

Family Faith Discussion Questions
For Sunday October 2, 2022 World Communion Sunday

Whether you worship with us online or in-person, you may find these questions helpful in starting meaningful faith discussions at home.

Scripture: Psalm 37 and Jeremiah 29: 10-14

Helpful Background:

Background on Our Psalm Passage for this week:

The Book of Psalms is a unique book of scripture. It contains 160 Psalms, which are basically songs where the music was lost centuries ago and only the lyrics remain. Many Psalms are attributed to David, but the historical authors are impossible to know. Psalms is filled with the emotions of followers of God. Anything we may feel towards or perceive from God --anger, love, gratitude, lament, pain, loss, loneliness, abandonment, joy, support, calling, encouragement, praise, majesty, awesomeness—it can be found in the Psalms.

Psalm 37 is described as a Psalm of Exhortation of Patience and Trust. It is an encouraging message reminding the reader to trust in God and describing specific actions they can do with this trust.

We've been reading through Jeremiah for the last few weeks. Just as a reminder:

Jeremiah was active as a prophet from the thirteenth year of Josiah, king of Judah (*Southern Kingdom*) (626 BC) (*Remember, Israel and the people of God split into two separate kingdoms (Southern kingdom named Judea and Northern kingdom named Israel) in 930 BCE*), until after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Solomon's Temple in 587 BC. This period spanned the reigns of five kings of Judah: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. Last week we read a passage in Jeremiah that foretold of the Jewish people's exile in Babylon, after being conquered by King Nebuchadnezzar. This week, our passage does raise some difficult questions for readers. *When exploring the passage with young children, remember that you don't have to have all the answers, and it's okay to have doubts or concerns about a belief. If you are in that situation, it can actually be helpful for children to see it because one day they will have their own doubts and questions and it is good for them to know that God loves and accepts us, as does our church family, even with doubts, questions, concern, and uncertainty.*

Questions:

Psalm 37

- Verses 3 and 4 instruct the reader to "Trust in the Lord and Do Good," and if they do, then they will have security and God will give them the desires of their heart. How does this idea connect with your own understanding of God and how God works in the world? Do you agree or disagree? If you disagree, what does it feel like to read this passage and others like it?
- Verses 7, 8, and 9 seem to be saying "do not worry... it leads to evil" Do you agree or disagree? Why? What is your reaction to this idea?
- We are told many times in the Gospels "do not be afraid" and we hear in the Old Testament "Do not worry" several times. Does that affect how you think about your life? Are you anxious or do you worry? How might your relationship with God help you to cope with anxiety and worry?

Jeremiah 29: 10-14

- Our passage from Jeremiah this week contains a very popular phrase: "for surely I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for your welfare and not harm, to give you a future with hope." (verse 11). What does this passage mean to you? Do you believe that God has a plan for your life? Why or why not? When it is hard to believe it, what makes it hard?
- Does it bring you comfort to think about God having a plan for you? Why or why not?

This is a hard thing for a lot of adults, because how can God have a good plan for us if bad things happen, or things are difficult, or someone we love gets sick and dies. Are you able to reconcile these things with the idea that God has a plan for each of us? How does it affect your faith?

- The rest of the passage can be troubling to some people. It clearly claims that God caused the exile, that God sent the people away from their homes into exile. What do you think of this? How does this idea of God having a plan connect with these ideas for you?