

# FORSAKEN

## GOAL

This session addresses the challenging question many people of faith ask, which is “Why does God allow bad or difficult things to happen” and helps us dive into the mystery of God’s providence as it exists in suffering, especially in light of the COVID pandemic.

## ENGAGE

### “IF IT WEREN’T FOR COVID I’D...”

Supplies: None

Set Up: Group members sit in a circle

- People think of things that they have missed out on or have not been able to do during the pandemic — there answers should be phrased as “If it weren’t for COVID I’d have...” (e.g. “If it weren’t for COVID I’d have played football this season”).
- Choose one person to go first and share their phrase and continue around the circle clockwise.
- If a person cannot think of something or repeats something that someone else has said they are out and remove themselves from the circle.
- The last person remaining wins.

## REFLECT

Begin by reading [Romans 8:28-39](#). Then play the video [“Forsaken”](#) found online via the [Connect Resources](#) website.

## RESPOND

### DISCUSSION

#### QUESTIONS

Use these questions to get a discussion started with the group. Don’t worry about trying to get through them all - if one question sparks a great discussion, go with it.

- Where have other people experienced suffering that you’ve observed (either in person or online) due to the circumstances of the past several months?
- What were some ways you were personally impacted by COVID19?
- Do you often see blessing first in your life or difficulties? How often do you stop to reflect on all the good in your life, even in the midst of challenging or unexpected times?
- What is an area of past or present suffering you want Jesus to unite with His own suffering?
- What are concrete things you can do to be more open to the creative work of God that often leads by a way we don’t know, but gives blessings we would never have expected?

## JOURNAL AND REFLECTION

Ask group members to spend some time thinking about blessings that have come from the pandemic. They should frame them in the statement, “If it weren’t for COVID19...” but then finish it with a blessing, e.g. “If it weren’t for COVID19, my family would not have gotten closer together.” Ask each group member to write down their statement.

After every person has thought of their statement, invite each member to share.

## A PSALM OF GRATITUDE

Read Psalm 34 as a group. If you have a bible, use it and pass it around so each person reads a line or goes line by line by pulling up the psalm on your phones. This is a prayer of thanksgiving, even in times of trouble. Use this as a prayer for the group and invite them to offer all of the blessings they’ve experienced during COVID back to God as they pray it.

Invite each person to read one verse at a time, taking turns until the psalm is complete.

## CLOSING PRAYER

End by praying together the following prayer attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola:

*O Christ Jesus, when all is darkness and we feel our weakness and helplessness, give us the sense of Your presence, Your love, and Your strength. Help us to have perfect trust in Your protecting love and strengthening power, so that nothing may frighten or worry us, for, living close to You, we shall see Your hand, Your purpose, Your will through all things. Amen.*