

Practicing The Practice

WHAT IS WALK HUMBLY ABOUT?

Walking humbly means drawing closer to God and intentionally living more and more into our identity as children of God. It is a balance between not belittling or discounting our gifts and uniqueness while understanding that we are human, just like everyone else. Walking humbly with God sets aside preoccupations with wealth, reputation, and power, accepting our own limitations while celebrating, and appreciating the multitude of gifts that others offer. As we walk humbly with God, we turn from ourselves, are quiet, and listen to the voices of others and of God.



* CELEBRATING OTHERS

Supplies: pens, paper, markers, crayons, envelopes, stamps

Make a list of five or six people that you or your household love. Relatives are good, but also try to think beyond extended family to a wider circle of neighbors and helpers. Beside each person's name, write at least three things that make them special that are blessings from God. Then make a card for each person on your list. Mail or deliver the cards letting others know that they are special to you. Consider continuing the practice each week with one or more people to celebrate. Wonder how walking humbly with God includes celebrating the gifts of others.

* GOD'S REQUIREMENTS

Supplies: Bible, Internet-connected device

Read aloud Micah 6:6–8 from several versions of the Bible. Suggested translations: Good News Translation, Common English Bible. The Message, New Revised Standard Version (Updated Edition), and the New International Reader's Version. Wonder how the different interpretations help you understand God's requirements. Then watch the video "Pat Barrett—Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly (Official Lyric Video)" (bit.ly/FMWalkHumblySong). (Reminder: bit.ly links are case-sensitive!) After the video, think about or discuss with others:

- What do you think are the connections between acting justly, loving mercy (or kindness), and walking humbly with God?
- What would it look like to have one without the others?
- What is an example of each of God's requirements (see Micah 6:8) that your household can practice?

* COMPLIMENT STRANGERS

Either alone (if you're an adult) or with others, take a compliment walk. This can be in a park, in a mall, around your neighborhood, in a store, or while doing errands. Give someone a compliment as you walk. It can be an observation such as "I like your shoes," "That was kind of you to help that man get the box off the shelf," or (perhaps the best compliment of all...???) "You did a great job parallel parking." After your compliment walk, talk together how it felt to compliment others. Wonder how walking humbly with God includes recognizing the beauty and actions of others.

GOD'S CREATION

Go somewhere where you are immersed in God's creation. This may be looking at the stars at night, visiting a zoo or aquarium, or walking in the park or on a beach or in the mountains or by a river or through a garden or farm. If you're with others, take turns pointing out what you see in God's creation. Look for a variety of characteristics, such as big and small, loud and quiet, colorful and plain, and so forth. Marvel at God's creation and consider your place within it. Consider what it means to walk humbly with God as part of God's created world.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Prayers of intercession, both in worship and as part of our own prayer practice, provide opportunities to name specific persons and situations that are prominent in the news, evident in our communities, or near to our hearts. Knowing how God favors the lowly, we bring these universal themes and particular concerns before God in prayer. As an individual or as a household, write down the people and situations you want to lift before God in prayer. Keep a running list that you pray for every day for a week (or the whole month). Consider: how does praying for the world help us walk humbly with God?

ACTIVE LISTENING

Part of being humble is listening to others rather than always being the talker. Challenge yourself to practice active listening as a family or within a friend group. Active listening requires paying attention to not only what is being said but the feelings and body language as well. It means being fully present and paying attention to the one speaking rather than thinking of how one will respond. Skills to work on include eye contact and body language that show attention; silence so the other may speak, even if it takes time; and reflection of what the speaker felt and said without judgment. Try the following activity: Sit in a circle or around a table. Invite people to give thanks for something in their day, not taking turns doing so but sharing when they are ready to do so. After everyone has shared, talk together about the experience, wondering if it was difficult or easy to pay attention or get distracted by thinking of what you would share. Ask if the silences, if there were any, were uncomfortable. Wonder how these active listening skills might be applied to listening to God.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What is the most unusual place you have gone for a walk? What did you see and learn on your walk?
- Brainstorm synonyms for the word humble. Which of these words show up in your everyday lives?
- What are some spaces that you can walk more humbly and listen for God as an individual and/or household?
- Who in your life would you describe as humble? What do they do (or not do) that is humble?
- Where do you find inspiration on how to live more humbly?

PRAYER

Holy One, teach us humility. Help us to celebrate ourselves and all the other people you have put into our lives. Teach us to say and demonstrate our gratitude to one another and to ourselves. Amen.

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