

FACE TO FACE

DIVINE ENCOUNTERS

John's Story

Focus God wants us to have daily, face-to-face, divine encounters with Him.

Open Play the “hot potato” game as a group. Use a balloon, a small pillow, a raw potato or some other lightweight object to pass around randomly and quickly. When the “potato” lands in each person’s hand, they must sing a line from any song. A person is eliminated from the game when they can’t think of a line to sing within five seconds (or make it three, if you are competitive). Keep going until one person remains and is declared the winner.

Read We learn from the story of Jesus’ disciple John about face-to-face encounters with God. Revelation 1:9–18 shows how John had a revelation of the resurrected Christ. This was a face-to-face encounter that occurred years after Jesus had died. Because John also knew Jesus when Jesus was alive on earth, he had a revelation of Jesus’ humanity (1 John 1:1; 4:3) and His divinity (John 1:1).

John had a growing revelation of Jesus. When John first started following Jesus, he and his brother James were called “sons of thunder” because they were not gentle or loving (Luke 9:54; Mark 9:38). Later in life he was called the “love disciple.” This transformation took place in his life because John had not just one, but many face-to-face, divine encounters with Jesus. The same is true for us—to grow into the disciple that God wants us to be, we must continue having encounters with God.

John had a revelation of himself in Jesus. He came to understand that Jesus loved him (John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20; 19:26–27) because he had repeated encounters with Jesus. God wants to have daily face-to-face encounters with

us so that He can tell us that He loves us, and that we are beautiful to Him. These encounters change our lives (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Talk

1. When did you first understand who Jesus is: the Son of God, born as a man and the Savior? What helped you to see this? Was it by reading the Bible, attending church, or did a family member or friend tell you about Jesus?
2. Read the following scriptures where Jesus makes “I am” statements about Himself. Which of these statements stands out or is especially significant to you today?

John 6:35

John 11:25

John 10:7

John 15:1

John 8:12

John 14:6

John 10:11

John 10:36

3. John grew from being a “son of thunder” to a “love disciple.” As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are all growing in learning how to love. What kinds of experiences and choices help us to grow in love?
4. Why do you think it is sometimes difficult to quiet our hearts and minds to have divine encounters with God? What kinds of things distract us? How can we get past those distractions?
5. Have you had a recent face-to-face encounter with God? How did He speak to you? Was it through something you read, a mental picture, words He spoke to your heart, a deep sense of peace? If you are willing, tell the group about it.

Live

Read the entire Gospel of John in your quiet times this week. Write down anything that God reveals to you about Himself as you read.

Pray

Thank you, Jesus, for revealing yourself to us. We praise you because you are the Son of God, our Savior, and the great “I Am.” Lead us into daily, face-to-face encounters with you.