



By: Kenn deMoll



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# WELCOME TO BASE CAMP!

Base Camp is the first stop for climbers in route to the summit of Everest to make sure they are prepared to climb. It is your first stop to help your candidate "climb" their Everest to reach the hopes and dreams you have for their faith life. This resource will help you discover your greatest resource for spiritual mountain climbing: your faith story. Why is your story so important: it reminds us the truth about who we are.

Has anyone ever told you that they are "so busy" when you ask them how their life is? We have made busyness a virtue in our culture that signals we are living life to the fullest. But, what we have forgotten is life is more than just the tasks we accomplish. You are not a human doing. You are a human being. Your identity comes from the fact that you exist, not in what you "do." When we step back from the busy-ness of life, we start to see moments, that when woven together, tell a powerful story of how God has been active in our life.

Do not be fooled: God is actively speaking to you every day. We have come to regard "religious moments" as rare and powerful experiences. While God does speak in powerful ways, He more often chooses the little moments of our ordinary life to speak to us (1 Kings 19:12-13). Jesus spent 33 years on earth. 30 of those years were spent doing completely ordinary things. The Gospel of John even describes how Jesus' life was bigger than what was captured in the Gospel (John 21:25). The point is: Jesus' life shows us God enters into the ordinary to reveal the extraordinary to us.

This resource will be a challenging experience. Most people doubt the value of their own experiences or are only aware of the "mountain top" religious moments. Do not make assumptions about your faith story. It will take you an hour to do this resource. I encourage you to do the entire exercise and to do it all in one sitting. You are free to complete these prompts however you feel called to: writing sentences, drawing, poetry, painting, etc. Be creative! You also do not have to share your work in this resource with anyone if you do not want to, so be free to be honest with the Lord. You will share a portion of your story with someone in our next session.

I want to acknowledge the work of Fr. Frank DeSiano and Fr. Kenneth Boyack in their book [Discovering My Experience of God: Awareness and Witness](#). I am indebted to their insights which were adapted and incorporated into this resource.



## OPENING PRAYER

Mountain climbers often struggle with fatigue. One source of fatigue is how they struggle to breathe. We sometimes struggle to breathe in our daily life because we are not fully aware of how the Holy Spirit is moving and active (Romans 8:26-27). As you start this exercise, I encourage you to take three deep breaths. Feel the breath moving in and out of your body and realize that as your lungs suck in oxygen, the Holy Spirit is as close to you as the oxygen that is entering your body and moving through your blood to fuel your body.

LORD, I GIVE YOU THIS TIME AS AN OFFERING.  
GIVE ME THE GRACE TO LOOK AT MY LIFE AND  
SEE HOW AND WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN ACTIVE  
IN THE BIG AND SMALL MOMENTS. I TRUST  
YOUR HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE MY THOUGHTS  
AND MY EMOTIONS.  
PLEASE HELP ME.  
AMEN.



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## HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

What is your first experience of God? This experience is probably ordinary and perhaps even forgettable. Do not undervalue it because it is ordinary. How old were you? Where were you? What people were present? How did this moment make you feel? Did this moment give you an ongoing experience of God or was this a one time event?

“All people are born as originals but many die as photocopies.” - Bl. Carlo Acutis



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## MOMENTS OF CLOSENESS

What are the moments you have physically felt or seen the presence of God? You are the ultimate judge of what you consider these moments to be. These can be moments of great joy or great sorrow. They could be moments that gave you great insight (hear God speaking to you), filled you with awe (witnessing a miracle), caused great suffering (death of a loved one), or moments of great conflict (a bitter divorce).

What happened? What were your emotions at the time of the experience? What are your emotions now about it? What people helped you in these moments (especially in small ways)?

"Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, 'I do will it. Be made clean.' And the leprosy left him immediately."

-Luke 5:13

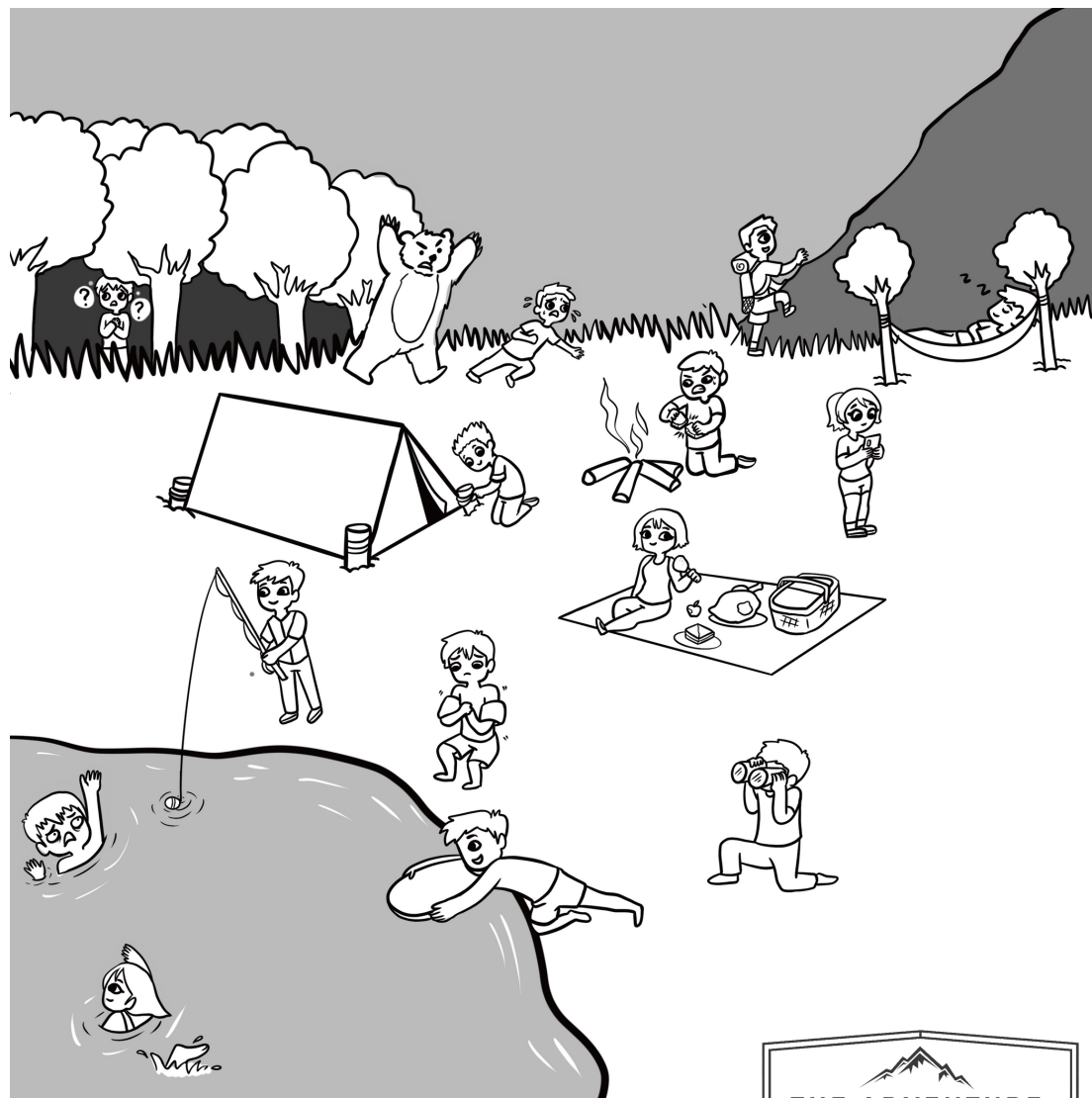


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# WHO IS GOD?

Which character in the picture do you think best represents God? Why?  
Which character in the picture best describes your current relationship with God? Why?  
Would you want to change characters? If so, who would you pick and why? If not, why?  
How do your choices make you feel?



Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see."

-Mark 10:51



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## BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Select a moment in your life that you would consider to be your greatest challenge. Name that experience. How did it affect you? What were you like before and after this moment? How did this challenge make you feel? Who helped you or supported you during this experience (especially in small ways)? How was your faith part of this experience?

"Fairy tales are more than true - not because they tell us dragons exist, but because they tell us dragons can be beaten."

-GK Chesterton



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## MOMENTS OF FAILURE & REGRET

All of us are imperfect. Write down some moments of failure or regret. How did these moments impact your life? What emotions do these moments bring up? Who helped you during these moments (especially in small ways)? Do you wish you did anything differently in these moments? How was your faith involved in these moments?

"All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God."

-Romans 3:23



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## IMPORTANT PLACES

List places that are important to you. These could be places of joy or sorrow, vacation or trials. What happened at these places to make them memorable? What kind of emotions do these places evoke? Who was with you when you were at these places?

Choose one of your places: how has God been present to you at this location?

"Peter answering said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

-Matthew 17:4



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# SENSORY FAITH EXPERIENCES

Close your eyes and consider your faith from the perspective of your senses. What images jump into your mind? What sounds? What smells? What tastes? What sensations? How do these sensory images make you feel? Who was with you when you experienced your faith in each of these sensory moments?

"Suffering is a sign you have come so close to Him that you can kiss Him."  
-St.Teresa of Calcutta



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## SACRED STORIES

What stories from the Bible or from the lives of the Saints stand out in your memory? What emotions does this story bring up? Does this story make you think about anyone in your life? Many people often find that their favorite Sacred Stories have connections to how God works in their lives. What connection is there between your story and your favorite Sacred Story?

"When we pray, we talk to God; when we read  
Scripture, God talks to us."

-St. Isidore of Seville



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## TIMELINE

Using the previous pages to create a timeline of your life. This is not meant to be a cumbersome exercise but a summary of the experiences you have been praying through. If you feel called to add or omit details, that is fine.

On top of the line, write the date and name of the event. Underneath the line, write people who were present at each moment and any emotions you felt.



"There is an appointed time for everything,  
and a time for every affair under the  
heavens."

-Ecclesiastes 3:1



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## OBSERVATIONS

Reviewing your work, do you notice any patterns or themes to your faith life? Do some people show up more or less in your faith life? Do you notice an emotion or image that appears multiple times in the moments you have analyzed?

What three moments most stand out to you about your faith? These can be big or small moments. Why do they stand out?

How did this exercise make you feel? What impressions are you taking away from this experience?

"What you are is God's gift to you.  
What you become is your gift to God."

-Hans Urs von Balthasar



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## OFFERING

We live in a fast paced-culture that often does not slow down or take time to reflect. This experience can conjure up many emotions because it causes you to reach into the depth of your soul. You may even feel spiritually like you have just climbed a mountain (out of breath and a bit of a mess). This is okay. All of these experiences have value because God has been present in them: good and bad. Each of those moments were helpful in getting you to this moment right now.

As you reflect, what is the moment that strikes you the most about your experiences of God? Write it down. Next, think about the life of Jesus. How does this moment connect to something Jesus did, felt or said while on earth? How does this connection make you feel?

**The next time you go to Mass, offer this moment as an intention during the Consecration**

**JESUS, I OFFER TO YOU THIS MOMENT OF MY LIFE.**

**THANK YOU FOR THE GIFT OF MY LIFE.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRESENCE IN MY LIFE.**

**AMEN.**