



FAMILY DEVOTIONAL FROM WESTMINSTER CHURCH
Control & Trust- Sunday, March 22, 2020

Background

This devotional can be used to help you grow as Christians together. Just follow the steps.

1. Parent(s): Read this ahead of time to prepare

a. Sometimes there are things in life that happen which scare us. Or maybe we just feel different because things are different—like not having school, or like sports or activities being cancelled, or like not going to church, or parents or grandparents doing things differently, or hearing things on the news that bother us. Because of all this we can feel out of control. But we feel better and more joyful when we know that God is never out of control.

2. Materials Needed

a. Modern translation of the Bible like the NLT or NIV (if you don't have one, text provided below)
Cue cards (or square pieces of paper) with the following words on them (Note: these are taken from the NLT translation): *HOLY, FORGIVES, HEALS, REDEEMS, RENEWS, GIVES, COMPASSIONATE, LOVE, REMOVED OUR SINS, FATHER, WEAK, DUST, LIKE GRASS, FOREVER, FAITHFUL, CHILDREN, RULES, THRONE, SERVE, PRAISE*. If you would rather not write them out yourself, you can print out the third sheet of this handout which provides them for you. Then cut out the words in the squares, and tape them to the wall with painter's tape (or other tape).

3. Activity

a. As a discussion starter, ask: "What are things in your life that you can control, and what are things in your life that you can't control?" Provide some examples to get people talking. You can control what words you use, but you can't control if someone sneezes on you at school!...

b. Read through Psalm 103 slowly and together. *Background: This is an ancient song (but we've lost the music/melody, so only have the words left.) It was written by David (who fought Goliath and later became King, about 3000 years ago!).* Use a modern translation like the NLT or NIV. If you don't have one, the NLT text is provided below. But ask your child(ren) to stop you whenever they hear something that they don't immediately understand and explain it to them. (Words that might fall into this category are: holy, righteousness, salvation, covenant, kingdom.)

c. When you start, direct your child(ren)'s attention to the various words taped to the wall in the room you're in. When they hear a word in the Psalm that is on the wall, they should take it down and put it in one of two piles on a table. One pile is for "What the Psalm says about God" and the other pile is for "What the Psalm says about people."

d. At the end of the Psalm/activity, go through your piles to see how accurate you were able to be.

e. Ask: Based on what we read, who do you think has more control—people or God? Discuss: Why does trusting God help us in situations when we feel out of control? (Reference back to your insights about God from Psalm 103.)

f. If you'd like (and if you're feeling strong enough!) try some "trust falls." This is when a younger person/child stands straight, and slowly falls backward, only to be caught by the parent (or older sibling) before they get too far. Be careful! This demonstrates that we can sometimes feel out of control, but God is there as a caring and perfect Father (Psalm 103:13). As it says in Deuteronomy 33:27: "The eternal God is your dwelling place, and *underneath are the everlasting arms.*"

g. At the end, together say a Thank You prayer to God for who he is, and that he is always in control even when we feel like we're not. Try to include some of the words about God that you discovered in Psalm 103.

Note: Older children may not be as interested in words taped to a wall. So alternatively, go through the text, encouraging them to use their own Bible. Tell them to underline or highlight the words the Psalm says about God and people.

Reminder:

Parents, remember that you don't have to be a Bible expert. One of the things that will resonate most with your child(ren) is that you took the time to do this important activity with them!

Psalm 103 (NLT)

Let all that I am praise the Lord; with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name.

2 Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me.

3 He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.

4 He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies.

5 He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's!

6 The Lord gives righteousness and justice to all who are treated unfairly.

7 He revealed his character to Moses and his deeds to the people of Israel.

8 The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

9 He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever.

10 He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.

11 For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.

12 He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.

13 The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him.

14 For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust.

15 Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom and die.

16 The wind blows, and we are gone—as though we had never been here.

17 But the love of the Lord remains forever with those who fear him.

His salvation extends to the children's children 18 of those who are faithful to his covenant, of those who obey his commandments!

19 The Lord has made the heavens his throne; from there he rules over everything.

20 Praise the Lord, you angels, you mighty ones who carry out his plans, listening for each of his commands.

21 Yes, praise the Lord, you armies of angels who serve him and do his will!

22 Praise the Lord, everything he has created, everything in all his kingdom.

Let all that I am praise the Lord.

HOLY	WEAK
FORGIVES	DUST
HEALS	LIKE GRASS
REDEEMS	FOREVER
RENEWS	FAITHFUL
GIVES	CHILDREN
COMPASSIONATE	RULES
LOVE	THRONE
REMOVED OUR SINS	SERVE
FATHER	PRAISE