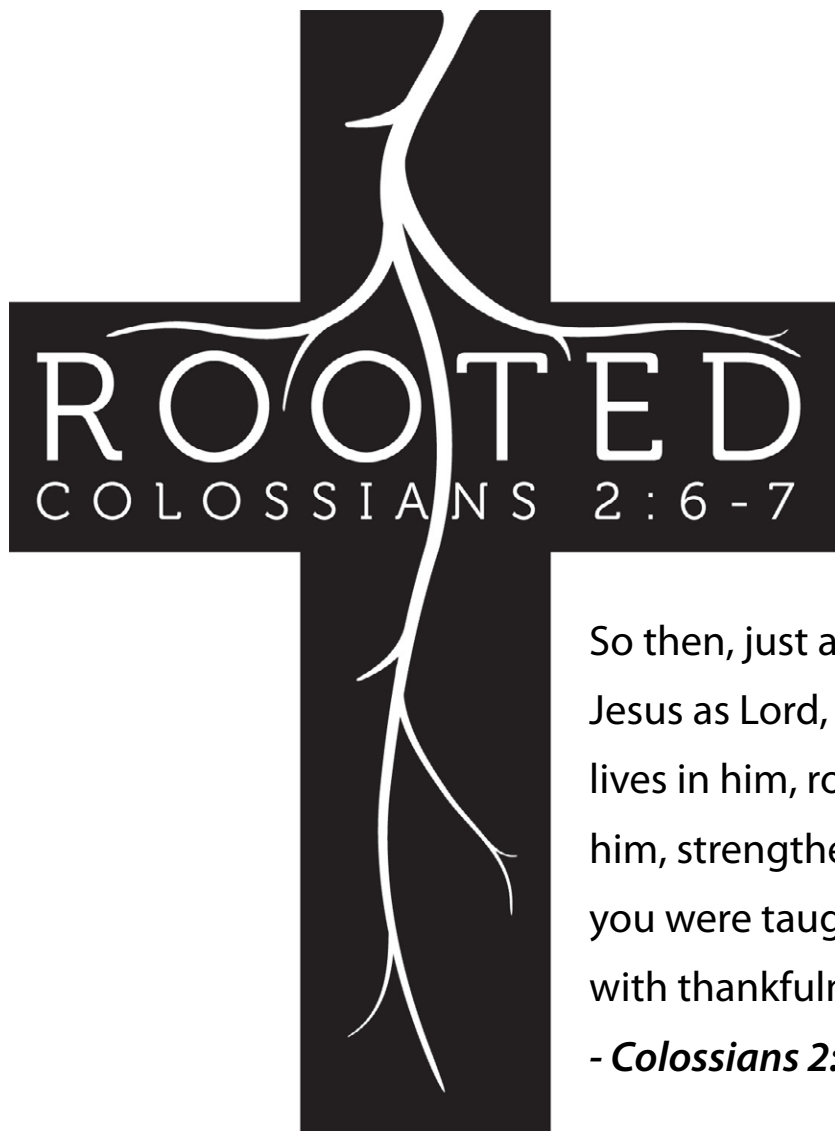


ZONE

2011-2012

Family Time Guide



So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

- Colossians 2:6-7

Notes for Leaders

Introduction to Family Time

Gathering as a church/family/youth group each evening at a Youth Encounter event is an important part of each Zone. It is here where activities, thoughts and conclusions can be processed and shared both individually, as well as in a group. The Zone hopefully will be a mountain top experience but it is meant to serve the youth and ultimately the church in the present and near future so the event is not meant to simply be tucked into the memory of each student and chaperone. To this end, we encourage "Family Times" for sharing with, uplifting and supporting those who are part of our church family and with whom we worship with most often.

Text Designations:

Bold text indicates Scripture passages and information that should be shared with the group. When explaining background information or making transitions from one section to the next, feel free either to use your own words or to read the text as it is written.

Plain text (text not in bold type, in capital letters nor italicized) indicates instruction for you as the Leader. These instructions will include transitional ideas to help you facilitate discussion or provide background information. These sections using plain text are mostly for your benefit as the leader and do not necessarily need to be shared with the group at large, unless you deem it appropriate.

Italicized & Bold text indicates where a prayer, a verse or a litany may be read by the leader or another participant.

Goals for this study:

To join together and share one another's experiences and impressions of the day.

To explore, examine, and express how we are rooted in our faith of Jesus.

To be assured our "rootedness" has a foundation of Jesus being rooted in us.

To see, rejoice in, and enjoy the fellowship of believers around us in our family group.

Preparation:

Supplies (both nights): Bibles, a piece of paper for everyone, and a pen/pencil for everyone.

Friday Night Family Time

I. Opening Prayer

Have a student or adult leader open with a prayer reflecting on the evening or they can read the following:

Heavenly Father, we come tonight full of different hopes, experiences, needs, hurts, wants and fears. But what we have in common is that You love us all individually and as a group with a never-quenching love. Our faith is rooted in Your Son Jesus alone. May the roots of our faith be strengthened this weekend and may our faith continue to grow and bear fruit. All this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

II. Personal Reflections On The Day and "High's" And "Low's" of the day

On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 is low, 10 is high) ask the students:

- 1. What was your expectation of the time you would have this evening (and of the weekend) before it began? Why?**
- 2. What is your actual rating of how you feel this evening went? Why?**

Now have each participant answer (both youth and adult):

- 3. My "high" for today was... Why?**
- 4. My "low" for today was... Why?**

III. Family Time Discussion

(Choose from Options 1 or 2 on the following pages based on the energy level and needs of your group.)

IV. Closing Prayer

Have everyone sit comfortably in as much of a circle as possible and either join hands, link arms, touch elbows, hold pinkies, etc. Ask for a volunteer to start the prayer or he/she can read the opening found below. After the opening, go around the circle and have each participant say one word that describes how they want God to see them this evening (for example, involved, loved, caring, open, interested, awaiting, eager, etc. Take a moment and let everyone first think of a word and then go around the circle.) Encourage everyone to think of a different - though accurate - word. Then ask for a volunteer to close the prayer or he/she can read the closing found below.

(Opening of prayer)

Heavenly Father, we thank You for this good day and for bringing us to this event. As we rest this evening, remind us again that while we're awake or sleeping, You are caring for us for You never abandon us. Rooted in You, may we realize that we are so very valuable to You. Hear us now as we ask You to see us in these ways tonight...

(Closing of prayer)

Lord Jesus, we rejoice in knowing of Your unconditional love proved at the cross and the empty tomb. May we rest soundly in You and may we be energized by Your Holy Spirit to enjoy a new day tomorrow. All this we pray in the name of Jesus. AMEN

Friday Night Family Time Discussion

Option 1: A Quick Look Back At Our Evening

1. Our theme this weekend is "ROOTED" based on Colossians. 2:6-7

Have all participants find the verses in their Bibles. Ask for a volunteer to read or recite it aloud:

"Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." - Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV)

2. What kinds of things need to have roots? What do roots do? Why should we be rooted?
3. Which way do roots generally grow? When you build something which way does it go? Why are both directions important for the Christian? Which is harder for you? Why?
4. **Close in Prayer.** (See suggestion on page 2 of the Family Time Guide.)

Option 2: Examining, Exploring & Expressing Our Theme And The Events Of This Evening

Examining:

As you know, our theme is "Rooted." The Bible verse it is based on is:

"Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." - Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV)

1. Does the theme make sense? How was the theme spoken (or sung) about this evening?
2. What do you remember from this evening about the theme, about Jesus or about our faith?
3. Why is it important for the Christian to have roots (go deep) as well as to build up (grow) our faith lives and each other?

Exploring:

Five words ring out from our text. They are:

Received – This is not something dreamed up on one's own. It is passed along. There is a union of giver and receiver. This is not something new or even something added.

Continue – The original Greek word (The New Testament was originally written in Greek) means to keep going down the same path as the ones who went before. The receiver follows the giver(s).

Rooted & Built (up) – Not just cemented in, but alive and going ever deeper, being alive and nourished. These roots also give stability and durability. Our faith is not to only be subterranean, but to be visible as it grows and strengthens. It is to encourage and help protect those who are also receivers and are continuing.

Strengthened – There is no status quo to a dynamic and alive thing. If it's not growing it's dying. If it's not getting stronger it's getting weaker. If it's not producing, it's failing. Our Christian faith is alive and dynamic not static or lifeless.

Overflowing – Because of what we received and continue in, because we are rooted and built up, as we are strengthened, we now overflow with thankfulness because all of these things are unearned, unmerited gifts! These gifts remind us we're loved, valued and not alone and assure us of our place in heaven (which Jesus paid for)!

(Notice: the first two words are the foundation of our Christian faith. The third set of words – our theme - is the activity the Holy Spirit is doing now in our lives, and the fourth and fifth words are the results of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. We dare leave nothing out!)

Ask for a volunteer to read Ephesians 3:17-19

1. What does Paul want us to be "rooted in" in this passage? What does this have to do with faith?

Have a volunteer read John 13:34-35

2. Both faith and love are alive and dynamic. Can you keep one while surrendering the other? What will happen? What does this mean for us to be faithful and loving?

Expressing:

Make sure everyone has a pen/pencil and a piece of paper. Ask for a volunteer to read Jeremiah 16:7-8.

Have everyone draw a vertical line down the center of their piece of paper thus making two columns. In the left hand column, have them write things they are rooted in outside of faith and God that feed their joy such as...basketball team, cheerleading squad, work, tinkering with a car, getting manicures/pedicures, reading, biking, Facebooking, etc. In the right hand column, have them write down how long in their lives each of these events will continue to nourish and strengthen them for daily and eternal living.

Discuss how these things compare with what Jeremiah is talking about regarding our Christian faith. (Note: be careful not to be disparaging about these other activities, they can be healthy and good, but they should not supersede the importance of our faith lives.)

Close in Prayer (See suggestion on page 2 of the Family Time Guide.)

Saturday Night Family Time

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II. Personal Reflections On The Day and "High's" And "Low's" of the day

On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 is low, 10 is high) ask the students:

- 1. How would you rate your day today in terms of fun, interest and being with friends? Why?**
- 2. How would you rate your day today in terms of faith building/strengthening and in being with God and other Christian young people? Why?**

Now have each participant answer (both youth and adult)...

- 3. My "high" for today was... Why?**
- 4. My "low" for today was... Why?**

III. Family Time Discussion

(Choose from Options 1 or 2 on the following pages based on the energy level and needs of your group.)

IV. Closing Prayer

Have everyone sit comfortably in as much of a circle as possible and either join hands, link arms, touch elbows, hold pinkies, etc. Ask for a volunteer to start the prayer or he/she can read the opening found below. After the opening, go around the circle and have each participant say one word that describes how they feel about God after the events of yesterday and today (for example, near, loving, open, understanding, interested, listening, present, etc. Take a moment and let everyone first think of a word and then go around the circle.). Encourage everyone to think of a different - though accurate - word. Then ask for a volunteer to close the prayer or he/she can read the closing found below.

(Opening of prayer)

Heavenly Father, we thank You for this good day and for bringing us to this event. As we rest this evening remind us again that while we're awake or sleeping, You are caring for us for You never abandon us. Rooted in You, may we realize that we are so very valuable to You. Hear us now as we tell You how we think of You this evening...

(Closing of prayer)

Lord Jesus, we rejoice in knowing of Your unconditional love proved at the cross and the empty tomb. May we rest soundly in You and may we be energized by Your Holy Spirit to enjoy a new day tomorrow. All this we pray in the name of Jesus. AMEN

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“Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” - Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV)

2. What part of the Christian life do you feel you could be more “rooted” in? Why?
3. What are some ways you could begin to try that would make you more “rooted” in these shallower parts of your faith? When will you start these?
4. **Close in Prayer.** (See suggestion on page 5 of the Family Time Guide.)

Option 2: Examining, Exploring & Expressing Our Theme And The Events Of Today

Examining:

As you know, our theme is "Rooted." The Bible verse it is based on is:

"Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." - Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV)

1. What part of the Christian life do you feel you could be more "rooted" in? Why?
2. What are some ways you could begin to try that would make you more "rooted" in these shallower parts of your faith? When will you start these?
3. What are some of the reasons you will find it hard to be more "rooted" in these ways? Would you be willing to ask someone to help hold you accountable?

Exploring:

Avoiding Root Rot:

As the name "root rot" states, the roots of the plant rot. Usually, this is a result of overwatering. Spiritual root rot is when the roots are getting too much activity that doesn't nourish or strengthen, but rather weakens and decays them.

Ask a volunteer to read Colossians 3:5-9

1. List out loud the things St. Paul tells us to "put to death"...
2. Why does St. Paul use the phrase "put to death"? ie. How serious is he about these things?
3. Paul says to put these to death. Why? What does this mean?

Helping Families Grow Strong:

Plants, trees, flora and fauna never exist in and of themselves. They are from a family of seeds with parents and siblings and extended family. Those things that hurt or ruin a family member have potential to harm each and every plant, tree, etc. Likewise anything that is good for one is good for the family.

1. How strong is your family root network? What best nourishes your family's roots?
2. What are some things that you can do for your own family's roots to grow deeper in the faith and closer to Jesus?

Helping Friends Grow Strong:

Next to our families, our friends have become the most important people in our lives. Our root system can't stay healthy if our friends' are decaying, nor can their root systems stay healthy if ours is full of root rot.

1. Are your best friends' roots healthy, deteriorating, getting stronger or rotten?
2. What can you do to make them healthier? Why is it hard to strengthen your friends' root system? What are the risks in doing this? What are the benefits?

Expressing:

Make sure everyone has a pen/pencil and a piece of paper. Then have a volunteer read Mark 4:16-17.

Have everyone draw a vertical line down the center of their piece of paper, thus making two columns. In the left hand column have them write the names of people in their lives (relatives and friends) who appear to have a weak root system in Jesus or those who have no roots in Him at all. In the right hand column, have them write down ways they could help strengthen and support a root system that doesn't let the plant of faith of each of their relatives/friends wither and die. Finally, discuss a time frame that these students and adults could work on helping their friends/relatives.

Close in Prayer (See suggestion on page 5 of the Family Time Guide.)