

	<p>Session # 3 The Church: Intersecting Beautifully Broken People with a Beautifully Broken World The church creates a space for us to encounter God</p>
<p>Scripture Focus: Hebrews 10:24-25</p>	<p><i>Hebrews 10:24-25</i> <i>24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.</i></p>
<p>Introduction to Small Group Workshop</p>	<p>Introduction: Whether it's through song, the word (scripture), or sacraments (Holy Communion) the church is an environment that provides us a <i>space to encounter God</i>. The church is not a building, but a community. It is a community of people who come together to worship and encounter God together. While a traditional Sunday service may not be exciting for many of us, its purpose is to create a sense of community with other people who have similar beliefs and values. When we come together in community as the church, we have a unique opportunity to build a closer relationship with God, and with one another. In our first session, we reflected on our own brokenness and how we are healed from our brokenness through the grace of God. In the second session, we reflected on the brokenness of the world and how God is using the ELCA and other Lutherans around the world to heal some of the brokenness in the world. The purpose of this last session is to explore different spiritual practices and to encounter God together as a community. Instead of a traditional prayer where we bow our heads and close our eyes, we will explore different approaches to spending time with God, and spending time with other people who love God.</p> <p>The church is a safe place where God and the world collide. It is a place where we can bring all of our own brokenness and all the brokenness of the world, and ask God to provide healing, wholeness, and everlasting grace. There are many approaches to creating an environment where we can all encounter God together and this session will give us an opportunity to explore some of those options as a community.</p> <p>Youth are invited to explore each station at their own pace but should visit at least 2 of the 4 stations. As a form of accountability, a sign-up sheet should be provided at each station which requires each youth to include their name, and one thing they learned at the station. They can go and read the instructions for each station and decide which ones they want to do. Or take time going around and completing each station.</p> <p>**Music should be playing in the background and a candle should be lit to help set the tone**</p>
<p>Digging Deeper for all ages with Bible Back up</p> <p>Materials: - Ribbons (multiple colors) - tape - markers - Activity worksheet with scripture, instructions, and examples</p>	<p>Luther's Four Stranded Prayer</p> <p>When asked by his barber how to pray, Martin Luther described his prayer routine as a four-stranded braid led by the Holy Spirit. While spending time with God, Luther was always focused on 4 key things.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Instruction from God: What is God trying to tell me? Thanksgiving: What should I be thankful for? Confession: How can I improve and be a better person? Petition: What would I like to see God do in my life or in the world? <p>Using this model, we will each create our own four-stranded prayer braid bracelet.</p> <p>Pick 4 different strands of ribbon, make sure the length is long enough to make a braided bracelet.</p> <p>Tie a knot on one end of the ribbons.</p>

Read 1st scripture for first ribbon strand:

Jeremiah 28:11 11 I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the LORD; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope.

Psalm 86:15

15 But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

What is God saying in these scripture? Pick a word that describes the meaning of the text i.e. (love, peace, great future, God's love, Hope, confidence, compassionate, merciful, loving, faithful)

Read 2nd scripture for second ribbon strand:

2 Corinthians 4:15 All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

1 Chronicles 16:34 34 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

On the second strand, write down one thing that you thank God for. (i.e. friends, family, coach, mentor, sibling, pets, food, shelter, peace, love, joy, grace,)

Read 3rd scripture for third ribbon strand:

James 4:17

¹⁷ Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.

On the third strand, name something that you could use improvement on. (i.e. following instructions, listening (parents/teachers), cleaning up, being nice, sharing, loving your sibling, being honest, being grateful)

Read 4th scripture for 4th strand

Psalm 17:6 ~ I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer

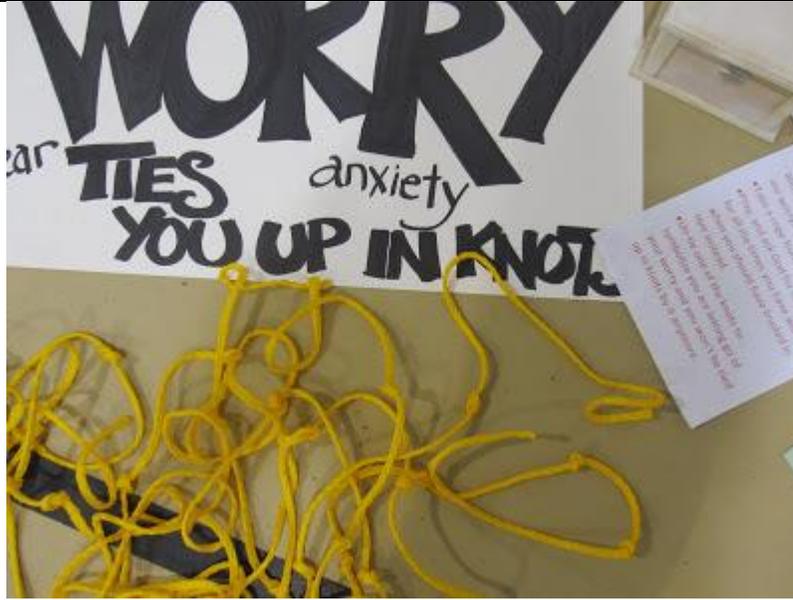
Psalm 145:18 The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

On the fourth strand, make your requests known to God. Ask for something that you want to see in your life (i.e. peace, happiness, joy, love, friends, better grades, more confidence, money for family, healing, grace, understanding, knowledge, wisdom)

OR something you would like to see in the world (i.e. end world hunger, climate control, end poverty, end homelessness, healthcare for all, protection, safety, love, grace, mercy, connection, no gun violence, no bullying, a cure for cancer).

After you have a word on each strand, braid or twist your ribbons to create a bracelet. You can either tape the strands to the table to hold in place while braiding, or have a friend hold the strings for you while you braid.

<p><u>Materials:</u> - Candy or fruit - Scripture print out - chairs or space to sit on the floor</p>	<p>1. The Sweetness of God</p> <p>This station is simply intended to take a quiet moment to reflect on all the different things we've learned this weekend. Read the scripture, take a piece of candy or fruit, and reflect on the sweetness of God that you have experienced during our retreat. Pay close attention to the meaning of the scripture and the taste of the sweetness of the candy or fruit. Intentionally chew slowly as you reflect on the ways you've encountered God this weekend.</p> <p>Psalm 119:103 How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!</p> <p>Psalm 34:8</p> <p>⁸O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.</p>
<p><u>Materials:</u> - Yarn with knots - scripture printout</p>	<p>Letting Go of Worry – “Worry ties you up in knots”</p> <p>Matthew 11:28-30</p> <p>“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)</p> <p>This station is a space intended to release worry and anxiety. After reading the scripture, grab a piece of yarn and take time to untie all of the knots. While removing the knots, reflect on things that may leave you feeling anxious or worried and ask God to give you peace and rest.</p>



2. PRAYER MOSAIC

Prayer Station Instructions:

Pick 1-3 3x3 paper tiles.

On one: write words or draw an illustration of what you hope to see in the world.

On the second: Write words or draw an illustration for your future dreams

On the third: Write words or draw an illustration of your hopes for the church

Materials:

- Tables
- floor space to arrange mosaic before gluing
- roll of masking tape (to temporarily stick tiles to backing)
- 3x3 paper "tiles"
- rubber cement
- 1/2 inch foam core board
- colored pens and/or pencils
- Prayer Tree attachment



3. Centering Prayer

- Choose a sacred word (example: Love, Christ, Joy, Patience, Self-Control, Joy, etc)
- Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Quiet your thoughts and ask God to enter in
- Let your sacred word be a symbol of your intention to be in God's presence. Focus on the word, but try to remain silent and leave the word unspoken
- When you feel your mind drifting, return to your word as an anchor
- Remain silent with your eyes closed, ideally spend at least 10 minutes in silent prayer.

4. Family Tree

- Using the image of tree branches, write the names of your family or the people closest to you. Use it as a guide to pray for those you love or write specific prayers next to their name.

<p>Closing Reflection</p>	<p>What does this mean for us today?</p> <p>READ – Romans 12: 9-12</p> <p>9 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. 10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. 11 Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. 12 Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.</p> <p>ASK –</p>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What does this mean?2. What are some examples of ways we can love others?3. How have you encountered God this weekend?4. Did the exercises make praying easier? How?5. Do you think its important to have a church community? Why or why not?
Closing Prayer	<p><i>Close with this or a similar prayer –</i></p> <p>Lord, thank you for your beautiful church. Despite the brokenness of the world, despite the brokenness of humanity, you have given us a safe space to be with one another and to encounter your everlasting love. We pray for wholeness in every broken aspect of our lives and our world. Thank you for giving us community and family and for equipping us with the tools, treasures, and talents we need to serve others. Help us to find new ways to encounter you in our everyday lives. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, your love for us made flesh. Amen.</p>