



BALDWIN COMMUNITY UMC

# FAITH

## MARCH 15

### YOUTH FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Since the youth group—together with the rest of the church—is on hiatus for a few weeks, I wanted to put together a resource that parents can share with their youth. Think of this as a sort of family Bible study. I'll be sending one each week we are not having Youth Group. It is designed to be read by the parent/grandparent/guardian, or other adult. Additionally, I put some little suggestion boxes around the edges to help guide the conversation. I hope that these provide a nice opportunity for your family.

### START HERE

"We always thank God for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers and continually recalling before our God and Father your work of faith, your labor of love, and your enduring hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 1:2-3

This is a strange time. Schools are moving home, the church is temporarily closed, many events have been postponed or canceled. In the meantime, the news can be kind of scary. It seems like every time you turn on the TV or go online there is some grim report. But the church is committed to being a place that brings comfort and joy. But bringing comfort and joy also means creating space to be honest about how we are feeling.

*Take a few moments to talk about how you are feeling. Are you anxious? Confused? Do you questions that haven't been answered?*

Some questions have easy answers. But some don't. Don't be afraid of not "having all the answers." It is more important for teens to be heard, than for them to get "answers." Being heard is already comforting.

Be sure to make this a two-way conversation. *Are you anxious or concerned?* It is important to provide stability, but teens also want to know that they are not alone, that others feel the way they do, *especially you.*





The Bible often groups together three practices that can help us in times where we feel lost or confused—*faith, hope, and love*. This week, we are going to talk about the first of these: **faith**. Let's start by reading a story about faith:

*Ask a youth to read: Mark 2.1-12*

What a weird story, right? Jesus does some pretty amazing things in the Gospels, but also some surprising, sometimes even baffling, things.

Don't forget, this is a time for everyone to share. If you've heard this story a lot, ask yourself, "what would I think if I was hearing this story for the first time?"

Don't rush. Give them time to think. Give them encouragement. It is sometimes hard to think of things on the spot, but teens are sharp. They've got this.

*What stood out to you in this story?  
What was surprising or interesting?*

The theologian—that's another word for someone who studies religion—Terrance Tilley says that our English word "faith" can be really unhelpful, because we tend to think that faith just means "believing certain things are true." He says that we can often understand the Bible better when we think of faith as "trust."

*How did the four friends show that they truly trusted Jesus?  
How did Jesus respond to their trust and faith?*

As we close out this time, with one last question, let's think about the world that we find ourselves in today.

*How might we build up our faith and trust in God during this time, when things are a little out of whack and not our normal day-to-day lives?*

Did you get a trite "Sunday School answer"? Encourage them to go deeper, they can do it! Try encouraging them with a clear goal, by adding something like: "let's try to come up with three more examples."

Let's close with a word of prayer:

*Spirit of God, we put our trust in you.  
We know that you are trustworthy,  
because our very lives prove your love.  
When times are tough, when times are confusing,  
may we trust you and remember your faithfulness.  
Amen.*

