

# GROWING IN FAITH



## John 21:15

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs."

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## STARTING OUT

Begin with a prayer. You can offer your own prayer or use the one below.  
God of mercy, You loved us long before we knew what it meant to love You. Open our hearts today to receive Your love. Teach us through Your Holy Spirit what it means to love You and to love each other. Use this time to remind us of who we are as Your children, and the life You have called us to. Amen.

Read the scripture verse for the day - John 21:15-17.

## PLAY THE VIDEO

## GOING DEEPER

Guilt and shame are not things that God puts on us. They are often things we put on ourselves.

Can you think of a time when you felt guilty or ashamed of something you had done?

Have you ever felt like you let God down? Why did you feel that way?

Read Isaiah 41:8-10. Based on this scripture, do we hold God up or does God hold us up? If God holds us up, can we let God down?

After the resurrection, Jesus didn't come back and tell the disciples how bad they all were. He made them breakfast and reminded them of who they are.

Do you know what your name means? Do you know what your children's names mean?

What names, or labels, are significant to you? (First name, family name, son, daughter, father, mother, friend, Christian, etc.)

How can these names or labels help us find direction for our lives?

Josh said that we won't be defined by our greatest achievements or worst failures. We will be defined by the way we love.

Think about the people who have had the greatest impact on your life. Do you remember them for their achievements and failures, or for the way they loved you?

How do you tend to measure your own life? How can we be better at measuring ourselves by our love?

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## GOING DEEPER

Jesus wasn't offering Peter forgiveness that day on the beach. He had already forgiven him. He was simply offering Peter the chance to forgive himself.

What is the purpose of forgiveness for ourselves or others?

Do you find it easier to forgive others who have hurt you or forgive yourself when you have hurt others?

Is it possible to move on from the past if we don't take time to forgive ourselves?

The modern place where this biblical story is remembered is at the Church of the Primacy of Saint Peter on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. Today you can stand at the church and look across the sea at the Golan Heights, a region torn apart by war, power struggles, and violence.

For more information about the Golan Heights refer to this article:

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Golan-Heights>.

It's an amazing paradox to stand in a place where Christ told us that loving God means serving others and look at a place that is torn apart by war in the name of God. In a world that seems to value power, possession, and wealth, even at the expense of war and violence, how can we set an example of humility and service?

What are some concrete ideas of things you can do individually or as a family to "feed my sheep"?

What are some concrete ideas of things you can do together as a group to "feed my sheep"?

"We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies." - Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Closing

Take time to lift up joys and concerns in your group before closing in prayer. You can offer your own prayer or use the one below.

God of grace, we confess that at times we have made mistakes, disobeyed you, and made the wrong decisions. Help us to trust in your love for us and find freedom and forgiveness for ourselves. Give us strength to go out into the world and use that freedom to feed your sheep. Amen.