
Session: Shipwrecked

Description

For a time, when our daughter was growing up, she was a coxswain. For the most part, on a rowing (crew) team the coxswain sits in the stern of the boat facing his or her rowers. Their role is to steer the boat and to coordinate the power and rhythm of the rowers by calling out instructions and encouragement. This role is necessary because the rowers sit with their backs in the direction of travel. Over the years, as we attended regattas and learned more about the sport, I learned that there's a unique seat for each person in the boat. It wouldn't be the same boat without them. You have the small bossy one (our daughter), the powerhouse, the pacer, followers and leaders. Each rower must be in sync acting as one for the boat to function at its peak.

Like a crew team, stability in families is about what happens when unique individuals come together around the things that matter most to them as a collective whole. We can't really live out what we believe as a family without the patience to sit with our values, and each other, slowing down long enough to discern who each person is, and who we are as a whole.

As we do this, we may begin to realize that our behaviors tend to identify our underlying needs. And while we may not agree with the behavior, we can have empathy for the reason triggering the behavior. Stability is about staying put and listening to each other, young or old, regardless of one's position in the family in good times and bad. It isn't always easy to give of ourselves.

Each faith tradition is different, but as Christians, our lives are a series of little deaths. We die to self and give those little pieces of ourselves over to God so that we may live (and give) in Christ. We try to control it. We fight against it. But in the end, if we believe and are strong enough to be weak, we die to self in order to live for God. Family life helps us practice this.

In this session you will work together as a family. In many war-torn countries the only thing families have is each other. They work together to make important, and sometimes life-saving decisions. In this session you will be on the run. First you will make decisions about what you would take if you had to leave your home in 15 minutes due to war or conflict. Then you will learn about refugee camps and what life is like there.

Materials Needed

Items found in your home. You will be deciding which items to choose in the activity.

Handouts

Refugee Handout

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Read aloud the quote or scripture

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" *An old African proverb*

Questions for discussion (10 minutes)

1. What are the advantages of staying in a relationship even when it's hard? Are there disadvantages in staying?
2. Have you ever left a relationship or decided not to be friends anymore? Share about that. Have you ever wished you had stayed in relationship with that person? Why / why not?
3. What do you believe God thinks about staying in relationships over a lifetime? Explain. Do you feel like God sticks with you even when you are difficult? Does God ever take a break from you? Explain.
4. Do you ever find yourself forming your opinion or answer while the other person is still talking? What are some pros / cons of doing that? What does the word "listen" mean to you?
5. Why do you think the Bible talks so much about how God values "little children"? Do you think there are things you could learn from small children? Explain.

Rule of life activity

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1. You are living in Syria and war has come to your town. In order to survive, your family must leave your home within 15 minutes with only items that you can carry.
 2. Your family lives in a nice home with the two heads-of-household being an attorney and the owner of restaurant.
 3. Unfortunately, your car was damaged during the conflict so you must walk. You will have 15 minutes to grab the items you choose to take on your journey to safety at the refugee camp.
 4. Let each person choose what they think is important to take **without any instruction to kids about what to bring**. Remind everyone that they must carry (walking) whatever they choose to bring.
 5. Set a timer for 15 minutes. When you say "go" each person will move throughout the house to get the items they wish to bring. Instruct family members to bring their items back to one common area where you will have a discussion at the end of the 15 minutes.
 6. Once the timer goes off everyone comes back together.
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7. One at a time (with no criticism), let each family member show what they have chosen and explain why they chose that item. They should demonstrate how they will carry the items they've chosen.
8. Once every person has had a chance to explain what they have chosen and why, get out the Refugee Handout.
9. As a family, examine one or more of the websites in the Refugee Handout.
10. Now that you've learned more about refugees, would you have packed differently? Discuss as a family what you think it would be like to have to move to a refugee camp.

Examen

How did it go? Debrief highs and lows

1. Each person shares their favorite part of the conversation / activity and why.
2. Each person shares their least favorite part and why.
3. Did you do a Serving/Giving activity last week? How did it go?

Serving /giving ideas for any time this week: Choose one or create your own. These can be done individually or as a group. You will be sharing your serving experience in the next session.

- Do some research to find out if there are refugees living in your town or city and donate items that they might need.
- Give money or donate tangible items to a nonprofit that serves refugees around the world.
- Sign your family up to serve at your local Habitat for Humanity for a day.
- Visit your local senior center or retirement home and find out if there is anyone there who came to the US as a refugee. Ask them to share their story with you.
- Purchase new clothing items and donate them to kids living in the foster care system.