

Encountering, Embracing, Embodying Christ...in the World

An Introductory Readers Theatre for E3Y3

VOICE 1: Welcome to the third year of Mennonite Church Alberta's focus on Encountering Embracing, and Embodying Christ. Year One we looked to encounter, embrace and embody Christ in life by looking inward, to find God's amazing love living within us, and outward, to see it all around us, while embracing God's presence and learning to live as beloved children of the amazing and omnipresent God. In year two we expanded our gaze to see God living within our church communities – both local and broader. We embraced God speaking through Scripture, Song, and each other as we explored what it means to embrace our identity as Christ's people, and embody Christ in Community. This year we want to go even further, as we look to encounter, embrace and embody Christ in the world. Let us turn to Scripture as we begin this year's journey.

Both the old and new testaments call us to encounter God in the world and the people around us.

VOICE 2: In Genesis 1:27 we read that: (CEB)

God created humanity in God's own image,
In the divine image God created them,
Male and female God created them.

VOICE 3: In Genesis 33:10 we read that, Even though Jacob had treated his brother badly and thought of him as a dangerous enemy, when he saw Esau was willing to forgive and welcome him, Jacob said, "Seeing your face is like seeing the face of God"

VOICE 4: In Exodus 18 Jethro, a foreign Midianite priest, helped Moses follow God, He said: "...may God be with you! Your role should be to represent the people before God..."

VOICE 5: Elijah was told In 1 Kings 19:11 to stand at the mountain...for the Lord was passing by.

VOICE 2: In Psalm 19 we read:

The heavens keep telling
The wonders of God,
And the skies declare
What he has done.

VOICE 3: In Matthew 25 we are reminded: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me

VOICE 4: John 14:9 – Jesus says "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father"

VOICE 5: In Revelation 7:9 we read that the people praising God were "from every race, tribe, nation and language, and they stood before the throne and before the lamb "

VOICE 1: God has made Godself known in the world, through nature and through people – both near and far, familiar and unfamiliar, friend and adversary. Let us look to encounter God in the world!

Let us embrace God's presence all around us! Over and over again we are assured that God is with us: present in us, others and creation, walking alongside us, supporting us, leading us.

VOICE 2: In Genesis 28:14 we are assured that "God is present with us to work out God's will and purpose in us and through us"

VOICE 3: In Exodus 33:14 God promises, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest"

VOICE 4: In Psalm 16:11: The psalmist praises God by praying: "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy."

VOICE 5: In Jeremiah 29:13 the prophet affirms God's presence: "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart"

VOICE 2: The prophet Isaiah is reassured in chapter 41:10,

do not fear, for I am with you,
do not be afraid, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. (NRSV)

VOICE 3: In Matthew 18:20 Jesus also assures us that "Where two or three are gathered in my name there am I among them"

In Matthew 28:20: He says "Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age"

VOICE 4: In James 4:8 we are challenged: "Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you."

VOICE 4: The writer of Hebrews 13:5: reminds us again that "...God has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you"

VOICE 1 So let us embrace God's presence in and around us, wherever we go, whatever we do. God is with us. We are never alone.

This assurance, ingrained now into our very being, gives us the strength and hope to go forth and embody our Loving God through our words and actions:

VOICE 2: As the psalmist says in Psalm 59:16 ...I will sing of your strength!

In the morning I will shout out loud
about your faithful love
because you have been my stronghold,
my shelter when I was distraught.

VOICE 3: And the writer reminds us in Proverbs 17:9: Love prospers when a fault is forgiven, but dwelling on it separates close friends.

VOICE 4: As the prophet wrote about God's call in Jeremiah 1:7: "... You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you..."

VOICE 5: As Jesus has assured us in Matthew 25:40: "Whatever you do it for one of the least of these... you do it for me"

VOICE 2: As we are challenged in Mark 16:15, we are to "Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to every creature.

VOICE 3: And as we are assured by Jesus in Luke 19:40 If [my disciples] were silent, the stones would shout

VOICE 4: And as we are encouraged by Jesus in John 13:35: This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other.

VOICE 5: And reminded by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5: 20 " We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."

VOICE 1: Let us take on the centuries old call to be Christ's representatives, Christ's body on earth: To show God's love, God's mercy, God's generosity to all around us. We are called to be light for the world and ambassadors of God. We are called to Embody Christ to the world.

So let us open ourselves to encounter, embrace and embody Christ in all our being, our speaking, and our doing, as individuals, as faith communities, as part of a world loved by God the Creator.