

CARING CONVERSATIONS—Each week, a topic for discussion is introduced that is connected to the weekly theme introduced by Sunday’s Bible reading. This topic can be used at any time during the week. But it is not by any means the only Caring Conversation you can have—try checking in with “Highs & Lows” (What was the best/worst part of your day?) or “God moments” (Where do you think you saw God’s love active and present today?). **The main point is to be on the look-out for opportunities to move your household’s talk from the surface toward intimacy.**

- In the reading this week, we hear that “the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul (Paul) for the work to which I have called them’” (Acts 13:2). The two had gifts and talents equipping them for that work. Many denominations use a tool called a “spiritual gift inventory or assessment” to help people discern what gifts and talents God has given them and how they might be used to serve God. Here are a couple from the ELCA and the United Methodist Church:

www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Faith-Practices/Assessment-Tools

www.umc.org/what-we-believe/spiritual-gifts-online-assessment

Adults & older youth—Try taking one of these inventories. Talk about what the identification of these gifts might mean for you in how you serve your congregation or out in the world. For households with younger kids—figure out a way to translate these principles to your younger kids. What talents and enthusiasm has God given them? How might they use those gifts to serve God?

DEVOTIONS—One way of thinking about devotions is as a continuation of our community’s worship, or at least as a connection with it. The following basic pattern could be one way of forming your household’s devotions:

- **Gathering Prayer**—This might include a lit candle; the PRAYER FOR THE WEEK from the front; or a suggestion from the RITUAL & TRADITION below.
- **Caring Conversation**—As suggested above, this could be as simple as a daily check in with each other or an extended conversation using the topic(s) suggested above.
- **Daily Bible Reading**—Read aloud from the DAILY BIBLE READING from the front. What do you want to remember from this reading? Households with small children might simply review the basics of the story read from an age-appropriate Bible.
- **Closing Ritual**—Some way of signaling the end: A BLESSING TO SHARE from the front; the Lord’s Prayer; or a song, either sung or recorded. If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotion time.

Note: This is only a suggested pattern. It will vary with YOUR household’s context and patterns. What works best for you? First thing in the morning? Over breakfast? Bed time? **Even if you don’t have children in your household, or if you live alone, be creative and flexible with how you practice your devotions.**

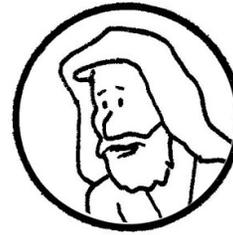
SERVICE—SERVICE is how we enact God’s great love for the entire world.

If you tried one of the spiritual gift assessments above, talk about how your gifts might direct you to serve your congregation. Now try it.

RITUALS & TRADITIONS— We’re only about half way through Easter. Keep up your Easter greeting—L: Alleluia! Jesus Christ is risen! R: **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

The “4-Key Faith Practices”—Caring Conversation, Devotion, Service, and Ritual & Traditions—are part of a framework developed by Vibrant Faith Ministries, Bloomington, MN and used by permission. For more information about the Vibrant Faith Frame, go to www.vibrantfaith.org/free-information/vibrant-faith-frame/.

APRIL 26, 2015



Sharing GOD’S STORY @ home

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK— While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”—Acts 13:2

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK—To be used in a variety of ways over the course of the week—first thing in the morning; before you go to bed; as an opening or closing to household devotion time (see reverse); etc.

God who calls and sends, your Holy Spirit is constantly calling to us. Some may be called to be pastors or preachers. Others may be called to positions of leadership and responsibility within the church. Some are gifted to be extravagantly generous givers. Others are called simply to be willing workers. Do not allow us to overlook that all are called. Equip us then to grow in faith and practice so we may respond in love and willingness to serve you and others. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

A BLESSING TO SHARE—A blessing can be a powerful ritual that reminds us of God’s promises and presence, both through the words, as well as the touch that we share. This can be used as a “good-bye.” It could be used as a bed-time blessing. Be creative in the way you bless and are blessed by the people in your life.

As you mark one another with the sign of the cross on the forehead, say,

“ **(Name), Child of God, Disciple of Christ, you called and set apart for God’s work, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**”

DAILY BIBLE READINGS—This week’s reading is just the beginning of what would end up being four missionary journeys by Paul throughout the Mediterranean region. Next week’s reading is from Paul’s letter to the church that was forming in Rome. At the end of that letter, Paul indicates that he is planning on journeying to Rome and beyond—even to Spain! The daily readings in between will fill in the gaps with some of the events that occurred on Paul’s journeys.

Sunday	Acts 13:1-3, 14:8-18	Paul’s First Missionary Journey
Monday	Acts 15:1-21	A Council Meeting in Jerusalem
Tuesday	Acts 16:1-34	Paul’s Second Missionary Journey
Wednesday	Acts 17:1-34	Paul in Athens
Thursday	Acts 19:1-10, 21-40	Paul’s Third Missionary Journey
Friday	Acts 21:1-36	Paul Returns to Jerusalem and is Arrested
Saturday	Acts 28:11-30	Paul in Rome
Sunday	Romans 1:1-17	The Good News of Being Saved by Faith

If you are using a kid-friendly Bible in your household, you will very likely NOT find all of these readings there. **Read to your kids anyway. Just pick a story!**

For a more detailed adult study, go to www.enterthebible.org, a site maintained by Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN.