

STORY TELLER

LEARNING FROM THE LIFE OF PHYLLIS SMITH

WELCOME: As Christian families we are called by Jesus to love one another and promote justice. It is crucial to talk with our children about the painful events torn at the fabric of our nation. Today we are blessed to have the unique opportunity to hear from Phyllis Smith, a faith mentor in our Children's Ministry, as she reflects on the racial injustice she has experienced throughout the course of her life. Join us as we seek Christ's message to us about how we can become agents of healing and light in the darkness.

PRAY – Please gather your family together and begin in prayer with one another. Ask God to give you humility, compassion and empathy as you enter into challenging conversations.

PREPARE YOUR HEART– This brief video will help explain the challenges of systemic racism in a way that the whole family can understand. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrHIQIO_bdQ

- As you watched this video, what did you learn or were stirred by?
- Did anything resonate with you personally?
- As you think about the stories you have been seeing on the news, how does this idea of “systemic racism” impact how you process the protests going on?

STORYTELLERS WITH MISS PHYLLIS –Before you watch the video from Miss Phyllis, challenge each other to enter into this time with a listening ear and a compassionate heart.

<https://youtu.be/WIbNAE7vwIo>

DAY 1

ENGAGING WITH HER STORY

- What stuck out to you about the three stories that Miss Phyllis shared?
- What types of feelings did you have as you heard her share about the injustices she faced and continues to face?
- Have you ever had to deal with anything similar? If so, what was it like for you?

UNDERSTANDING PRIVILEGE

- We would like to assume that racism is a thing of the past, but Miss Phyllis shared that while some things have changed, others have stayed the same. What advantages do you think that you have that others may not have?
- Why is it unfair to assume that everyone has the same advantages as you?
- Why do you think it is important to identify the advantages that you have?
- What might it look like to use your voice, and your privilege to help others?

For more on privilege, take a look at this video which shows concepts of privilege through a physical race. -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K5fbQ1-zps>

DAY 2

WHAT CAN WE DO

- Miss Phyllis outlined three really important steps to make an impact in the midst of these challenging times. What were they? (Listen / Lament, Build Relationship, and Pray/Confess)
- Which of these three feels the most challenging for you and your family?

LISTEN / LAMENT

- Why is it so important to listen to the stories of others, rather than thinking about your own personal experiences?
- What does Lament mean, and how can we do that as a family?
- **Read Psalm 25:1-2 & 16-21**
- What does this passage teach you about God and his heart for people?

DAY 3

BUILDING RELATIONSHIP / EMPATHY

- Think about your closet friends... if someone did something bad to them, how would you respond?
- Now think about children that face the harsh realities of racism on a daily basis, how do you respond to them?
- What is the difference between our two responses, and how can we start to build relationship with those that don't look like us?
- **Read Luke 10:25-37**
- What can we learn about Empathy from this story?
- What parallels can we draw from this parable and the painful injustices that we see in our world today?
- Watch this clip to learn more about Empathy
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ewvngu369Jw&t=88s>
- How might empathy and compassion help you make an impact in the racial tension throughout our country?

DAY 4

PRAYER / CONFESSION

- **Read Romans 8:18-27**
- What does this verse tell us about the types of prayers that we pray today?
- Why is it so important to confess our part and pray for all those who are impacted by social injustice?
- As a family, take a few minutes to write a prayer to God for those who are impacted by injustice. Then read them aloud to one another.
- Why is it harder to "listen for God" than simply doing something, or supporting an organization?

WRAPPING UP:

- What is your family's big take-away from this weeks conversation?
- What would it look like to regularly empathize with and listen to the stories of those who are marginalized by injustice?
- If you feel your family has privilege how can you use it for God's good? What would it look like to regularly pray for justice for all?
- What would it look like to regularly ask God to lead you as a family to be a part of the solution rather than the problem?

DAY 5

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: In many ways, systemic racism is similar to the chain reaction caused by dominos. Any one isolated event does not appear all that significant, but as each domino falls, momentum is gained and the end result is a huge mess. Ultimately, the only way to stop the dominos from tumbling over is to create space between them. Similarly, when we create space to listen, we allow ourselves to experience empathy, and when we enter into this type of empathy, we are able to stop the chain reaction.

As a family, build two domino chain reactions.

- For the first one, just knock it over and watch them all tumble down.
- After knocking them over ask...
 - Which domino was the most important in knocking down the rest? (answer – they are all the same)
 - Talk about how each domino represents a small injustice, but when they are put together they make a big mess.
 - What might be some examples of seemingly small moments of injustice that actually make a huge impact?
- In the second one, have each child remove a couple dominos in strategic spots.
- Then push it over again.
 - Why didn't all the dominos fall over?
 - How can you create a break in the chain by listening to the stories of your friends, and neighbors?