

## SESSION 2: LIFE IN A RELATIONAL WORLD

# LOOK AROUND: PARENT GUIDE

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Often our kids are stressed for good reason.

Sometimes we all feel pressure as members of families, cultures, and friend groups.

This week, your teenager and the rest of our group explored how well-intentioned people—including us as parents—can add to the pressure they feel. In the midst of anxiety, it's tempting to push people away and focus on our own fears and mistakes.

In Luke 5:1–11, one of the main characters of the gospel, Simon Peter, tries to do just that. But Jesus doesn't let him. Not only does Jesus reassure Simon that he (Jesus) is with him, he also reconnects Simon with those who were in the boat with him.

In both this first-century story and our lives today, Jesus is forming a circle of people to take on a journey of new identity, a new way of interacting, and a new way of being with one another. Relationships can be frustrating (and stress-producing) at times—but God designed us to be part of groups and families, and to have a circle of care we can ask to be with us through good times and bad.

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## HERE'S A CONVERSATION TO HAVE WITH YOUR STUDENT THIS WEEK

Since friendships are so important—and sometimes so volatile—for teenagers, talk with your student about how their friendships at times create stress, and at other times relieve stress. Consider talking with your child about each of their closest friends individually by name, asking when each of those friends is most likely to increase stress, as well as lower stress.

If the mood feels right, have a similar conversation about your family. Explore with your child when your family interactions are most likely to reduce stress, as well as raise stress. Avoid the temptation to defend yourself or other family members; instead, listen intently and ask clarifying questions to make sure you understand your teenagers' experiences and feelings.

## HERE'S SOMETHING YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR STUDENT AS THEY GROW

Your student has been challenged this week to have a conversation with a family member—or someone who is like family—who has offered them wisdom or good advice in the past. As a parent or stepparent, you have certainly given them good counsel. But since the goal is to widen your child's circle, it's better for your child to choose a non-parent if at all possible.

Brainstorm with your teenager about a family member or close adult friend they can spend time with this week—either in person or by phone or video. While it's ideal for your child to reach out to that friend or relative themselves, be aware of how you can support your child by helping them figure out the best time and place to meet so they can expand their circle of care.

## HERE'S SOMETHING YOU CAN DO TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Throughout our 4-week journey, students are exploring the Ignatian Prayer of Examen as a tool to help center themselves and seek God when life feels anxious. We're calling it the "Daily Replay."

You can encourage your student to develop this practice by walking through the following five prayer steps together, asking how the practice is helpful or challenging, or using the steps to grow in your own practice of prayer. Given your influence in your family, your own prayer habits can indeed be contagious and help you all develop faith in our anxious world!

## HERE ARE SOME PROMPTS TO PRACTICE THE FIVE STEPS THIS WEEK:

1. **Become aware of God's presence.** *Where has God been at work in my life today?*
2. **Review the day with gratitude.** *Whose friendship or expressions of love am I thankful for?*
3. **Pay attention to your emotions.** *What conversations or moments with others have been emotionally charged this week?*
4. **Forgive, and ask for forgiveness.** *Where can I make the first move towards creating peace?*
5. **Look toward tomorrow.** *What interactions with others can I picture going differently tomorrow?*

The Daily Replay is based on the Ignatian Prayer of Examen, and adapted for teenagers. Find out more about this prayer practice at [www.ignatianspirituality.com](http://www.ignatianspirituality.com).

If you find apps helpful in reminding and guiding you through your own practice of the prayer, search your app store for Ignatian Spirituality's "[Reimagining the Examen](#)," or "[Examen](#)" from FULLER studio.

## HERE ARE MORE TOOLS TO HELP YOUR FAMILY DEVELOP FAITH IN AN ANXIOUS WORLD

When it comes to developing faith in an anxious world, the majority of your most important parenting happens behind the scenes as you stay sharp and alert, ready to support your child with what they need:

- Check out the [Faith in an Anxious World Parenting Podcast: Episode 2](#), available wherever you listen to podcasts.
- Visit [fulleryouthinstitute.org/anxiousworld](http://fulleryouthinstitute.org/anxiousworld) for additional practical advice on how young people can best navigate anxiety.
- Seek professional help from a local counselor or therapist (we will cover this in more depth in the coming weeks).
- Reach out with your questions to a crisis hotline ([National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255](#) or [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)).