



For when you are missing home

Gather:

Consider incorporating these questions into your check-in time to help your group start thinking about this week's topic.

What do you like most about your family?

Among your friends or family, what are you famous for?

Reflect:

We may encounter God through his Word, but also through the words of others. Invite the Spirit to help you encounter God as you read the following poem together. Note scriptural themes and movements of the Spirit as you consider this week's topic.

Family Forever (Paul David Tripp)*

Family Forever
I deserve to be
forsaken,
to be forever cast away.
I deserve to be
rejected,
to have you turn away and stay.
I have debated your goodness.
I have doubted your wisdom.
I have run from your love.
I deserve your
anger,
the punishment for my wrong.
I deserve your
righteous judgment,
the full weight of your law.
I have wanted what I wanted.
I have walked from your grace.
I have trespassed your boundaries.
I have envied your throne.
I don't deserve your

affection,
the many things I could not earn.
I don't deserve your
provision,
The daily gifts of your love.
I don't deserve the rights of
family,
To be called your child.
I don't deserve the warm
reception,
tender care, and endless help.
I don't deserve to call you
"Father,"
to be welcomed in your home.
You came to be
rejected,
to have the Father turn his face.
Your bond of family was
broken;
You came to stand in my place.
You didn't deserve to be

rejected,
you came because of your love.
You didn't deserve to be
forsaken,
yet you were willing to the end.

So, now I have a
family,
forever I've been received.
I am never
forsaken,
even when I'm all alone.
When fatherless and
friendless,
You are with me even then.
I have been given a
family
I did not deserve or earn.
The Lord has
received me.
I will never be alone.

Once more I will forsake you.
I will question your love.
Once more I will debate you.
I will turn from your face.
But you will come as a
Father.
You will treat me as your child.
You will forgive and
restore me
with great patience and great love.
In you, I have found a
family.
In you, I have found grace.
And I've found, I've found
Forever.
Forever Father.
Forever family.
Forever welcomed.
Forever loved.

Connect:

Choose one or more of the following scriptures to read together. How is reading these scriptures the same or different from reading the poem? How is God reflected differently or similarly?

Ephesians 2:19-21

Respond:

Take time together to think about how you have encountered God in community, the words of others, and in scripture. Consider the following questions or activities to conclude your time together.

Provide your group with paper and pens; take time and write down the things you miss about your family. How do those characteristics reflect God?

How do you see God in your family? Your friends back home? The physical place?

How do you view God and community differently than you did growing up?

What does it mean to be a child of God no matter where you are? How does that make you think about your identity?

Prayer:

Close your time in prayer for each other. Consider asking each person to write down their prayer requests on a 3x5 card and switch them with someone else in the group. Pray for each other throughout the week.

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