

Be With

Scripture-based exploration

Jesus and the disciples: look in the beginning of each of the gospels and pinpoint where Jesus opened up His life to be shared with friends (“disciples”). This will take some time, but I believe it is highly valuable, so set aside time and space to explore this. What do you learn? What patterns do you notice about Jesus? How does this inform your “being with” others?

The story of Joseph and his brothers: Genesis 37-50. Joseph’s journey of “being with” or “not being with” his brothers is a microcosm of many of our relational opportunities. Read this section of Genesis, looking with loving eyes (not being critical or detached, but relationally curious) at Joseph’s relational phases with his family, especially his brothers. At what point would you say Joseph is at peace with “being with” his brothers? How about his brothers with Joseph? Does this give you insight into any of your relationships?

Read about the relationship between Naomi and Ruth in the four-chapter book of [Ruth](#).

Non-Scripture readings

Quote from Damon Kelly after a retreat with 125 kids and leaders:

“I remember glancing around several times and watching 25 adult leaders being WITH. WITH is a part of the fabric of who we are. The leaders that are with your students are WITH your students. I can't quite write/speak words to convey just how beautiful and strong this WITH is. It is an offering to God.”

[The Seven Sacred Pauses](#) by Macrina Weidekehr

Artwork for the creatives

Paint, collage, or convey/express the truth of “Be With” in your life

Movies

“Castaway” (Tom Hanks)

“The Incredibles”

“The Painted Veil” (Naomi Watts and Edward Norton)

Partnerships

This month, call someone in your group to pray with them.

Go to lunch with someone in the group, or send a few encouraging, personal texts. Don’t be shy; we all love to be loved.

Questions to ponder:

With whom do you find it easy to “be with”? Ponder about why.

How do you handle people with whom you have a hard time “being with”? How long does it take you to get to a level of frustration?

Who are your “till-death-do-us-part” friends? How do you show affection for each other? What does simply “being with” your closest friends look like?

Read John 13-17. The focus is on Jesus’ last evening with His disciples before His crucifixion. List the many ways Jesus responds to their need to “be with” Him. This will also take some time, but will be oh-so-rich.

How do you comprehend the life of the Holy Spirit within you? If Jesus was “Emmanuel, God **with** us,” then what do you comprehend in the idea that the Holy Spirit is Christ within us now? Find more clues and understanding about the Holy Spirit in John 14 and 15.

Colossians 1:27 reads, “Christ within us, the hope of glory.” Couple that with John 20:22 and 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. What do these verses together mean to you?

Find or write a psalm about “being with.”

May all of your longings to “be with” be met in the Trinity:

“Never will I leave you or forsake you.” ~Joshua 1:5

“Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” ~Matthew 28:20

As we pursue God and He pursues us, we find we develop strong feelings, thoughts, and disciplines about “being with” Him. Two of the ancient Christian disciplines that aid in being with God are the “seven sacred pauses” (check out the book by that name by Macrina Weidekehr) and the Examen. For more information, check out these resources:

<http://amindfuljourney.com/seven-sacred-pauses/>

www.marshall.org/pdf/sp/PrayerOfExamenLong.pdf

www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen