



What Matters Most?

A Youth Journey through Doctrine and Covenants 163:11b

Trip Planning

At the end of a trip some families like to record their memories by assembling a photo album. These photos not only represent the trip, but they also point out what mattered most to the photographer. The pictures may include scenery or candid family moments. When reviewing the photos, it is interesting to discover that what one family member viewed as important another family member didn't even notice. These photos are like our individual lives. What each views as important or what matters most to them may differ. This lesson looks at the activity of discernment as a way to explore "what matters most." Using Doctrine and Covenants 163:11b and Micah 6:8, we will

1. explore the meaning of the word "discern";
2. explore discernment practices;
3. find issues that need to be discerned to discover what matters most in our lives and in the life of the church for the journey ahead.

Packing List

- Bible
- Doctrine and Covenants
- CD player or other media player
- paper
- pencils
- clocks: one old, one new
- hammer
- safety glasses

Navigational Aids

"There are many issues that could easily consume the time and energy of the church. However, the challenge before a prophetic people is to discern and pursue what matters most for the journey ahead."

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:11b

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

—Micah 6:8 NRSV

Unpacking the Scripture

Ask the youth to read Doctrine and Covenants 163:11b, which says: "There are many issues that could easily consume the time and energy of the church." This message in no way lessens the issues that individuals in the church may be passionate about. Instead, it is a directive to use discernment activities to be able to listen to God and discover what matters most for our journey.

Talking and Listening to God

Merriam-Webster Online dictionary has several definitions for the word "discernment." One is "the quality of being able to grasp and understand what is obscure" while another definition is "a power to see what is not evident to the average mind." The act of discernment is the engaging of practices to be able to talk and listen to God. Prayer for some is defined as talking to God, while meditation is the act of listening to God.

Use this *Dwelling in the Word* activity to practice discernment by reading the entirety of Doctrine and Covenants 163. Then do the following:

After reading the passage, sit together in silence. Then, in conversation, share with one another what caught your imagination or what triggered a memory. Let the passage draw you together as a group.

Were there times when it felt like God was talking to you? When? Were there times when you felt like the scripture's words were your conversation with God? What were they? Were there passages that led you to an issue that mattered most to you? What were the passages?

To close this activity, provide time to pray to God for continuing help in taking the time to listen to what God is speaking. This will assist in making a tangible expression of the activities of listening and talking to God.

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Read Micah 6:8. This passage is attributed to an Old Testament prophet. In this passage he shares that God has taught us about what is good and that we are required to do justice, love kindness, and walk with God. The previous activity centered on the tasks of talking to and listening to God. To do justice and love kindness may require a change in preconceived ideas of right and wrong as well as issues about what matters most.

To discern what matters most, it may be necessary to first determine what matters most to you. Provide paper and pencil and play meditation music. Ask the youth to respond on paper to the following:

Are there concerns or issues that matter to you? What are they? These may be of an individual or communal nature.

When you think of justice and kindness, what comes to mind?

To discern what matters most, it will be necessary to engage in activities of discernment. This discernment will involve talking and listening to God. Are you prepared to do so? How will you discern the mind and will of God?

When all are finished, ask those that are willing, to share any thoughts they wrote down.

From Listening and Talking to Doing

In previous sections we have explored the meaning of discernment and engaged in a discernment activity. We have also explored what matters most to us as individuals.

The challenge before the church is for individuals to be engaged in discernment (talking and listening to God) to discover what matters most on our journey. As a class, make a commitment to continue to practice discernment. A suggestion might include setting aside an appointed time during the day to talk to God and another time to sit in silence and listen to God. These practices may be found in previous editions of the *Herald* or by using online search engines to explore tools and practices for discernment.

Repacking the Scripture God's Time

Doctrine and Covenants 163:11b focuses on the stewardship of time and energy that is often used poorly in addressing issues related to the church and the human condition. Suggest to the class that it is understood that their lives are full and there is plenty to keep them busy. The call to act justly and love kindness is a call to be attentive to how God is calling us to respond to the issues of life and what matters most. In order to talk and listen to God, we need to make sure that we don't schedule God out of our lives. Invite God to be involved in every minute of it.

If available, find an old clock that is either broken or has outlived its usefulness. Tell the class that this clock represents our old lives that are driven by what we think matters. Invite the youth to smash the clock (use safety glasses) as a representation of changing and being in better communication with God. We need to spend time with God to discern what matters most. Now put up a new clock indicating the giving of our time and lives to God.

We're Not There Yet

This class has explored ideas about discernment and the issues that matter most in building the peaceable kingdom. Use a camera to take photos of each participant. When practical, print them and post them in a prominent place in the classroom. Ask the class to share in prayer. Confirm to them that they matter to God.

Legend

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