

Intergenerational Worship Gathering: The Faith Practice of Wonder

GET READY

Pray for the meal at the end of the morning service; give instructions for seating (color-coded name tags by age, get a name tag as you wait in line for the meal, etc.)

“To encourage intergenerational seating, we would like you to try to have no more than two of each color at every table.”

K thru 12th grade	Red
College thru age 34	Green
35-54	Blue
55 and up	Purple

As you EAT, work through the introductory table discussion questions on the table tent on your table:

- Tell the table your name. Then tell them something unique about yourself.
- What’s the most unique creature you’ve seen or know about. Why?
- Where is the most exotic place you have traveled to? What made it exotic?

Clean up

GATHER

Opening Song and Prayer:

Song: *How Great Thou Art* LUYH 553:1-2

Creator God,
We praise you for this world.
As we continue to learn more of the vastness of your cosmos
and the smallest particles of each atom,
we stand in awe that you created all things
in a great harmonious design.
And then to think that you made us
and you placed us in families and church families.
That you know us and care about us.
And then, that you, your Son not sparing,
sent Jesus to die, we scarce can take it in!
That on the cross, our burdens gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away our sin.
How great are you, Lord God!
Receive now our praise in concert
with creation and saints and angels in heaven—
all offered through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

—based on WSB A.1.13

What are Faith Practices?

The Service Leader explains: “Today we will be learning about the Faith Practice of Wonder. But what is a Faith Practice?”

Skit: “Faith Practices. Practicing Faith.” (see page 5)

Introduce the Practice of Wonder with the *Experiences of Wonder: Table Discussion* worksheet (see page 9)

1. **Share the definition from Chris Schoon’s article ‘[Wonder: Glimpsing a Suprising God](https://www.crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject/wonder/wonder-glimpsing-surprising-god)’**
(<https://www.crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject/wonder/wonder-glimpsing-surprising-god>)

“The Faith practice of wonder helps us glimpse with surprise just how creative, faithful, good, big and present God is.”

2. What do you like about that definition? How does this definition relate to other ways you think about wonder?
 - a. Adults–tell the younger children what the word “glimpse” means.
 - b. Children–tell the adults what “surprise” means. Or better yet, *show* them what it looks like to be surprised.
3. **Share Experiences of Wonder at your table.**
 - a. When were you surprised by how big God is?
 - b. When were you surprised by how creative God is?
 - c. When were you surprised by how faithful God is?
 - d. When were you surprised by how good God is?
 - e. When were you surprised by how present God is?

(It would be great to collect each table’s worksheets and ask someone in the congregation to make a “crowdsourced” poem out of surprises.)

Transition Thoughts:

The Service Leader explains that to train yourself to be filled with wonder, you must slow down and look closely at the world. Then introduces the magnifying glass activity:

Take time to look closely at the objects on your tables. Notice the colors and patterns and layers and textures and details big and small. Show and tell each other what you see.

Magnifying Glass Activity

Supplies:

- good quality magnifying glasses, small supplementary magnifying glasses
- Baskets of objects to look at:
 - Shells or small fossils
 - different types of leaves
 - live creepy crawlies inside a small scoop of garden soil (inside a ziploc)
 - lichens on pieces of tree bark

- patterns and crystal structure in stones
- their own fingerprints and the still-smaller creases in the skin between them (consider having a station for fingerprinting to keep the mess at a minimum)
- the way ink rests on the weaved structure of a piece of paper

GROW

Childlike Wonder-  **Wonder Walkers**(<https://youtu.be/5Qejku0n0n8?t=2>)

Ask a good reader to read aloud the book *Wonder Walkers* by Micha Archer.

The Service Leader introduces the book: “You know, you children are better at being filled with wonder and awe than we adults sometimes. And you also might be better at Wonder-ing...at saying, “Hmm, I wonder why that does that, I wonder how that works???” Here’s a book about some kids who take a ‘Wonder Walk’.

Invite children up to the front for a closer look at the pictures.

An Attitude of Wonder – Psalm 139

1. Service Leader: “This psalm writer of Psalm 139 was filled with “childlike wonder” when he thought about God. Take time at your table to read through Psalm 139, verse by verse, person by person with your best full-of-wonder voices. Let’s think about whether *we* have this kind of wonder.”
2. After the reading, table leaders lead their tables in a discussion using the worksheet: *An Attitude of Wonder from Psalm 139*. (see page 11)

Testimony from a member Ahead of time, ask someone to give a testimony or share a story that illustrates how “Wonder” plays a role in their faith? Parenting? Work?

GO

A Blessing and a Poem

Rachel Carson says in her book *A Sense of Wonder*, “If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder... he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.”

The Psalmist in Psalm 8 says “when I consider the heavens, the moon and stars which you have made.” Jesus, quoted in Matthew 6, instructs us, “Look at the birds of the air and . . . consider the lilies.” And the Psalmist in Psalm 139 concludes “I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works, Oh Lord. That I know well.”

In the coming weeks as we consider the natural world changing daily, as we look at a child running loose-limbed in the sun, as we see seniors helping children watch a forlorn worm on the sidewalk or stare off into space, let our wonder turn to wondering: who, how, why? and as we find answers or don’t find answers, to saying, “How great is our God.”

[Watermelon Hands](#) poem by David Schelhaas, from *The God of Material Things*, a book of poems published by Dordt Press. (<https://tinyurl.com/3ektbsm4>)

Sing - “*We Will Extol You, God and King*” LUYH 562: 1,3

Take-home activities: See [Faith Practices: Wonder](http://www.smores.com/58ymx) (www.smores.com/58ymx), an online newsletter curated by Jill Friend.

This intergenerational worship gathering was curated and created by Covenant Christian Reformed Church, Sioux Center, IA. May be used with attribution.

“Faith Practices. Practicing Faith.”

***Mom** is bustling around at home. **Kid 1** walks in with duffle bag and a ball. **Kid 2** sits at the piano.*

MOM

Hey Kid. How was practice?

KID 1

Oh, fine. I’m exhausted. We started by doing these really hard stretches. Then we had to do a bunch of drills. Then we tried this new drill and we had to repeat it like 10 times.

MOM

Sounds intense. Ready for the game tomorrow?

KID 1

I think so. We’ve really come a long way since the season started.

MOM

Good.

Hey, Other Kid. Finished practicing piano?

KID 2

Yep!

MOM

Scales?

KID 2

Yep.

MOM

Arpeggios?

KID 2

Yep.

MOM

Play through your songs at least twice?

KID 2

Always!

MOM

How's that new song?

KID 2

Hard! But I think I'll get there. And the recital isn't for two months.

MOM

Cool. Great. Well, supper is in an hour. Now I'm off to practice.

KID 1

Huh? What practice? Where are you going?

MOM

For a walk.

KID 2

What are you practicing for?

MOM

I'm going to do some Wondering and Listening.

KID 1

Um, elaborate please?

MOM

Oh, well, gladly. I'm trying to focus in on some faith exercises that can help me pay closer attention to the Holy Spirit, or maybe help me as I long to become more like Jesus and love God and others like he did. Wondering and listening can do that. I'm going to try it out.

KID 1

You're trying to be a better Christian?

MOM

Kinda. But not because I want to be better-than ... but because I really think these *activities* can help me serve God and others better.

KID 1

But practice is something you do to prepare for something else. I don't think that word works.

MOM

Maybe not exactly.

I'm not preparing for a game or a recital...but by practicing these things, I hope to be more prepared for each day of life in God's kingdom.

KID 2

And you can do that by listening? Listening to what?

MOM

I don't know exactly. I'm going to take this walk today without my phone—no podcast, no music. I'm going to work really hard to empty my brain of my worries about things coming up and I'm just going to be present on my walk. I'll listen to the birds and let them speak to me.

KID 1

Mom, there aren't any talking birds in Sioux Center.

MOM

Well, I know. But what I mean is what does the song of the birds make me think about? How does it make me feel? Or the sound of laughing children. Or the wind. And I might also pray, but with few words. And frankly, I might not "hear" God right now. But I'm practicing, right? I'll try again tomorrow.

KID 1

That reminds me, wait til you hear what we talked about in Bible class today.

MOM

I would love to hear about that after my walk. I will listen and be present with you.

KID 2

And wondering?

KID 1

Yeah, how do you practice that?

MOM

Well, today, I'm leaving here ready to be surprised by something I see outside on my walk. And when I find it—and I'm pretty sure I will—I'm going to let myself say "Wow." And I'm going to ask some questions. Why did God make that the way he did?

And at your game tomorrow night, I'm going to watch you move and jump and score and smile and I am going to let myself be surprised by how God made you fearfully and wonderfully and how did you grow up so fast. Wah Wah.

KID 2

What about me?

MOM

Well, when you play the piano, I should wonder at the power of music. When I really stop and listen—ooh connections—I do let music act as a gift from God to me. And wonder at such a gift.

KID 2

You're welcome.

MOM

Ok, enough for now. I'm off. I'll let you know how it goes. Oh, could you set the table? And pick up your socks, Kid!
The neighbors are coming over for supper. We get to practice hospitality tonight.

KID 1

Is that a Faith Practice too?

MOM

Sure is. Later!

Experiences of Wonder: Table Discussion

- A. **Have someone read the definition of the Faith Practice of Wonder:** “The Faith practice of wonder helps us glimpse with surprise just how creative, faithful, good, big and present God is.”

Then ask:

1. What do you like about that definition? How does this definition relate to other ways you think about *wonder* or use the word *wonder*?
2. Adults–tell the younger children what the word **glimpse** means.
3. Children–tell the adults what **surprise** means. Or better yet, *show* them what it looks like to be surprised.

- B. **Say: “Keeping that definition in mind, let’s share our experiences of wonder with each other.”**

1. When were you surprised by how big God is? (*two-three responses*)
 - *Ex: I was surprised by how big God is when I stood at the edge of the Grand Canyon.*
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
2. When were you surprised by how creative God is? (*two-three responses*)
 - *Ex: I was surprised by how creative God is when I saw a strange fungus in the woods.*
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
3. When were you surprised by how faithful God is? (*two-three responses*)
 - *Ex: I was surprised by how faithful God is when I saw the asparagus shoot up from the ground after a cold and dry winter.*
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
4. When were you surprised by how good God is? (*two-three responses*)
 - *Ex: I was surprised by how good God is when I bit into a pear off our pear tree.*
 - _____

- _____
- _____

5. When were you surprised by how present God is?

- *Ex: I was surprised by God's presence standing on the shore of the ocean, far from my home.*
- _____
- _____
- _____

An Attitude of Wonder from Psalm 139

–based on question from www.crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject

(At your table, say:) In Psalm 139 the psalmist “glimpses with surprise” how big and good and present God is.” It’s mind blowing.

(Ask these questions for people to ponder, but don’t pause for answers yet:) When you think about God and God’s story, do you allow yourself to be filled with wonder? Do you let yourself ask questions about God and God’s creation and God’s Story?

(Now ask and pause to discuss:) What do you think makes it hard to be surprised by God, God’s creation and God’s Story? Or in other words, what gets in the way?

(Brainstorm with your table:) What practices (i.e. activities or habits) might help you recapture a sense of childlike wonder? Be ready to share an idea with the whole group.

(Have everyone look back at Psalm 139.) "Look back at the Psalm. What characteristics of God make you say "Wow!"? ***(Have some children write the words in the cloud.)***

