

Habit 2: Hang Time With God:

Prayer on a personal level

What to Do:

- Start out with prayer
 - o See "Habit 1" to assist if needed

- Review Vision and Values Statement

- Tackle and Explain – "Can You Hear Me Now?" exercise.

- Go into the "Now What" section that brings up the questions of why is scripture important to me.

- Plan an action step (tangible and intangible)
 - o Before Next Time
 - o Take Home Materials (the How-To guide to Lectio Divina for families to try)

- Close in prayer

Materials:

- Leader's Guide and Candidate Handout
- Bible (book or app)
- Writing utensil

Can You Hear Me Now? Exercise:

Our question is: How does God speak to us? Each of the following passage shares a different way that one person in the Bible communicated with God. The purpose of this exercise is to help the student realize that communicating with God can happen in different ways. Give the candidate 10 minutes to read one passage and then spend the next 10 minutes discussing the questions.

Prep Work:

Before you meet with the candidate try this exercise on your own. Each passage has a different story and one might relate more to you than another. Feel free to fill out the handout yourself so that you can share your notes with the candidate during the discussion.

Passages for Sponsors to understand more deeply:

(these 5 are listed on the candidate worksheet without a description to each)

1. Exodus 18:5-26

Background: The Israelites had miraculously crossed the Red Sea, escaping from slavery in Egypt. Now it was time to become their own nation. Jethro was Moses' father-in-law, some sort of chieftain of a nomadic tribe in the Sinai. Here he gives some practical advice.

Moses got guidance from his father-in law. This might have been confusing, because it's not clear from the text that God was speaking through Jethro, but the advice is good, and Moses took it. You can't do it all yourself! Moses himself was sort of in the place of God, judging the people's disputes, and he needed to find other leaders to share the load.

Note: God uses wise Christians to speak to us, especially parents and other older folks who know us (as Jethro knew Moses). When you're not sure what God wants, talk to people like that. (ex. homilies at Mass, counsel during Confession, your small group leader, your sponsor, etc.)

2. Judges 6:12-24, 36-40

Background: "Judges" were leaders God appointed to save his people from foreign oppressors. Here we find Gideon being called into service to lead Israel against the Midianites, but he seems rather reluctant.

Gideon felt ill-equipped for the task at hand. He had excuses, but he was willing to do this, if God really wanted it. So he put God to several tests. He basically dared God to work some mini-miracles to prove himself. We're not told that this was a good thing to do, but God indulged him.

Note: God works with us. When we have doubts, he deals with them. When all else fails, you can ask God to confirm something you think he might be saying. If you are honestly seeking him with all your heart, he will get the message through. (ex. When we tithe we put God's blessing to the test. Tithing is an example of an action step to trust God with our finances.)

3. 1 Samuel 3

Background: Samuel was a boy who was given by his mother to serve in the Tabernacle with Eli the priest. The nation was not in good shape, due to poor leadership by Eli and his sons. Here God gives a message to young Samuel, who isn't sure what he's hearing.

Samuel heard God's voice, but he thought it was Eli the priest calling him. After being rudely awakened a few times, Eli instructs young Samuel about listening to God. Simply it's about being ready to listen. God gives Samuel a message of judgment: doom for Eli and his family. It was the beginning of a long career for Samuel as a prophet and leader of God's people.

Note: Many of us grow up hearing God's messages from our parents. But the time comes when God starts dealing directly with us. (ex. We can hear God's message to us through Scripture reading, devotionals, Christian music, etc.)

4. 1 Kings 19

Background: Elijah had just had a mountaintop experience (literally). He had challenged the false prophets of Baal to a sacrificing match – and Elijah had won, successfully calling fire from heaven. But wicked Queen Jezebel still wanted to kill him, and that was depressing.

Elijah had called fire from heaven, but God hadn't changed the nation. Moping in a desert cave, he witnesses huge displays of God's power, but he learns that God "is not in" those displays. It's the gentle whisper that gives this prophet his next assignments.

Note: We get charmed by big displays of religious power – youth retreats, powerful preaching, awesome occurrences – but we need to listen for God's gentle whisper. (ex. Quiet time through journaling, finding a quiet spot, trekking out in nature.)

5. Acts 10:1-23

Background: Peter was a leader of the Church, which was growing, but only among Jews. By law, Jews were forbidden to eat with or stay with Gentiles (non-Jews), just as they were not allowed to eat certain foods. But on this occasion, God challenges Peter's assumptions.

Peter wanted to do the right thing, and it seemed that God was telling him to do the wrong thing. Eat unclean food? Never! But God was doing something new in the world: welcoming Gentiles into relationship with him. Peter's obedience would change the world.

Note: Sometimes God leads us "outside the box." Be careful about this, because rule breaking is generally not a good idea, but every so often he will challenge us to take a bold new step that everyone else thinks is crazy. (ex. If you play an instrument, a sport, or have an ability, there are different ways to live out your faith. It can be a ministry, i.e. how you conduct yourself on the field, a piece of canvas or stage.)

Can You Hear Me Now?

GET CANDIDATE WORKSHEET OUT

Choose one passage to read, and answer the questions. If you have time to do more than one passage after the session is over, you're welcome to circle back and do more.

Passages listed above:

Exodus 18:5-26

Judges 6:12-25, 36-40

1 Samuel 3

1 Kings 19

Acts 10:1-23

Assigned Passage: _____

Who was God speaking to? _____

How did God "speak"? _____

Was the person sure it was God speaking? _____

Why or why not? _____

What was the gist of God's message? _____

How did the person ultimately respond? _____

PART 2: Now what...

So why does this matter to me?

- Why do I care about God's relationship with people I've never met?

Sometimes we see scripture as a journal of how others who are more important than me found a relationship with God. Why would I care about that? In today's society, I "follow" people I want. I don't care about seeing updates from people who aren't in my newsfeed or timeline.

Scripture is more!!!

The Living Word... The Word... It became flesh for you and for me. We tend to go into reading scripture as if we're in English 101 and forcing as many lines of text into our brain as humanly possible before crashing...

That's not how a conversation with Scripture works.

Take a brief line from scripture and read it... Think about that line in your own life.

- Does it have any meaning to what you're going through RIGHT NOW?
- What about this line you just read effects your life (or has effected your life?)
- What is God saying to you?

What are some of the struggles you have when it comes to talking with God?

- We've bought the lie that God cannot speak to us personally. Why would He concern himself with us!?!?
- Just because God hasn't parted water, lit a tree on fire, or spoke through the wind in a loud voice to you doesn't mean He isn't still able to talk to

you through the Living Word. He probably won't give you specific instructions on how many steps to take before turning left, because God isn't a genie or Tylenol. He's not meant to come to your aid just at one moment, but instead he's present ALWAYS and in ALL WAYS.

- Scripture is a LIVING DOCUMENT. You can read the same verse 1 year apart for 10 years and hear 10 different messages.

Filling the Holes:

- What are some of the struggles you have when it comes to talking with God?
- God has many names (i.e. father, comforter, provider), what is a name or word that best describes God for you?
 - *Important to realize that the word "Father" gives each person a different image. To some, "Father" is a comforting shoulder, to others it's a disciplinarian, and to others it's someone who has abandoned me. What word best fits your image of God?*
- Why do you think having a relationship with God is so important?
 - *Because your faith & the Sacraments can and will sustain you! They'll bring you true joy that your heart is so desperately searching for. Look no further than the writings of St. Augustine, "Our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in you"*
- In today's culture; what are some obstacles (other focuses) that are fighting for our attention? Are they fulfilling the restless hearts of those around you?

3. Action Step:

- **Try the Bible Roulette exercise at home with one or both parents. If it's uncomfortable to find a verse that way, then assign a verse and talk to their parents about making it happen before Large Group Session 1.**
- **Another way to share in this with family at home is to practice Lectio Divina. Try this for 2 nights this next week before bed with a parent.**
- **Yes, this is hard, but encourage effort! Go beyond comfort!**
- **Practice this (if possible) with the mentee before leaving the session.**

Lectio Divina Exercise

A How To Guide:

Our question is: How does something thousands of years old help me in my day-to-day life? *Lectio Divina* is Latin for divine reading, spiritual reading, or "holy reading," and is a traditional Christian practice of prayer and scripture reading intended to promote communion with God and to increase our openness

to God's Word. It is a way of praying with Scripture that calls us to study, ponder, listen and, finally, pray and even sing and rejoice from God's Word, within our souls.

Overview:

Step 1: Choose a text from the Scriptures (below or your own) that you wish to pray with. When choosing scripture, length of text can depend on what God is calling you to do – it can be a verse or an entire chapter. For those trying this for the first time, it is probably best to do something brief.

Step 2: Place yourself in a comfortable position and allow yourself to become silent. Some Christians focus for a few moments on their breathing; others have a beloved "prayer word" or "prayer phrase" they gently recite. That practice is known as "centering prayer" or *Meditatio* which makes for a good, brief introduction to *lectio divina*. Use whatever method is best for you, and allow yourself to enjoy silence for a few moments.

Step 3: Turn to the text and read it slowly, peacefully. Encourage others to take in each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the "still, small voice" of one word or phrase that somehow says, "I am for you today." Let those participating know that the phrase or word may not jump out at them, but reveal itself slowly. Have each person choose a word or phrase from the reading, repeat it, and share it (without elaboration). Do the same with the word you have taken from the passage.

Step 4: Read the text again; however, this time you're asked to place yourself in the Bible scene or in a situation where they are speaking to God. Spend some time discussing the scene or situation they envisioned while rereading the passage.

Step 5: Read the text for a third time and ask the those participating to contemplate what God is inviting them to do. What do they think is being communicated, what is God trying to tell them, what is revealing itself through Scripture? If you wish to reread the text again, feel free, there are unlimited amounts of time one can reflect on a passage.

Suggested Readings:

Psalms 23 ("The Lord is my shepherd...")

Matthew 7:13-14 ("the narrow gate")

Luke 22:39-44 (agony in the garden)

Mark 4:35-41 (Jesus calms the storm)

John 15:1-17 (the vine and the branches)

Philippians 2:1-13 ("have among yourselves the same attitude as Christ Jesus...")

Matthew 20: 1-16 (Workers in the vineyard)