

Expecting Encounters with God Week!

Our focus this week is to expect encounters with God as we spend time with him in creative ways.

James 4:8 says *'Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.'*

God loves to spend time with us, he loves to surprise us with different things to show us how much he loves us, how much he knows us and how special we are to him. Be expectant of the encounters he has in store for you this week.

Here are some different things you could do as a family to be intentional about drawing near to God. As you do this expect God to give you amazing encounters 😊 For fun I have based a lot of the ideas around things you could do outside either in a garden or park.

You might like to keep a diary of your time with God each day, you can then look back and remember all the amazing things you have done and He has shown you.

Water

You will need: a water feature, a paddling pool, a washing up bowl, a bath or sink filled with water. Squares or rectangles of cellophane or acetate plastic, and permanent marker pens.

Read John 4:14 - *'Jesus said: ...whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'*

And John 7:37-39 37 - *'On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.'*

Think about Jesus' promise to give us the Water of Life. Think about how Holy Spirit is like water? Think of a word that describes this (for example, refreshing, life giving etc), write it on the plastic and let it float on the surface of the water.

Use your water as a focal point and spend time asking God to fill you with Holy Spirit Living water. Be filled up with his refreshment.

Clouds

You will need: a blanket and sky!

Lay on a blanket outside and look up at the sky, or look out of a window at the sky. Think about what clouds you can see, do they cover the sky? Are there a lot of clouds or little fluffy clouds! What words would you use to describe the sky and the clouds you can see?

Read Psalm 19:1 1 - *'The heavens declare the glory of God;
The skies proclaim the work of his hands.'*

It is amazing to think of the skies worshipping God!

In what ways do you think the sky shouts about God's glory?

Join with the sky's worship. As the sky shows you things about God (eg He is big, beautiful, creative etc) say these things out loud to declare the glory of God.

Walking

You will need: to go for a walk!

Have you been making sure you go outside each day for a walk or run for some exercise? Do you ever think about Jesus joining you on your walk?

Read Luke 24 – the story of when the resurrected Jesus walked with his disciples to Emmaus.

As you go out for a walk today be purposeful about inviting Jesus to join you. Pay attention to what he talks to you about and what he shows you as you walk together.

Flowers

You will need: a flower bed in your garden, a vase of flowers or a pot plant. Sketchpad or paper, colour pencils or pens

Read Matthew 6:28-34 - *‘And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.’*

Do what Jesus asked his listeners to do; consider the flowers. In order to really look at them in details, choose a flower to sketch. Examine its intricate details and its beauty. As you draw, let God speak to you about your worries and anxieties. Perhaps note them down around your drawing, hand them over to God and ask him to help you trust him.

Fruit

You will need: a tree or a bush. It doesn't have to be a fruit tree. Apples, permanent markers and string.

Read John 15:4- 5 - *'Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.'*

Chat as a family about the kinds of fruit we can grow as Christians, as well as the fruits of the Spirit! Ask God to show you what fruit you are growing. And what fruit he is planting in you to start growing. Write these on the apple and hang it in the tree.

Birds

You will need: a tree with branches you can reach, paper, pens, string and sticky tape.

Read Matthew 13:31-32 - *'Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."*

In the Bible, birds coming to rest in a tree is used as an image of people from all different nations becoming friends of Jesus. Jesus wants everyone to know him and be his friend.

Who do you dream of becoming a Christian and Friend of Jesus? Who are you praying for?

Make some origami birds – watch this YouTube clip to show you how to make them:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6ciLmiEfg0>

Spend time with God as you fold a bird, talking with him about the people on your heart and hear his heart for them. Write the person's or people's names on the bird and hang it in the tree.