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## Session: Blind Draw

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### Description

Obedience, in the Benedictine context isn't so much about a child being obedient to a parent as it is about a family being obedient to each other. This can involve multiple generations and the lessons we learn throughout our history as a family.

As I've gotten older, I find myself thinking about time. Psychologist Edmond Friedman said, "The past is present in the present".<sup>i</sup> In this sense, time isn't linear, it can fold in on itself like a telescope. I can think of so many instances of this, but one example is my son and my husband. Craig and I sometimes disagreed on the correct course of action when it came to our son. Coleton never got in any kind of serious trouble, but he challenged us. When it came to obedience, we would say right, and he would go left, sometimes I think just to get a reaction. He would intentionally "forget" to do chores, or do them poorly, just to get a rise out of us. It worked.

We had many a heated discussion about the difference between enabling and guiding. Our past folds in on our present.

Craig and I had different histories. I moved out at age 17, headed to university and never moved back. Craig's siblings didn't have the resources to attend a university, it wasn't even an option. The kids, at different times, lived with their mom even into their late twenties. Additionally, when Craig was 15 years old, his parents divorced. His dad moved out and for the most part he, his siblings and mom were left on their own. His dad wasn't there to guide him as he grew into a young man. There were no career discussions. When Craig told his father that he wanted to be a firefighter, he made fun of him and said he'd never get hired. He told Craig that it was a waste of time. And so, when Coleton moved back in after college, quitting jobs, disrespecting our rules, our home and us, my first instinct was to ask him to move out. A little couch surfing would do him good. Craig, however was not going to "abandon" him the way his Dad had abandoned him. He was sure he could help Coleton become the young man we knew he could be. This piece of history (Dad, Craig then Coleton) had telescoped down over our lives.

We didn't kick him out. We worked through it, and Coleton, through his own discipline and hard work has become the incredible man we knew he could be. Going through this helped me understand that even with a lot of prayer (sometimes hourly for me at the time), there were other forces at play. Author, leader and family therapist Edwin Friedman said, "Individuals do not function simply according to their own personality makeup or background, but according to their position within an institutions multigenerational field".<sup>ii</sup>

Sometimes, when we are right in the middle of a family challenge, we only see the obstacle that's right in front of us. We're blind not only to how our past is present in the present, but also to what God may be doing with us through this challenge as we learn and grow.

In this session, using another family-member's perspective, you will have to rely on them being your eyes as you navigate a shared task.

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# Practice

## OBEDIENCE



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| <b>Materials Needed</b> | Drawing pad, a pen, pictures (photos or magazine pages) of everyday objects. Unobvious items make the game more interesting like a coin or trampoline. Place them inside an envelope so no one can see them. |
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| <b>Handouts</b> | None |
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## Blind Draw

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| <b>Read aloud the quote or scripture</b> | “A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.” – <i>Marcus Garvey</i> |
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| <b>Questions for discussion</b><br>(10 minutes) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Can you give an example of something from your past impacting your present? Explain.</li><li>2. Do you think God uses our past to impact our present? If so how? Explain.</li><li>3. Can you think of an example of something from a previous generation impacting your family’s present?</li><li>4. Do you think God has a multi-generational plan for your family? In other words, something that might not come to fruition until the second or third generation? Explain.</li><li>5. If yes to question number four, why do you think God would do this?</li></ol> |
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| <b>Rule of life activity</b> | <b>Blind Draw</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In this activity you will blind-draw an object using only verbal instructions from a family member.</li><li>2. Divide into teams of two or three.</li><li>3. Get your drawing pad, pen, and printed pictures of objects inside an envelope.</li><li>4. Each team decides who will draw and who will give instructions.</li><li>5. As a family choose which team goes first.</li><li>6. Team member A (the artist) faces the drawing paper while team member B takes the envelope with pictures in it and faces with their back to the artist.</li><li>7. Team member B selects a picture from the envelope.</li><li>8. Using only verbal instructions, team member B now instructs the artist on how to draw the object without saying what the object is, using only verbal instructions.</li></ol> |
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# Practice

## OBEDIENCE



9. When the artist feels the drawing is complete, Team member B turns around and shows the artist the picture.
10. Now each of the rest of the teams have a turn. If you want to keep going the artists and describers can switch places.
11. When everyone has had a turn, vote on which drawing looks most like the object that was described.

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## 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?

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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.

- Interview someone in your family from an older generation then take some time to see what life-lessons you might learn from them.
- Purchase some puzzles and crafts and donate them to a senior center.
- Make amends with someone you've had a disagreement with from an older generation.
- Call your parents or grandparents and tell them thank you for the lessons you learned from them.
- Find a family tradition that has been passed down through at least 3 generations. Research the story of how it got started and write it down for future generations. If you don't have on, create one for the future.

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<sup>i</sup> Edwin Friedman, *Failure of Nerve* (New York: Church Publishing, 1999), Kindle page 2976.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid. Kindle 2537.