

Encounter Five: Growing in Faith

This Encounter is about ways to grow in faith and to look for opportunities for growth to continue throughout our lives. Insights here will help mostly with Part 4 of the Faith Story.

1. Begin by sharing any “highs” or “lows” since your last meeting together.
2. Read **Ephesians 6:10-18** together. In this text, Paul reminds us how to “dress” for a life of faith. In the midst of challenges to our faith, God gives us gifts to help keep our faith strong and growing.
3. Use the following questions to share your ideas together about and plans for life-long growth in faith. Take Notes for the Story!
 - a. A growing faith requires things that nurture its growth. What things do you think are needed in order for faith to grow? What gifts does God provide to help our faith grow?
 - b. The Holy Scriptures are one of God’s gifts to help us grow. Are there certain Bible texts that especially speak to you? You will be asked to choose your “confirmation verse” – the one passage that has the most meaning for your life – to be recited as you are confirmed. Have you chosen this verse yet? If so, why have you chosen it?
 - c. God’s Sacraments (Holy Baptism and The Lord’s Supper) are other gifts to help us grow in faith. Share stories of participating in or observing the sacraments. How have they communicated the message of God’s forgiveness, love and hope to us?
 - d. Christian community is another of God’s gifts to help us grow. How have Christian parents and grandparents helped you understand God’s love for us? Do you have friends with whom you share a common faith? How do you encourage each other and show that faith in daily living?
 - e. Gathering for worship services is another of God’s gifts to help us grow. How does your worship life help your faith to grow? How important is it to worship weekly to be fed with the good news of Jesus, confess sins and receive the assurance of forgiveness, receive the sacraments, and to be among the Christian community of believers in your congregation?
 - f. Research suggests that there are at least seven practices that disciples (followers) of Jesus can use with confidence to help their faith grow. Discuss how these practices could be a part of your daily life: *praying, studying God’s Word, worshipping, inviting, encouraging, serving, and giving.*
 - g. Do you think you make good decisions? What do you do when you need to make an important decision? To whom do you turn for help and advice?
 - h. Think about the person you are now and the person you would like to become. What would you like to change in yourself? What resources will you need for that to take place?
 - i. Do you think you will be active in the life of a congregation when you are 20? 30? 40? Older years? If so, what do you think you will be doing? (Attending worship, serving on Church Council or Boards, Sunday School teacher, pastor, choir member, confirmation guide or mentor, organizing service projects, other?)
4. Have you been reviewing the Ten Commandments, Lord’s Prayer, Apostles’ Creed, and the three Bible verses that the student is responsible to know before confirmation? Does the student feel confident with regard to these matters?
5. Make plans to greet each other in worship!

Close your Encounter with prayer. Decide who will begin the prayer and who will conclude it. Pray that God will help your faith to grow. Pray that God will help you use God’s gifts and the practices of discipleship to nurture your faith as your life unfolds.