church: Hail Mary, Our Father, sign of the cross, Jesus Prayer, or the Act of Contrition.

Contemplating:

Invite the family to simply relax and rest with God and one another. Feel God's warm embrace and love. The length of quiet time may increase as the family becomes comfortable simply being quiet with one another. Read aloud paragraph 3 from the Reflection Guide.

CONTEMPLATING

Notice the transforming presence of God within you. Surrender all that is stirring, even if only briefly, and rest in God's embrace.

Becoming Christ-like:

Listen to the Word of God again as everyone looks again at the illuminated Word. In what ways does this speak to your family? Can you imagine in a new way what it means to be a family? Does this illuminated Word paint a new picture for you of God and of family? Does it gently call your family to a new way of relating to one another? Discuss the family questions on the Facilitator Guide at this time or save them for a meal conversation later in the week.

BECOMING CHRIST-LIKE

Return to God's word. Allow it to transform you. Notice how your faith is being deepened and your way of life motivated.