

Group Learning Guide



WORKING THROUGH THE STEPS in this book with a group of people can provide the solidarity and support needed for lasting change and can create a profound sense of community and trust among participants. Here are a few tips for initiating and leading a group to work through the tasks and exercises in *Belonging and Becoming*.

LEADERSHIP

Form a team of two to three people who will initiate the learning group and facilitate sessions. We can't stress enough how important it is to have collaborators in this process. When you collaborate, you have a greater pool of skills and wisdom to draw from and a wider network of potential participants to invite.

Decide together when and where you will meet, how you'll invite participants and the roles each person will play during your group sessions. People in your group will be only as invested and authentic as the facilitators are. The honesty, self-awareness and commitment to growth and change you model will set the tone for the entire group. Make sure your core team has the time and space necessary to facilitate this process.

INVITATION

As you invite people into the learning group, make the opportunity and expectations for participation clear. You're inviting participants

into an intensive and practical process of cultivating skills for creating a thriving family culture. Participants will get the most out of this experience if you set the expectation that this is a high-commitment learning journey rather than a book study. If you're introducing this opportunity to an existing group that meets regularly for other purposes, emphasize the unique intensity and commitment to action this process will require.

Participants will get the most out of this experience by making a commitment to participate fully in the process by attending all sessions, reading the assigned chapter and completing tasks and exercises before the next session. To solidify this commitment, invite participants to sign the Shared Learning Contract at your first session. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you invite people to participate:

- The main purpose of this eight-session intensive is to develop skills for taking practical steps to create a thriving family culture.
- For momentum and group safety, it's important to attend every session and not to allow new people into the group after the first week.
- The time commitment required includes a one- to two-hour group meeting, and three hours to read the chapter and do chapter tasks before the next session.
- Don't be surprised if a few people decline your invitation or drop out partway through. It's common for 5 to 10 percent of a group to drop out within the first two weeks of a high-intensity process like this.

SESSION FACILITATION

Create a welcoming, conversational and supportive environment. Your willingness to risk honesty and transparency about your successes and failures will empower others to do the same. Try to include everyone

in conversations. Invite less talkative people to respond to questions, and gently redirect over-talkers by saying something like “Okay, now let’s hear from someone who hasn’t had a chance to share yet.” Be creative, and make your group experience fun, lively and unpredictable. Each session is designed to include the following elements:

- a welcome and opening prayer
- discussion of some aspect of the assigned chapter
- a check-in on the exercises, tasks and experiments of the assigned chapter (done in smaller huddle groups of three to four people)
- a suggested Scripture to engage with as a group
- a group exercise that explores a theme from the chapter
- a review of chapter tasks to complete before the next session
- a closing meditation or prayer

Plan activities for the session ahead of time. The Group Learning Guide includes ninety minutes of activities. Estimated times for specific session activities are provided but flexible; expect them to take slightly more or less time, depending on the dynamics of your group.

If possible, allow two hours to meet, including fifteen minutes of socializing before and after session activities. You can shorten your session to an hour by eliminating some of the suggested activities, but most groups who’ve gone through this process say they could always use more time to process the steps they’re taking.

As you look at the guide for each session, decide what activities are most relevant to your group. There may be more suggested activities than you have time for.

Enter each session assuming participants have done the chapter tasks. Always include check-in, and review what to do before the next session. These are important elements of the learning process, providing accountability and support for new steps of action. If there are more than five people in your group, we recommend dividing up into

“huddles” of three to four people to check in on homework tasks. Designate a facilitator for each huddle. To ensure that each person in the huddle has the opportunity to share, try using a timer. Give each person in the huddle group a certain amount of time to check in on homework tasks.

Many of the topics brought up in this process lead to emotional sharing. Be prepared to care for and walk alongside people as they face regrets, new realizations and invitations to greater freedom and healing. Some people in your group may need more space to process outside of group sessions or assistance in completing tasks and exercises.

Think about who is in the room. Consider their ages, life stages and circumstances. Choose activities and discussion topics that are relevant to the people in your circle.

Not everyone has the same strengths or growth edges when it comes to this process. You may need to speak up for an underrepresented perspective occasionally so that each participant’s life experience is acknowledged.

Regularly remind your group of the vision and goals of the group process. Some people will be taking courageous and challenging new steps in their lives. With the effort required, sometimes it’s easy to forget the “why” for specific tasks or activities. The tasks and exercises for each session are designed to help participants take their next step toward family thriving.

Follow up your weekly session with an email to participants. After each session, send a note that summarizes the discussion, offers encouragement and reminds participants of the tasks to complete before the next session.

Near the end of your process, invite the group to consider what’s next. Walking through the steps in this book together can lead to a strong sense of community and trust. The group may want to consider ways to stay connected on a monthly or quarterly basis to keep on track with their commitments and steps to growth.

SESSION 1: A THRIVING FAMILY LIVES FROM A VISION

Before this session: Read chapter 1, and complete the Family Thriving Self-Assessment.

Session goals

- Help each other feel welcome and connected, and take steps to build trust.
- Reflect on the invitation into a flourishing life of belonging and becoming.
- Value family strengths and help each other identify growth areas.
- Review and sign the Shared Learning Contract.

Welcome (10 minutes)

- Invite each person to introduce themselves, and briefly answer the following questions:
 - What do you like about the family you're part of?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group learning experience?

Prayer (2 minutes)

Read the “Group Prayer for Family Thriving” together.

Chapter discussion (15 minutes)

- What resonated with you from chapter 1?
- What questions do you have about the process of creating a thriving family culture?
- Do you have any triggers or baggage around this topic? How can this group help you stay open to the process?

Scripture (10 minutes)

Read the following words of Jesus three times aloud, pausing after each reading to invite group members to offer a one-word response to the questions below.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

- Family life can be tiring and difficult at times. What is one word you would use to describe an aspect of family life that makes you feel weary or burdened?
- The Creator invites us into the potential of true rest. What is a word that describes the thriving you desire for your family?
- Jesus invites us to learn from him. What do you want the master to teach you that will help you and your family flourish? Respond by completing this sentence: “I want to learn to . . .”

Chapter task check-in (30 minutes)

Invite each person to take seven to ten minutes to complete the Family Thriving Self-Assessment (p. 27-31) and then reflect together on the results. If your group is larger than five people, divide into groups of three or four to do this activity. Take turns responding to the following questions, allowing each person five minutes to share. You may find it useful to use a timer to keep your group on track.

- What did you identify as your family’s greatest areas of strength? Why?
- Which of these did you identify as your greatest area for growth? Explain.
- Prior to this session, did you get a chance to engage your spouse and other family members in an activity to explore what you like about your family? How was that interaction?

Shared Learning Contract (5 minutes)

- Read, briefly discuss and then sign the Shared Learning Contract (p. 228-228).

- Make sure you have contact information for each participant so you can be in communication between sessions.

Announce and explain homework tasks (5 minutes)

- Read chapter 2.
- Reflect on your family-of-origin experience and scripts.
- Develop a family purpose agreement.
- Do an activity that invites your children to engage with your family purpose agreement.

Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Read the “Group Prayer for Family Thriving” once more together.

SESSION 2: A THRIVING FAMILY CARRIES OUT ITS PURPOSE

Session goals

- Reflect on family-of-origin experiences.
- Explore the gifts and shadows of the scripts that shape how you approach family life.
- Affirm one another’s family purpose agreements.

Welcome and prayer (5 minutes)

Gather as a group, and invite each other into two minutes of silence before reading the “Group Prayer for Family Thriving.”

Chapter discussion (10 minutes)

- What stood out to you as you read this chapter on family purpose?
- Has this process brought up any interesting conversations in your family?

Scripture (10 minutes)

Read the following passages from Psalms responsively. Invite one person to read each section, and then have the whole group respond

with the italicized refrain. (This is also a great way to invite kids to engage with psalms.)

Lord, you have been our dwelling place
throughout all generations.

Before the mountains were born
or you brought forth the whole world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

You turn people back to dust,
saying, "Return to dust, you mortals."

A thousand years in your sight
are like a day that has just gone by,
or like a watch in the night.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death—
they are like the new grass of the morning:

In the morning it springs up new,
but by evening it's dry and withered. . . .

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Relent, LORD! How long will it be?

Have compassion on your servants.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love,
that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,
for as many years as we have seen trouble.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

May your deeds be shown to your servants,
your splendor to their children.

May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us;

establish the work of our hands for us—
yes, establish the work of our hands.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

Invite each person to turn to a person next to them and respond to the following questions:

- Where have you seen evidence of the Creator's care and presence in the generations of your family?
- Where do you long to see God's favor manifest in your family?

Chapter task check-in (35 minutes)

Do a check-in on the chapter tasks from session 1. If your group is larger than five people, divide into groups of three or four for this activity. Take turns responding to the following questions, allowing each person five minutes to share.

- What scripts from your family of origin are you repeating or reacting to?
- Where are you in the ongoing process of understanding and forgiving your parents their mistakes and limitations?

Hand out six sticky notes to each person. Invite everyone to write down three things from their family of origin that they hope to carry with them into their family and three things they would like to leave behind (one per note). Then divide into pairs and take turns sharing your responses, first what you want to leave behind and then what you want to carry with you (two to three minutes per person). As participants share what they want to leave behind, invite them to throw their notes into a trash basket. Invite participants to post in their book the sticky notes of what they want to carry with them.

Large-group activity (20 minutes)

Reconvene as a larger group. Invite each person to present the family purpose agreement they developed. After each person shares, cheer and applaud. Then pause for a moment to invite group members to

affirm what resonated with them. After each person has had a chance to present their family purpose agreement, ask the group the following questions:

- How did you experience the process of developing your shared purpose agreement?
- What did you do to explore your family purpose agreement with your kids?

Announce and explain homework tasks (3 minutes)

- Read chapter 3.
- Identify your shared family rhythms.
- Reflect on tradeoffs.
- Engage in a whole family activity to explore shared rhythms. Try on a new family rhythm, set boundaries with screens or explore priorities with your teen.

Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Gather as a group and read the “Group Prayer for Family Thriving” together.

SESSION 3: A THRIVING FAMILY FINDS ITS RHYTHM

Session goals

- Celebrate the life-giving family rhythms practiced by group participants.
- Reflect on tradeoffs and any adjustments group members feel invited to make.
- Consider the level of intentionality required to live into a shared family purpose agreement.

Welcome and prayer (2 minutes)

Gather as a group and read the “Group Prayer for Family Thriving” together.

Chapter discussion (10 minutes)

Take a few moments to have an impromptu dance party. Put on some upbeat music, and invite group members to get their groove on. After one song, have a seat and discuss the following questions:

- What stood out to you as you read this chapter on family rhythms?
- How comfortable are you with the level of communication and the intentionality with time suggested in this chapter?
- What has been encouraging and challenging for you as you attempt to do a weekly family meeting?

Scripture (10 minutes)

Invite the group to consider how they feel about their time. Read the statements below, asking group members to raise their hand if they relate to the statement that has just been read.

- I feel hurried and tired.
- I don't have enough time.
- I should be getting more done than I am.
- I feel expectations and demands on my time from others.
- I fear that I'm wasting my time.
- I wonder whether I'm getting to what's really important.
- I feel peaceful and content with how I spend my time.

Have the group close their eyes and listen as you read the following slowly three times.

*My heart is not proud, Lord,
my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.
But I have calmed and quieted myself,
I am like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child I am content.*

Invite everyone to practice soul-quieting by sitting in silence together for five minutes.

Chapter task check-in (35 minutes)

Do a check-in on the tasks from chapter 3. If your group is larger than five people, divide into groups of three or four for this activity. First, have each person take three or four minutes to respond to the following questions about family rhythms:

- What are the rhythms that are most life giving to your family?
- What are some rhythms you would like to renew or a new rhythm you want to try?
- What whole family activity did you choose to do this week? How did it go?

Invite each person to spend three or four minutes reflecting on family-time tradeoffs using the following questions:

- What are the costs or tradeoffs of the decisions you've made as a family? Are you satisfied with the tradeoffs you're making?
- Are there any new decisions you feel inspired to make to have more time and energy for what matters most to you?

Large-group activity (20 minutes)

Reconvene as a larger group. Hang three large posterboards on the wall with one of the following statements written at the top of each one:

- Favorite family rhythms
- Best media-management strategy
- Lingering questions about family scheduling

Put on some music, and invite participants to jot responses on the posters, using markers provided. After everyone has had a chance to write something, step back and look at the posters together. Ask the

group what they notice and are curious about. Invite several people to share more about what they wrote down. Before you move on, ask the group if anyone has a hot tip for living in rhythm as a family.

Announce and explain homework tasks (3 minutes)

- Read chapter 4.
- Reflect on your own spiritual journey and what you want to share with your kids about God's story.
- Choose a spiritual practice to try as a whole family activity.
- Talk about a new step you want to take to put your values and beliefs into practice.

Closing meditation (2 minutes)

Invite someone in the group to read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

SESSION 4: A THRIVING FAMILY DISCOVERS A COMMON STORY

Session goals

- Help participants feel empowered to explore the larger story with their families.
- Practice facilitating spiritual conversation and experiences.
- Affirm how participants want to live out their beliefs and values with their families.

Welcome and prayer (2 minutes)

Collect as a group, and read the "Group Prayer for Family Thriving" together.

Chapter discussion (10 minutes)

- What stood out to you as you read this chapter on discovering a common story?
- Do you find it easy or difficult to initiate spiritual conversations and experiences in your family? Explain.

- What's one thing you hope your family can affirm and embrace about the story of the real world?

Scripture (20 minutes)

Practice exploring the great themes of Scripture by acting out some stories together. Choose one of the stories below to perform together (or divide into multiple groups and have each group act out one of these stories). Take five minutes to read the story, and pick people to play various parts. Have one person narrate the story as the others act it out.

- The story of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32)
- Jesus calms the storm (Mk 4: 35-41)
- The feeding of the five thousand (Jn 6:1-15)

After you've performed, sit down and discuss the following questions:

- What can we learn about God and ourselves through this story?
- Is there a new way you want to think or act inspired by this story?
- How did acting out the story help you engage it differently?

Chapter task check-in (35 minutes)

Do a check-in on the tasks from chapter 4. If your group is larger than three or four people, divide into groups of three or four for this activity. Take turns responding to the following questions, allowing each person three or four minutes to share.

- What have been the most significant moments and turning points in your experience and understanding of God and the larger story? Is there anything you wish had been explained differently when you were younger?
- What practice did you try this week with your family to help you experience God's presence and live into the larger story together?

Invite each person to spend three minutes reflecting on this question:

- What new step would you like to take with your family to put your beliefs and values into practice?

Large-group activity (20 minutes)

Reconvene as a larger group. Invite the group into a show-and-tell about Scripture, story, prayer and presence practices. Take turns demonstrating a song, prayer or story-exploring technique you've found meaningful to practice in your family. If possible, don't just describe the activity; lead the group in doing it. Then discuss the following questions:

- What may be the long-term impact of having shared Scripture, prayer and presence activities as a family?
- What are your lingering questions and wonderings about pursuing a spiritual path together as a family?

Announce and explain homework tasks (3 minutes)

- Read chapter 5.
- Choose a whole family activity to try that fosters love and respect.
- Talk about your communication rules and practice resolving conflict.
- Reflect on where you feel vulnerable or how you're triggered by conflict.

Closing prayer (2 minutes)

Read the "Group Prayer for Family Thriving" once more together.

SESSION 5: A THRIVING FAMILY FOSTERS CONNECTION

Session goals

- Affirm the participants' desire and effort to create a culture of love and respect in their families.
- Build and reinforce skills for working through conflicts.

- Share and celebrate the ways families in your group build connections, have fun and offer hospitality to others.

Welcome and prayer (2 minutes)

Collect as a group and read the “Group Prayer for Family Thriving” together.

Chapter discussion (10 minutes)

- What stood out to you as you read this chapter on fostering connections?
- How do you relate to the complex role of being both a team coach and player in the life of your family?
- What’s one thing you really like about how your family fosters a culture of love and respect?

Scripture (20 minutes)

Have someone read Romans 12:9-21 and then invite one another to offer short responses to the questions below.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary:

*“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”
Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

- Which instruction from this passage do you most resonate with?
- Which practice of loving relationship mentioned in this passage do you find most challenging or difficult to live out?
- What are the inner resources that allow someone to live out this radical way of love?

Chapter task check-in (35 minutes)

Do a check-in on the tasks from chapter 5. If your group is larger than three or four people, divide into groups of three or four for this activity. Take turns responding to the following questions, allowing each person three minutes to share.

- What kind of rules does your family have in place to support a culture of love and respect?
- What activity did you choose to do this week to foster connection?

Invite each person to spend three or four minutes reflecting on their skills for working through conflict.

- How familiar and comfortable are you with the conflict resolution skills that were presented in this chapter?
- In this chapter, you were invited to practice making repairs with your spouse or another family member. What did you learn from this experience?
- What aspect of resolving conflict do you find easiest? What is most challenging?

Large-group activity (20 minutes)

Invite each person in the group to think of a favorite activity that helps them have fun and feel connected as a family. Then, using posterboard

or a whiteboard, take turns drawing out those ideas and have other group members try to guess the activity (similar to Pictionary). Play until everyone has had a chance to draw. Then discuss the following questions:

- How does your family offer hospitality and welcome to others?
- What's a new step you'd like to take to build deeper connections in your family?

Announce and explain homework tasks (3 minutes)

- Read chapter 6.
- Reflect on steps you can take to address your own personal growth edges.
- Have a family conversation about growth and change.
- Discuss your children's current developmental challenges and character growth edges, and brainstorm ways you can support their growth.

Closing blessing (2 minutes)

Invite someone to read Ephesians 3:14-21.

SESSION 6: A THRIVING FAMILY NURTURES GROWTH

Session goals

- Provide a compassionate and constructive space to talk about personal growth edges.
- Explore the connections between inner scripts and outward behavior.
- Encourage and affirm honesty about blessedness and brokenness in ourselves, in our children and in our world.

Welcome and prayer (2 minutes)

Gather as a group, and read the "Group Prayer for Family Thriving" together.

Chapter discussion (10 minutes)

- What stood out to you as you read this chapter on nurturing growth?
- What are the unique qualities and personality characteristics of the members of your family that you love to celebrate?
- What stages of development are evident in your household right now?

Scripture (20 minutes)

Distribute pens and paper, and have someone read aloud the passage from Psalm 139 below. Then invite people to spend ten minutes journaling using the prompts below.

*You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.
You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.*

*Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me*

*and the light become night around me,”
even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.*

*For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.
How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!
Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you. . . .
Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

- How does God see you?
- What does the Creator desire for you to experience more of?
- What do you find challenging about holding the tension between your belovedness and brokenness?

Before moving on, take two minutes to turn to a person next to you to share what came up for you in your journal session (1 minute per person).

Chapter task check-in (35 minutes)

Do a check-in on the tasks from chapter 6. If your group is larger than three or four people, divide into groups of three or four for this activity. Take turns responding to the following questions, allowing each person three or four minutes to share.

- Where do you long to see growth and change in your life?
- What truth or true script do you need to affirm to be empowered to make a change?
- What practical action can you take to respond to the invitation to grow and change?

Invite everyone to spend three or four minutes reflecting on how they can support growth for other members of their family.

- Do you find it easy or difficult to have honest and constructive conversations about growth challenges in your family? Why?
- What do you feel are the important real-world conversations to have at this stage in the life of your family?

Large-group activity (20 minutes)

Chapter 6 suggested that parents can guide their kids toward growth and change by focusing more on internal character development than on external behavior or just following the rules. As a group, brainstorm a few typical child behaviors that parents feel challenged to address. Then talk together about strategies to address both the presenting behavior and the opportunity to develop character growth, using the questions below. Work through two or three scenarios. If your group is large, divide into groups of three to five people to work through this process. Try to talk about the scenarios generically rather than specifically in order to protect the privacy of participants' children.

- Name the presenting behavior.
- Name the negative impact this behavior has for the child and their relationships with others.

- Name the false scripts or unmet needs that may push a child toward this behavior.
- Name the good reality you can affirm that may help a child make a better choice from an internal motivation.

After you've worked through a couple of scenarios, gather as a group and respond to the following question:

- What's a good step you've been able to take to focus on character development with your child?

Announce and explain homework tasks (3 minutes)

- Read chapter 7.
- Do a whole family activity that helps you practice gratitude, affirm trust, express contentment and live generously.
- Reflect on what you want to teach your kids about handling money.
- Review or develop family financial goals and a spending plan, and start a conversation with your kids about money.

Closing blessing (2 minutes)

Have someone read the following passage aloud (Phil 3:20–21).

Now to [God] who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to [God's] power that is at work within us, to [God] be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

SESSION 7: A THRIVING FAMILY CELEBRATES ABUNDANCE

Session goals

- Allow participants to name challenges to living a right-sized life as a family.
- Explore where participants feel invited to take new steps toward right-sized living.

- Share best practices in training kids to handle money and possessions.

Welcome and prayer (2 minutes)

Collect as a group and read the “Group Prayer for Family Thriving” together.

Chapter discussion (10 minutes)

- What stood out to you as you read this chapter on abundance?
- Where do you feel the challenge or invitation toward a right-sized life?
- Where have you seen abundance and divine provision in the life of your family?

Scripture (20 minutes)

Invite someone in the group to read aloud the following passage from Luke. Ask participants to listen to the text being read again and to pay attention to a word or phrase they resonate with. Read the text again and ask people to share the word or phrase that spoke to them.

Ask participants to listen to the text being read for a third time, paying attention to a surprising challenge Jesus presents. Read the text a third time and ask people to share what they felt most challenged by in the passage.

Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?”

“Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which

is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Before moving on, take two minutes to turn to a person next to you and respond to the following questions:

- Did Jesus seem to believe in a world of scarcity or of abundance?
- Do you tend to see the world through a lens of scarcity or abundance?

Chapter task check-in (35 minutes)

Do a check-in on the tasks from chapter 7. If your group is larger than three or four people, divide into groups of three or four for this activity. Take turns responding to the following questions, allowing each person three to four minutes to share.

- What activity did you try with your family to practice gratitude, affirm trust, express contentment or live generously? How did it go? What did you discover?

Invite each person to spend three or four minutes reflecting on their family’s financial goals and practices.

- Are you satisfied with the way your family makes financial goals and decisions? What’s working and what’s not? Share a new step you’d like to take.

Large-group activity (20 minutes)

Brainstorm a list of hot tips for teaching kids about handling money and managing material possessions, using the questions below as prompts. Document your list using a posterboard or whiteboard.

- What's a valuable lesson you learned in your family about handling money and material possessions? How was this communicated?
- What's a favorite technique for learning how to handle money and possessions that you've used with your kids?
- What's a step you've taken in your family to share or conserve resources so that all families on earth may thrive?

Announce and explain homework tasks (3 minutes)

- Read chapter 8 and the conclusion.
- Talk about the work that needs to get done in your family and how your children can learn and help.
- Reflect on the personality and passions of each person in your family and how you can support each other's development.
- Try out a whole family activity that helps your family compassionately engage the aches and opportunities of our world.
- Bring a meal or dessert item to share at the next session to celebrate the journey your group has taken together.

Closing blessing (2 minutes)

Invite each person to express thankfulness for one way God has provided for their family, using the phrase "I'm grateful . . ."

**SESSION 8: A THRIVING FAMILY
SUPPORTS PRODUCTIVITY*****Session goals***

- Reflect on family as a place where we learn to participate in the work of the world.

- Invite each participant to evaluate what they have gained from this process and discern next steps.
- Celebrate the journey you've been on together as a group.

Welcome and evaluation (2 minutes)

As participants arrive, have them complete the self-evaluation and feedback questionnaire below. You can make copies of this document to distribute to the group so that you can collect them and review feedback. If you've planned a celebratory meal, have participants fill out the self-evaluation and feedback form before they eat; you will get a much better response rate that way. This activity will help participants be prepared to reflect later in the session on their experience of the process.

Reflect on your experience.

- What was the most impactful aspect of participating in this group learning experience?
- What practices, tasks or activities were most helpful to you?
- What step have you taken in this process that you're most proud of?
- Which aspect of family thriving would you like to revisit and work on more?

Reflect on the group process.

- What advice or encouragement would you give to someone considering working through *Belonging and Becoming*? What do you wish you would have known before starting this process?
- What advice would you give to the facilitators about how this process could be improved?
- What are your ideas about what this group might do to stay connected and continue to encourage and support each other's efforts to thrive as families?

- Would you recommend this process to a friend? ___ Yes ___ No ___ Maybe
- Is this a process you would be interested in helping facilitate for others in the future? ___ Yes ___ No ___ Maybe

Chapter discussion

- What stood out to you as you read this chapter on work and productivity?
- What strategies have helped your family accomplish household tasks?
- What are some ways you've been able to teach skills and build capacity in your kids?

Scripture (10 minutes)

Have someone read Mathew 25:31-40, and then invite the group to respond to the question below.

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes

and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

- Who are the “least of these” in your neighborhood and city—the most marginalized people facing great challenges and struggles?
- What are the great aches in our world that your family is most sensitive to and engages with?

Chapter task check-in (35 minutes)

Do a check-in on the tasks from chapter 8. If your group is larger than three or four people, divide into groups of three or four for this activity. Take turns responding to the following questions, allowing each person three to four minutes to share.

- What steps did your family take to compassionately engage the aches and opportunities of our world? What did you learn through this experience?
- Invite people to spend three to four minutes sharing their reflections on possible vocational trajectories for the people in their household.
- How do you imagine the gifts and personalities of your family members contributing to the greater good God desires for our world? What kind of work can you imagine them doing?

Large-group activity (20 minutes)

Take some time to reflect on the learning journey you’ve been on as a group, affirming and expressing appreciation for one another, using the questions below as a guide.

- What was the most impactful aspect of participating in this group learning experience?

- What practices, tasks or activities were most helpful to you—and what step have you taken that you are most proud of?
- What do you appreciate about the people you've gone through this process with—the facilitators and other participants?

Closing blessing (2 minutes)

Read the “Group Prayer for Family Thriving” once more together.