

BRIDGE GATHERINGS

IN ADVANCE:

- Assemble a small oversight group to help you vision and plan.
- Ask if the church has a Zoom subscription, and can you use it for the meetings.
- Have your IT specialist check that the church/your laptop or mobile device have updated Zoom software and whether they can support virtual backgrounds. Learn what's involved in hosting Zoom meetings; how to use a divided screen and post slides. Practice walking someone through the basics (muting, reactions, etc, speaker to gallery mode, etc.)
- Do a multi-pronged invite to families about what to expect.
- Divide gatherings by age or small groups if necessary. Keep the first fellowship gatherings simple, perhaps with you and another staff person/pastor
- Invite congregants to join you and see who steps up. Build a group of people who receive some training in the use of the online platform and can eventually share the host/co-host role

If your upcoming co-host is a craft/plant/visual artist/musician: Make sure they know they will have 5-10 minutes. They probably have extra supplies or know where to get them. Supply them with manila envelopes and postage stamps. Have them assemble and mail packets to each family. On the outside, write "DO NOT OPEN UNTIL (date of the activity)" to build curiosity. *Make sure they give you/the host some advance instruction in case their connection gets interrupted.*

Take your place at your computer 2-5 minutes in advance of start time.

- WELCOME, introduce your co-host, announcements-reminders about online protocol. Offer prayer.
- CHECK-IN: Invite your co-host, and each family group, to do a check-in with a "high" and "low" for the week.
- FAVORITE SONG, or teach a simple new song, with words printed in large font
- BIBLE STORY: read with your co-host OR turn the story into a simple reader's theater, with passages in large print and invite participants to take a part. OR do a simple puppet show rendition, etc.
- OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS about the story, and what it suggests about our highs and lows. Perhaps you could include some Godly Play or Young Children and Worship "I wonder" statements.
- OPTIONAL CRAFT/DRAWING ACTIVITY led by your co-host
- PREVIEW the next gathering. Alert families to watch for a follow-up email.
- RESPONSIVE PRAYER written in advance: Invite written or spoken prayer requests. Then say something like, *Please pray with me by praying after me.* Speak a few words at a time, reference peoples highs and lows, and invite participants to repeat what you say. Close with something like: *Thank you ... for loving us ... help us ... to love you back. Amen.*
- BLESS ONE ANOTHER by making the sign of the cross on one another's forehead
- If applicable, OPEN CONVERSATION until families step away.

Provide a follow-up email where you solicit feedback. Make periodic adjustments in response.

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF INSPIRATION FOR BRIDGE GATHERINGS:

- A favorite Bible story book. Consider *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, (Caldwell, Elizabeth and Wehrheim, Carol A., 2018, Louisville, WJK) There are some great open-ended questions at the end of each story.
- A favorite former VBS program or special seasonal lesson materials you already have
- Proven FREE faith formation programs like:
 - **PC(USA) materials-** <https://pres-outlook.org/2020/03/family-worship-for-march-22-2020/>
 - **APCE recommendations** https://apcenet.org/2020/03/23/resources-for-home-prayer-and-worship/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=resources-for-home-prayer-and-worship&fbclid=IwAR1ibxYe12QWr4tSFk_iMQLgO0jyfCrhbcTYWIA6ef1yLu7yEAK3yTw8b5c
 - **Our Daily Bread** <https://odb.org/coronavirus/>
 - **The Bible Project Website:** <https://bibleproject.com>
 - **Kitchen Table Project** <https://kitchentable.org.uk>
 - **Pandemic Hope** (FaithInkubators)
https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/cb/cb0cd516-be94-40af-99bd-f2f2860b752e/documents/Pandemic_Hope_Devotional.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3yNWJO4FRyljQKQ98xZ5ROpgh
 - **Faith Finders YouTube Channel-** https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXIPslx_Ov1u8Z-QOOCQDrw?fbclid=IwAR3x49WYbNuwoEBJCD3fQyQBMkain82ECDrdgkh6ZbBSpEDO3ly3WAMBLAU&app=desktop *You could play these 4-minute videos or use them as a model*
 - **Home Grown Faith-** http://homegrownfaith.net/coronavirus-resources-for-home-congregation/?fbclid=IwAR3afKKxmngf7Uhe99_AK_hpsb2y6U3b4RRXdGlrKjSE7sCIWWdlOM5Dew
 - **35 Tech Free Children's Ministry ideas from Christian Reformed Church-**
<https://network.crcna.org/childrens-ministry/35-tech-free-faith-forming-fun-activities-families-do-home?fbclid=IwAR1RHZazKdG7izm5u6QPHD1HoDgkDol1XXePfnjbNvhDKAetJOGh-Rb-Gww>
 - **Faith@Home- Emails crafted by Forma educators** (an Episcopal group) https://us15.campaign-archive.com/?e=cb79007d75&u=87c240cff49780896ac2c3e7c&id=3fe19bea0c&fbclid=IwAR1a724VpKHg79TE1wYDhoDDRBBGr3xYx2mTYwn_Y0Ywdb7aGUbXG5GATrzw
 - **Praying In Color** <https://prayingincolor.com/praying-in-color-praying-in-black-and-white>
 - **A Godly Play Video-** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUma7baGD-4&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1b5jEVTie4ib_IoTyJR_wTQT9sdFhsRvuh_ogVI2HA7SJ16AWVXkRZgk8

The Church is always open...even when the building is closed.