



Welcome to

Compassion and a Campfire –

Mount Calvary's answer to Vacation Bible
School *Off The Grid* and open to all ages!

High School & Young Adult

There really is nothing like a **CAMPFIRE.**

No matter the season,

People have been circling a fire for longer than any of us can imagine. The fire was heat, light, warm food, and a place to be together. Those gathered were family, friends, and community - tasks were done, plans made, dreams dreamed, problems solved, laughter shared, and stories were told. Life was lived. Around the campfire nothing was impossible and those who gathered knew they belonged and who they belonged to.

Even though it is no longer a matter of survival, or the only place we gather, we all have memories of campfires where we gathered, sang, ate too many s'mores and maybe told a ghost story or two. Campfires are magical in their ability to become sacred space! And around the campfire we too know belonging.

COMPASSION is the ability to feel for another living being. Compassion alludes to kindness and sympathy, but there is something deeper, something even more profoundly powerful, in its meaning...in Latin, 'compati' means "suffer with." Compassion means someone else's heartbreak becomes your heartbreak. Another's suffering becomes your suffering. The Bible is filled with the word compassion. Not only God's compassion towards us, and people's compassion for one another but most importantly the compassion of Jesus toward all.

This summer, in this time, we are going to play with these two beautiful words and invite you to an "almost" off the grid experience! We will explore 5 different biblical stories – the story is what we "gather around" like a campfire; each story invites or gathers us in. Each story will have different activity options – think of these activities as the "stones" that surround the "fire" or the story itself. The stones hold the story and help us to know it! Below are listed some very helpful hints!

Compassion and a Campfire comes in 4 different versions!
The versions for High school and older can be done with
friends, family or by one's self.

- a. Families with younger children
- b. Families with Middle School teens
- c. High School Youth
- d. Young Adults
- e. Adults

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You can use the story and activities around
a real campfire, a “pretend” campfire or
even a candle!

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These materials can be spread out over time
and campfires. You can choose one “stone”
over another – whatever works for you or
your family!

Compassion is the ability to feel for another living being - it is the practice of recognizing and sharing in the feelings of others. Compassion helps us see and welcome. Gathering at a table together encourages relationship, and sharing a table helps us to begin to accept each other in the same way God accepts us.

SESSION 1

At the Table

Through the parable of the father and the two brothers in Luke 15:11-32, we will see how compassion can empower us to release the anger and judgment we may hold toward others, ourselves, and the world for not being what we wanted or needed. We will learn how compassion inspires seeing, forgiveness, and welcoming.

Scripture: Luke 15:11-32

The Story of the Lost Son

11-12 Then he said, "There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, 'Father, I want right now what's coming to me.'

12-16 "So the father divided the property between them. It wasn't long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to hurt. He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncocks in the pig slop, but no one would give him any.

17-20 "That brought him to his senses. He said, 'All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I'm going back to my father. I'll say to him, Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.' He got right up and went home to his father.

20-21 "When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech: 'Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son ever again.'

22-24 "But the father wasn't listening. He was calling to the servants, 'Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We're going to feast! We're going to have a wonderful time! My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!' And they began to have a wonderful time.

25-27 "All this time his older son was out in the field. When the day's work was done he came in. As he approached the house, he heard the music and dancing. Calling over one of the houseboys, he asked what was going on. He told him, 'Your brother came home. Your father has ordered a feast—barbecued beef!—because he has him home safe and sound.'

28-30 "The older brother stalked off in an angry sulk and refused to join in. His father came out and tried to talk to him, but he wouldn't listen. The son said, 'Look how many years I've stayed here serving you, never giving you one moment of grief, but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money on whores shows up and you go all out with a feast!'

31-32 "His father said, 'Son, you don't understand. You're with me all the time, and everything that is mine is yours—but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. This brother of yours

was dead, and he's alive!

He was lost, and he's found!'"

-Prayer of the Day-

Welcoming One, Your warm, wide arms are always open, drawing us into your heart full of love. Make our arms your own, helping us see and welcome with compassion all those we meet. Amen



Reflect

Have you ever experienced anger so intensely that you couldn't control it?
Where did that anger come from?

Was there any part of the situation that you had control over?

What was your response to this anger?

Have you ever felt unfairly treated by friends or family?

Think about an experience where you felt left out-- how it made you feel?

Was there a conversation about this at the time? *Could there have been?*

How did the situation resolve, and was there anything that could have been done differently?

Have you ever had a family member or friend who was not "easy" to love?

Reflect on what made that relationship tough and what role you played in any of it.

Think about what emotions were behind different actions.

Make a list of feelings you have experienced in the past four months.

Circle the feelings that are the hardest or most uncomfortable feelings to handle.

Take time to write what about each of these feelings is difficult to manage.



Create

Create a centerpiece
for your family's dinner table
or a piece of decor for
your bedroom end table.

As you use supplies from home or outside, consider what appears welcoming to you!

What things could you add to the centerpiece that reflect the different members of your family or anyone else who might join you at your table? What things might add even more “welcome” to the table?

As you add pieces influenced by a specific person, think about why you are thankful for that person and thank God for them.



Call
Who is someone you haven't
reached out to in a while?
them or send them a text to let them
know you are thinking about them!

Think of someone in your life who is
especially supportive to you and write
them an email to thank them for the
impact they have had on your life. It
will make their day!



Still Yourself



Yoga began as a spiritual practice in ancient India, centering on bringing the mind, body, and spirit into oneness with the Divine. This meaningful practice has grown globally, with people of all faiths and belief systems finding nourishment in different variations - a powerful reminder of how we learn from one another. When we say, "Namaste," we connect with siblings across the world.

Breathing is the heart of yoga, and breath itself is a physical way to receive and release. As we reflect on the ways compassion makes us release, accept, and welcome, we will focus on breath alongside some basic yoga poses.



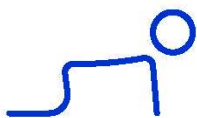
Sit on the floor, legs crossed. Take three deep, slow breaths together, with one person saying the following during inhales and exhales:

INHALE:	I see...	EXHALE:	...and welcome.
INHALE:	I see...	EXHALE:	...and welcome.
INHALE:	I see...	EXHALE:	...and welcome.



Move into child's pose (Balasana). Kneel forward, big toes together, knees making a "V," and stretch your arms forward. Let your forehead rest on the ground. Stay in this position for as long as feels comfortable for the people in your group. While in this pose, one person can say:

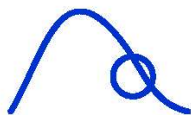
"Child's pose is a position where we connect with God's creation (earth) and God's Spirit within each of us as we bow our bodies and our hearts."



From child's pose, move into table top pose (Bharmanasana). Feel the steadiness of this pose, and how your hands and knees firmly plant into the ground. One person can say:

"The table is a place of regrounding. Feel your steadiness. There is room for everyone at God's table."

Breathe in...

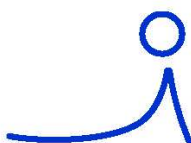


From table top pose, stretch your hips up, your legs back, and your arms straight into downward facing dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana). Hold this pose while breathing in and out a few times. One person can say:

"We let ourselves be stretched and prepared to see what's to come."

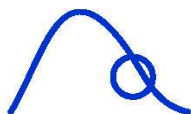


From downward facing dog, lower your hips into plank pose (Phalakasana), then lower further to the ground.



Straighten your arms and stretch your upper body, head toward the sky, into upward facing dog (Urdhva Mukha Svanasana). Hold this pose while breathing in and out a few times. One person can say:

"We face the sun and welcome what this day holds for us."



From upward facing dog, lower your upper body back to the ground, then push your hips and legs up into downward facing dog once more.



From downward facing dog, jump both feet forward (or step one foot, then the other) to meet your hands. Slowly roll your back up until you are standing straight and tall in mountain pose (Tadasana).

(If desired, flow through this same sequence two-three more times. From standing position, lower your arms to touch the ground, then kneel into table top. Move through the sequence again, focusing on breath and flow).



Reach your arms up to the sky, then draw them into prayer form, right by your heart. End with a bow of your head and hands as you share the foundational yoga greeting - "Namaste" - a call to see one another the way God sees each of us. One interpretation of the phrase is "The Light in me sees the Light in you."

...Breathe Out

Zone out and let your worries melt away.
Listen for God in the serenity around you and
give thanks for the time you have to
just BE with God for a while.

Coloring



the EXAMEN

The Daily Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and discern his direction for us. This

Blessings

Where have you felt the presence of God?
What brought you joy this day?
Where have you found peace?

Blessings & Bruises can be done daily or whenever you feel the urge. They are a great "around the campfire" conversation and way of connecting!

You can even



Songs to Listen to:

Open the Eyes of My Heart, Draw the Circle, O Come to the Alter (Will Morrison), For Everyone Born,



Bruises

Where have you felt an absence of god?
Have there been moments of unrest?