



# Revive

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Equipping Lay Leaders to  
be Spiritual Leaders

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## Acknowledgments

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# Introduction

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The difference between *knowing about* God and *being in a relationship with* God has been compared to the difference between reading a menu and eating the meal. The same can be said about our church work.

Busily working for the church does not necessarily mean we are being nourished by the life-empowering feast of faith. Being actively involved in the church does not automatically mean we are spiritually growing. Our church work is a loving response of stewardship to serve God's kingdom as a follower of Jesus. The work, however, can become so overwhelming that we miss the most precious gift the church has to offer. A relationship with God, framed by Jesus' teachings, is the most transformative gift the church can give our long-serving, dedicated servants of Christ.

But how do we find time for this gift? Buildings, budgets, social needs, changing demographics and staffing leave little space for God. Who can find space for the spiritual when there are so many urgent and immediate physical concerns? The sad truth is that we will never be the people—or the church—God is calling us to be if we rely solely on our own strength, merit, and effort. In fact, our self-sufficiency will only leave us feeling depleted, overwhelmed, and disillusioned.

Jesus did not come into the world so that we would have a church job; he came so we might know the freedom and full life that is found in a close, intimate relationship with the One who loves us beyond imagining.

## Introduction

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Jesus told us to make disciples and to be the light of the world, and that the empowerment of the Holy Spirit would help us accomplish more than we can ask for or dream of.

How do we go from doing ministry for the church to being in a relationship with this life-giving empowering God? We quite simply have to stop. Stop the frantic busyness. Stop the intellectual analysis. Stop the self-reliance. Stop the anxious worrying, and let God renew and revive our hearts and minds. Being in a relationship with God, as with every other healthy relationship we experience, takes time and attention in order for it to grow and deepen. Otherwise, as with other relationships, our connection with God can shrivel and even die if it is left to languish. *Revive* aims to provide a supportive structure and community to help that relationship reignite and come alive!

*Revive* is offered as a gift of thanks for the dedicated service of people who have worked so hard for the church yet feel they do not know God as deeply as they desire. By accepting this opportunity, participants will grow in confidence as spiritual leaders who yearn to live a Jesus-shaped life.

Archbishop Moon Hing of West Malaysia wrote in the 2016 Lambeth report *Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making*: “To follow Jesus of Nazareth ... is simply the most challenging, the most beautiful, the most costly, the most rewarding journey we could ever choose to begin.” Welcome to this journey! It is the most important and transforming gift the church has to offer.

# Course Overview

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*Revive* is a small-group discipleship program. Lay leaders join their minister in a safe setting, where they find words to describe their spiritual experiences and grow in intimacy with God as a follower of Christ. In ten months, this small-group program can help transform leaders of practical church ministry into confident spiritual leaders who desire to find new life in service and ministry.

*Revive* comprises an opening and closing retreat and three six-week modules:

- Module 1: Communicating with God
- Module 2: Engaging in Scripture
- Module 3: Called for Ministry

The program can be run over a year beginning in the fall or the new year, or the modules can serve as separate workshops. The program is most effective when there is consistent membership in the small group for a ten-month period.

## WHO IS A LAY LEADER?

A lay leader is anyone who holds a church office, oversees a ministry, or has fiduciary responsibility for finance, property, or human resources. Usually a leader holds a medium or high level of screening associated with safe church protocols. Leaders include wardens, vestry members, property and finance officers, committee chairs, church school teachers, youth ministers, pastoral visitors, and liturgical ministers.

## WHO IS THE FACILITATOR?

The facilitator of the program is a minister of the church who is leading the small-group sessions. We have purposefully used the word minister as a signal that the person can be ordained or lay. The facilitators do not have to be a spiritual saint or a master spiritual director but they must be intentional about their own spiritual growth and open to a relational connection with God. It is advantageous for a minister to have a spiritual director (or be one) as it serves as a model for commitment to spiritual growth.

## VIDEO OR LIVE PRESENTATIONS

Each session takes two hours and includes at least one presentation from a prepared video or a live talk from the facilitator. Notes are available to help guide the facilitator's talk. The videos are optional and only available to help provide the content and make the program easy to lead so that the facilitator can attend to hospitality, group dynamics, and facilitating discussions.



## PARTICIPANTS:

- Learn about themselves and discern their life's calling
  - Explore their faith journey and enter into a relationship with God
  - Enjoy a sense of community and deepened relationships with peers
  - Gain confidence with prayer, scripture, and spiritual leadership
  - Discern gifts for their calling to serve God's world
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## Course Overview

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### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Participants observe the facilitator model a spiritual practice and are then given practical, hands-on experience with the practice. They then reflect on their experience of the new practice within the supportive small group. Each week participants are encouraged to continue experimenting with the new concepts and journal about their reflections.

### FEEDBACK

We are always looking to grow and so your comments, thoughts, and reflections are invaluable. Please send your feedback to [revive@forwardmovement.org](mailto:revive@forwardmovement.org). You will be helping *Revive* be more effective for others.





### ABOUT FORWARD MOVEMENT

Forward Movement inspires disciples and empowers evangelists. Our mission is to support you in your spiritual journey, to help you grow as a follower of Jesus Christ. We live out our ministry by publishing books, daily reflections, studies for small groups, and online resources, as well as by hosting conferences for formation and mission. Other ministries of Forward Movement include RenewalWorks, which helps transform congregations by inviting them to reflect on their spiritual vitality, and ChurchNext, which offers online courses for spiritual growth for individuals and congregations. Our daily devotional, *Forward Day by Day*, is read by Christians around the world and is also available in Spanish (*Adelante Día a Día*) and Braille, online, as a podcast, and as an app for your smartphones or tablets. We donate nearly 30,000 copies each quarter to prisons, hospitals, and nursing homes. We actively seek partners across the church and look for ways to provide resources that inspire and challenge.

A ministry of the Episcopal Church for more than eighty years, Forward Movement is a nonprofit organization funded by sales of resources and gifts from generous donors.

To learn more about Forward Movement and its resources, please visit [www.ForwardMovement.org](http://www.ForwardMovement.org). We are delighted to be doing this work and invite your prayers and support.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This program was developed by the Rev. Canon Dawn Davis, an Anglican priest with more than thirty years experience in a variety of parish and diocesan leadership positions. For ten years, she was director of ministry resources in the Diocese of Toronto and was a certified human resources professional specializing in training and development. She recently earned her doctorate in ministry from Tyndale College University in spiritual formation.

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# Opening Retreat



“ I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel. ”

- Philippians 1:3-5a

# Agenda

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## Friday Evening

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SESSION A  
**INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW**

- Welcome and Hospitality
- Opening Prayer
- Presentation A: Introduction and Overview
- Small Group Discussion
- Review Small Group Commitment
- Icebreaker, Getting to Know You
- Small Group Discussion

Break

SESSION B  
**YOUR SPIRITUAL STORY**

- Presentation B: Your Spiritual Story
- Group Discussion
- Making our Spiritual Storyboard

Closing Prayer

## Saturday Morning

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SESSION B  
**YOUR SPIRITUAL STORY**  
*(continued)*

- Welcome and Opening Prayer
- Complete making the Spiritual Storyboard
- Small Group Sharing Spiritual Stories

Lunch

## Saturday Afternoon

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SESSION C  
**YOUR SPIRITUAL PREFERENCES**

- Fill out the Spiritual Preferences Form
- Presentation C: Spiritual Preferences
- Quiet Reflection time
- Learn the *Examen* Prayer Method
- Small Group Discussion
- Feedback & Evaluation

Closing Worship

# Opening Retreat

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## SESSION A

### Introduction and Overview

#### FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Become familiar with the *Revive* program
- A chance to say thank you
- Get to know your small group
- Discuss the Small Group Commitment

#### WELCOME

**Thank you!** Your dedication and commitment to the church is a gift and is deeply appreciated. *Revive* is offered as a gift to say, “Thank you for all you do!”



#### OPENING PRAYER

*Loving God, we come from many different activities to be here at this moment. Breathe peace and contentment into our hearts so that we may be present to you and to each other. We give thanks to you for gifting the many women and men who serve our church. Let this time together be a sign of your love and renewal as we commit to journey together toward you. Help us to hear you in and through one another and grow in love for you and your world. In Christ and empowered by the Spirit. Amen.*

#### OR

*O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

- The Book of Common Prayer

“  
I am bone dry,  
refresh me. I am  
care-worn, restore  
me. I am heart  
ache, revive me.  
I am outside,  
include me.”

-Stephen Cottrell  
Bishop, Church of England

## Introduction and Overview

### OBJECTIVE OF REVIVE

- Learn about yourself and discern your life’s calling
- Explore your faith journey and grow in your relationship with God
- Enjoy a sense of community and deepened relationships with peers
- Gain confidence with prayer, scripture, and spiritual leadership
- Discern gifts for your calling to serve God’s world

### LEADERSHIP

- Can be hard and time-consuming work
- Includes decisions about buildings, worship services, outreach, programs, visits, stewardship, etc.
- Leaders can have a difficult time connecting with God
- Even clergy struggle to find time to pray
- Sometimes we know *about* God and about doing a lot *for* God but we do not necessarily *know* God or how to *grow* spiritually

Congratulations for accepting the invitation to be part of *Revive!* Let your church tend to you for a while. Come and be spiritually fed. Jesus’ words are as profound now as they were then: “Come to me all of you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What makes the difference between knowing about God or working for God and having a relationship with God?

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2. Do you sometimes feel like you know about God or work for God but do not have a relationship with God? Explain:

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3. What part of your church work gives you life? What tends to be a burden?

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“Action and contemplation are very close companions; they live together in one house on equal terms. Mary and Martha are sisters.”

- Bernard of Clairvaux

# Small Group Commitment

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“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.”

- Matthew 7:12

- We will respect confidentiality and recognize that other people's stories are not ours to share outside the group.
- We will respect that each person controls what and how much he or she shares in the group. Our sharing will be genuine and honest.
- We will give permission for each person to grow into the fullness of God's calling, recognizing that no one is finished.
- We will respect the dignity and worth of each person as she or he is precious before God.
- We will listen to all contributions to seek understanding and learning. Disagreement does not give permission for impatience or bullying.
- We will give space for everyone to speak and practice a spirit of humility, recognizing that no one person has the whole answer.
- We will be sensitive to cultural differences and watch for ways to ensure all participate.
- We will be responsible for our own feelings, including being patient with myself.
- We will commit to discussing differences during the meeting.
- We will commit to being open to the work of the Spirit who can do more than we ask or imagine.

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Name (Please Print)

Signature

Date

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**SMALL GROUP COMMITMENT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Are there any commitments that cause you concern or need clarification?

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2. Do you feel you can commit to these values and behaviors?

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3. Are you willing to function within this group with these commitments to each other?

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### CLOSING PRAYER

*Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.***

- The Book of Common Prayer

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SESSION B

## Your Spiritual Story

### FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Become aware of the diversity within the group
- Create your personal spiritual story
- Share your spiritual story



### OPENING PRAYER

*O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

- The Book of Common Prayer

“Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.”

- John 20:18

## Your Spiritual Story

### YOU HAVE A SPIRITUAL STORY

- God has been at work in your life, calling you into fullness

### YOU ARE UNIQUELY CREATED

- God creates and nurtures diversity and even says that “it was good”
- We sometimes presume everyone feels and thinks the same way as us
- Upbringing, genetic makeup, life experiences, particular events, and our own choices all contribute to our unique spiritual story

### SO WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

- Creation of family, job changes, connection with friends, loss of loved ones
- God has been there all along; we just have to notice

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever thought that you have a spiritual story?

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2. Do you find it difficult to see God in the midst of your life?

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CREATING A SPIRITUAL STORYBOARD

- On a large piece of paper, draw a horizontal line across the center of the page with a pen or marker (see next page)
- Mark the line in increments of ten years until you get to your current age
- Mark on the line big life events: births, marriages, family moves, educational achievements, illnesses, deaths
- Review your life and mark above the line when there was a strong connection with God
- Mark below the line where you felt distant from God
- Decorate your spiritual storyboard with craft supplies that provide beauty and meaning to the depiction of your story
- WARNING! This is not performance art or a competition. You will not be judged on artistic merit. Simply allow the depiction to aid your insights and reflections

Reflection questions to consider when creating your Spiritual Storyboard:

- How did you feel about God during the significant events in your life?
- Were there particular times when God felt far away or close?
- How has your involvement in the church been a part of your spiritual story?
- How has your family of origin contributed to your spiritual story?
- Who taught you about the faith?
- What events changed your thoughts and feelings about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit?

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Your Spiritual Story

STRONG CONNECTION WITH GOD

FELT DISTANT FROM GOD



## Sharing your Spiritual Story

### REVIEW THE SMALL GROUP COMMITMENT

- You get to control what and how much you share
- Everyone, all the time, is unfinished
- Other people’s stories are not yours to share outside the group
- Respect each person as they are precious before God

### TELLING AND LISTENING TO A SPIRITUAL STORY

- You control the details and how much you want to share
- If something is too personal to share, be oblique
- Listening to someone else’s story is a privilege as they are trusting you with something precious
- As much as you are able, be present and respectful
- Do not try to fix, correct, or judge another person’s spiritual story
- If someone’s story upsets you, speak with your minister

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How was this experience for you?

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2. Were you able to trace God’s activity throughout your life?

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3. Did you gain any insight or sense a response from God through this process?

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4. What was it like for you to find words to express your spiritual experiences?

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5. What was it like for you to listen to other people's spiritual experiences and stories?

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6. Where do you sense you are being called to next?

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## CLOSING PRAYERS

Your Spiritual Storyboard is a sacred depiction of God working in your life. Here are prayers of blessing to honor your sacred offering.



## SPIRITUAL STORY PRAYERS

*Bless these depictions of our spiritual stories, O God. Thank you for the gift of memory and for your presence in the good and bad times. Make us aware of your steadfast love that promises to sustain us. Pour your loving Spirit upon us all. Through Christ. Amen.*

**OR**

*God, you give us the wonderful gift of memory, the ability to reflect back over the years with insight and awareness. Help us see how you have been actively working in our lives and have brought us to this moment. Bless this time of recollection and give us insight and openness. Through Christ's love and empowered by the Spirit. Amen.*

**OR**

*Creative and loving God, you fashioned each one of us while we were in our mother's womb, and you have been as close to us as our very breath ever since. Remind us that we are created in your image and help us to see you in the working of our lives: in our past, in our families, in our labors, in our creativity, and in our play. Calm our anxiety and strengthen our trust in you. In Christ and empowered by the Spirit. Amen.*

“Stories have to be told or they die, and when they die, we can't remember who we are or why we're here.”

– Sue Monk Kidd, Author, *The Secret Life of Bees*



SESSION C

# Your Spiritual Preferences

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Learn about spiritual preferences and how those preferences affect prayer styles
- Gain insight into your own personal preferences and how these may affect the spiritual life
- Learn about and experience the *Examen* prayer form

“Grant Lord, that I may know myself that I may know you.”

- Saint Augustine



## OPENING PRAYER

*Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

- The Book of Common Prayer

Complete the Spiritual Preferences Form. Share the results with the group. Here are some questions for reflection:

1. Were you any surprised by the results of the Spiritual Preferences Survey?

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2. Did you learn something new about someone in your group? About yourself?

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3. Did you experience a wide variety of responses within your group or mostly similarities?

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### Spiritual Preferences

- Everyone has a particular spiritual preference or style when relating to God. Part of the spiritual journey is to discover your spiritual preferences and how to access them through spiritual practices
- An inward journey but not one of self-indulgence but rather good stewardship
- God created us, and therefore our preferences are unique to us and as such are God’s fingerprints on the soul
- Many assume only one way to relate to God and wonder why we are not satisfied
- We impose our preferences on other people with the assumption that if a particular practice or spiritual style works for us, it should work for others
- Wonderful opportunity to learn about what works for you
- Be open and curious

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.”

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

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# Spiritual Preferences

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You can select more than one, but be particular, choosing the best answers for you.

- When and where are you most likely to experience God?
  - In nature
  - In silence and solitude
  - While reading scripture, theology, or an inspirational story
  - While meaningfully connecting with another person
  - In churches and beautiful architectural spaces
  - During worship
  - While singing or listening to music
  - While helping another person in need
  - While creating art
  - Other:
  - Meeting for coffee after the service
  - Serving on the Altar Guild
  - Offering service as a communion minister, usher, deacon, etc.
  - Other:
- Which person of the Trinity do you tend to relate to in prayer?
  - Father, Almighty Creator
  - Jesus, Friend and Brother
  - Holy Spirit, Renewing Energy and Comforter
- Which part of Sunday worship best feeds your soul?
  - Singing the hymns
  - Hearing scripture read
  - Reading the scripture to the congregation
  - Hearing the sermon
  - Praying the prayers
  - Passing the Peace
  - Participating in Holy Eucharist
- What do you believe is the best way to respond to God?
  - By finding time to be alone with God
  - By being the hands and feet of God
  - By feeling compassion for the needs of God's world
  - By learning more about God through theology and scripture study
  - Other:
- Do you get energized and renewed by:
  - By being alone?
  - By being with people?

# Examen Prayer Guide

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The *Examen* prayer practice was developed by Saint Ignatius, a Spanish soldier who lived in the 1500s. He came close to God during a time when he was recovering from a battle injury. The *Examen* is also known as praying backwards as it is a loving examining of the day that just happened. You can do this in the morning but often it is done as the last thing at night. Ignatius believed that this prayer form was significant because if you lost the chance to reflect on the day, then you lost the gift of that day.

Here is how to pray the *Examen*.

## 1. PRESENCE

Find a comfortable posture. Relax your body. Take five deep breaths. Shift your focus to God and ask God to be present to you.

## 2. THANKFULNESS

Call to mind something that you are thankful for.

## 3. REVIEW

Now begin to review the day hour by hour. Ask God to accompany you in this process. Start with how you felt when you woke up. Who did you eat breakfast with? What conversations did you have? How did those conversations go? Go through the whole of your day as if you were seeing a slide show. Be slightly detached and reflect on where God was present and where God felt absent. Ignatius calls the moments where God was present “consolation” and where God was absent “desolation.” Be careful not to ruminate — that is, get stuck going over and over something that was said or done, especially hurts and recriminations. Pay attention to feelings that come to the surface.

## 4. COMMIT

Talk to God about the feelings and then turn your attention to the next day. Commit to living with a deeper sense of God’s awareness and ask God to strengthen you for the new day.

## 5. LORD’S PRAYER

End with the Lord’s Prayer.

“Pray as you can,  
not as you can’t.”

– Dom John Chapman  
20<sup>th</sup>-century Benedictine abbot

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. How was this prayer for you? Describe the experience.

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2. Do you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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3. What have you become aware of?

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**SLEEPY?**

If you are doing these practices in the evening after a long day, you might become sleepy. This happens. We are embodied people with physical limitations and all your body is telling you is that you are tired.

About the Retreat

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What new learning or insights did you gain from this retreat?

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2. What is your big “take away” from the retreat?

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3. How did it feel to share your spiritual story?

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4. Were you aware, at any time during the retreat, of a closer connection with God?  
If so, can you describe that experience?

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5. How will you take the experiences and learnings from this retreat and incorporate it into your daily living? Who might you need to share the experience with?

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6. What are you looking forward to in the upcoming six sessions? What are you apprehensive about, if anything?

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**NOTES**

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# Module 1

## Communicating with God



“ To pray is to listen to the One who calls you ‘my beloved daughter,’ ‘my beloved son,’ ‘my beloved child.’ ”

- Henri Nouwen, 20<sup>th</sup>-century theologian



# What Is Prayer?

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Recall how you learned to pray
- Reflect on the challenges of praying
- Define prayer

“ You have made us for yourself,  
O Lord, and our heart is restless  
until it rests in you. ”

- Saint Augustine of Hippo



## OPENING PRAYER

*Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

- The Book of Common Prayer

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you define prayer?

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2. When do you most often find yourself praying?

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3. What is the focus of your prayers?

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## What Is Prayer?

**Most churchgoers are dissatisfied with their prayer life, regardless of denomination, age, gender, ordination status**

### 1. SEPARATION BETWEEN GOD AND HUMANITY

- Limited and flawed humanity
- Up against an all-powerful, all-seeing, all-knowing God
- Yet, God initiates a relationship
- Jesus said, “I do not call you servants any longer...but I have called you friends.” (John 15:15)

### 2. SEPARATION BETWEEN PARISHES AND MONASTERIES

- Monks and nuns were set apart
- Assumed prayer was for religious elite
- Vast treasure trove of practices did not enter mainstream church life

### 3. SEPARATION BETWEEN WORSHIP AND LIVED REALITY

- Assumed the ability to pray would “rub off” from the experience of attending worship
- No culture of adult training or catechesis
- People relied on prayer teaching they received as children
- Consequently prayer practices did not mature with people’s lives
- Even Jesus’ disciples needed training to pray

### 4. SEPARATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

- Spiritual matters considered personal and private
- Prayer experiences not discussed

### 5. ACTION-ORIENTED CULTURE THAT REWARDS ACCOMPLISHMENT

- Our cultural norms devalue what is not easily seen or measured

**Result: Churchgoers tend to be busy *doing* ministry instead of *being* in a relationship with God.**

**WHAT IS PRAYER?**

Prayer is communicating with God. Through prayer we develop a relationship with God.

**ENTERING AN ONGOING CONVERSATION**

Martin L. Smith, an Anglican monk, says we do not initiate but are invited to join a conversation that is already underway between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What is the difference between saying prayers to God and being in a relationship with God?

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2. If prayer is communication, what portion of the conversation should you spend speaking and what portion should you spend listening?

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3. What are some of the ways you can communicate with God?

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May you find your place in God’s ongoing conversation.



# Let Us Pray

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Learning to pray together
- Learning the key elements of prayer
- Learning the Everyday Prayer

“ But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ ”

- Genesis 3:9

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who taught you to pray?

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2. What were you taught to do and say when you prayed?

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3. What were the first prayers you learned?

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## Let Us Pray

### Many mainline churchgoers consider prayer is private

- The mainline church tends to spiritually form through liturgy and private devotions
- Lacks a norm for speaking about the personal spiritual experience
- Clericalization has fostered a professionalizing of spiritual practices with those who are academically educated and ordained
- Consequently, few lay leaders feel comfortable speaking about their spiritual experiences or leading prayer in public

**RESPECTING PRIVACY IN A SMALL GROUP**

- Imagine a Jewish prayer shawl that covers the head and acts like a little tent during prayer
- Respect the space around each person
- Close or keep eyes lowered during prayers until you hear “Amen”

“Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night.”

- George Herbert, 16<sup>th</sup>-century Anglican priest

**EVERYDAY PRAYER**

- Can be used anytime, anywhere
- Contains many of the common elements found in most traditional prayer forms
- Takes 3-5 minutes (or longer)

Anne Lamott, Christian writer, says we pray with four words: Wow! Thanks. Sorry. Help. Traditional prayer elements are ACTS: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.

**EVERYDAY PRAYER JOURNAL**

1. How was this prayer for you? Describe the experience.

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2. Did you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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3. What did you become aware of?

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# Everyday Prayer Guide

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## PRESENCE

- Settle yourself. Make sure you are comfortable and sitting with good posture. Put both feet on the floor. Let your hands rest on your legs, palms down or up, as you desire. Relax your body and do a body scan. Be aware of your body and how it is feeling. Relax your muscles, especially those around your face and shoulders.
- Drop your gaze to the floor or gently close your eyes.
- Now be mindful of your breathing. Take five deep, slow breaths.
- Shift your mental focus to God. As much as you are able, still your thoughts. Let distracting thoughts and noises simply drift away. Continue to breathe deeply and slowly as you rest in God's peace. Silence (30 seconds at least).

## THANKFULNESS

Recall one thing you are thankful for. Silence (30 seconds at least).

## ASK

Recall one thing you need help with or that you are concerned about. Ask God for that which is on your heart. Silence (30 seconds at least).

## FORGIVENESS

Recall that for which you are sorry and are holding onto in your heart. Offer it to God. Silence (30 seconds at least).

## LISTEN

Now just listen. Simply be open to God as we sit in silence for a moment. Silence (30 seconds at least).

## END

Amen.

***Pause. Now lift your eyes and slowly come back to the group.***





# Does God Answer Prayers?

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Discuss the question: Does God answer prayer?
- Learn how to use Doodle Prayer



## OPENING PRAYER

*Almighty God, to whom our needs are known before we ask, help us to ask only what accords with your will; and those good things which we dare not, or in our blindness cannot ask, grant us for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

- The Book of Common Prayer

“The real work of prayer is to become silent and listen to the voice of blessing...that demands real effort.

- Henri Nouwen,  
20<sup>th</sup>-century theologian

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Does God answer prayers?

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2. Have you experienced prayers being answered? Explain.

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3. Have you experienced times when prayers weren't answered? Explain.

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## Does God Answer Prayers?

**This is one of those big questions of our faith.**

- Some say “Yes!” while others say “No”
- Some have experienced change or received clarity or direction
- Others hear only silence and feel abandoned by God

### 1. “GOD ANSWERS ALL PRAYER BUT NOT ALWAYS THE WAY WE LIKE IT.”

- This may be true as we learn to trust beyond our own perceptions
- It is also true that adversity can spur the spiritual life to a deeper level
- But this is an inadequate response in the face of traumatic loss or devastating pain
- We are left with the question, “How could a benevolent God intentionally inflict suffering, perhaps even suffering on the innocent, simply to provoke spiritual growth?”

### 2. SANTA CLAUS GOD

- A God who answers our every prayer turns into a magic-wish dispenser or mystical vending machine
- It assumes we know as much as God and what is best for us and for the world
- “Prayer is no magic solution,” observed former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams

### 3. UNANSWERED PRAYER

- Leaves us with the gaping question: “Where are you God, and why is this happening?”

### WHAT IS PRAYER?

- Prayer is communication with God
- Prayer is a vehicle for entering into a relationship
- Prayer is about being immersed in the intimacy and love of God
- Prayer keeps us connected to God's love through the good and the bad
- Prayer aligns us to God for service in God's kingdom
- How God works in the world is a mystery. When we pray, we enter into that mystery

#### 1. ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE

- Jesus instructs us to pray and in those prayers, to ask
- And so in humility we ask, we plead, and we surrender
- Prayers where we bring our yearnings and requests to God are called petitionary prayers
- Examples of petitionary prayers are the Prayers of the People or the Intercessions

#### 2. I WILL PRAY FOR YOU...

- We say this but do we follow through?
- Sometimes this is aspirational rather than a real commitment to pray

# Doodle Prayer Guide

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You can engage in Doodle Prayer at your desk, while you wait for an appointment, or when the thought of the person pops into your mind. *Absolutely no skill is required.* This is doodling, not performance art. If you'd like, make it colorful. You can also include stickers if they are available.



**Write the petition:** Begin by writing down the name(s) or thing(s) that you want to pray for.



**Decorate:** While you are thinking about the person or situation you want to pray for, loosely draw or scribble a shape around the name. If you have color markers or pencils, decorate the shape.



**Commend to God:** Now stop the doodling and prayerfully place your hand on the name or situation drawn and commend each one to God. You do not necessarily have to ask for anything. Simply ask Jesus to envelop them in love.



**Response:** Be open to receiving a response from God.



**Journal:** You might wish to write a word beside the drawing that has come to you in this prayer time or reflect on the experience in your journal.

“Hear my prayer, O God;  
do not hide yourself  
from my petition.”

- Psalm 55:1



# Doodle Prayer Journal

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## MY DOODLE PRAYER



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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How was this prayer for you? Describe the experience.

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2. Did you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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3. What did you become aware of?

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**NOTE:** Do not be alarmed if you or some of the other participants do not respond positively toward this—or any other—prayer practice. Remember, we all have different spiritual preferences. Our preferences sometimes change or deepen later on, so it is good to be exposed to a variety of prayer practices.





# Leading Prayer

## FOCUS OF SESSION

- Learn how to lead public prayer
- Learn about the STAF formula for leading public prayer

## Leading Prayer

**Leading public prayer is an important spiritual leadership activity.**

- Many people, however, feel anxiety and fear and will not do it
- But offering a prayer can bring people into a closer awareness of God
- Public prayer is another form of petitionary prayer

“Ever traveling as we travel, moving as we move, prayer grips like home, until the heart belongs nowhere else and the body can scarcely function apart from them both. Prayer is dangerous and the entrance way to wholeness.”

- Phyllis Tickle, American author

Here is an easy-to-remember formula for saying public prayers:

**S**alutation

**T**hanksgiving

**A**sk

**F**inish

**STAF.** If mnemonics help, consider “Prayer is the STAF of life.”

**SALUTATION:** Similar to a letter or an email, public prayer should always begin with a greeting or salutation.

**THANKSGIVING:** Think for a minute: What are you thankful for? If you are at a church meeting, think about what you could offer as thanksgiving. Are you grateful for the wonderful and faithful people who have gathered? Or perhaps you are thankful for the people who have gone before you and who have made your church and ministry possible, for the opportunity to offer our gifts, or simply for the beautiful day that you have experienced.

Sometimes it is difficult to find something to be thankful for. Perhaps you are sitting in the hospital with someone who has received some very difficult news, and they have asked you to pray with and for them. What is there to be thankful for in this situation? If all else fails, we can always be thankful for God’s promise to be present and to meet us in prayer.

**ASK:** Step 3 is offering your “big ask” or petition. Offer, on behalf of those gathered, the desire that is on their hearts. Ask yourself: What do I wish for or am struggling with that I want to bring to prayer? Our wishes can be a window into the yearnings God places on our hearts. So, for example, if you are at a wedding, your wish might be that the couple enjoys a long and loving life together. If you are at the hospital, you might ask for healing and for strength and insight for the doctors and nurses. If you are at a meeting, perhaps you request an efficient and productive time together or ask that the meeting will not be too long!

**FINISH:** Finally, close the prayer. There is nothing worse than a prayer that goes on interminably. Public prayer is not performance art. It connects the community to a conversation with God and conveys on behalf of the community their collective desires.

So how do we finish? Most Christian prayers end with something like “Through Christ, Amen.” or “Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. **Amen.**” You can also use phrases such as “by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**” Or “in God’s holy presence.” Or simply “Amen.” But there has to be a signal that tells the community the prayer is over.



**RECAP**

**STEP 1:** Salutation: “Dear God.”

**STEP 2:** Thanksgiving: “Thank you for being here.”

**STEP 3:** Ask: “I ask that you bless our time together.”

**STEP 4:** Finish: “Through Christ and empowered by the Spirit. **Amen.**”



**Note:** When you lead public prayer, you need to establish sacred space. Sacred space is about awareness: It can be created in a beautiful cathedral or beside a busy street. You will need to call the group or individuals together, help them shift gears to a deeper awareness of God, and then guide them through the process of prayer. This is not about your ego and need to control. This is all about offering servant leadership on behalf of those gathered.

Sacred space can be established by simply opening your hands out and clearly saying, “Let us pray...” Often in situations with Episcopalians, someone will lead by saying, “The Lord be with you.” Those present will answer, “And also with you.” Then the leader begins the prayer. Once you have people’s attention, give them a moment for quiet—a rare commodity in many of our lives—so that they can settle themselves in God’s presence. Say your prayer audibly and end with an obvious “Amen.” This helps people relax and participate more meaningfully in the prayer as they are relying on you to guide the moment.

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# STAF Formula Guide

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Salutation

Thanksgiving

Ask

Finish

**STAF...** *“Prayer is the STAF of life.”*

## LET US PRAY

Call the assembled community into prayer.

## SALUTATION

Choose a greeting or a salutation for your prayer. Some suggestions include:

- Almighty God
- Everlasting God
- Heavenly Father
- Dear God
- Loving God
- Generous God
- Holy One
- Great Creator
- Father and Mother of us all
- Merciful God
- Creator God
- O Lord, our God
- Father in heaven
- Most loving God
- Gracious God
- Lord of all
- Blessed Lord
- O God
- O God, creator of heaven and earth

## THANKSGIVING

Offer a statement of gratitude on behalf of those gathered. A default is to be thankful for God’s presence.

## ASK

Offer a suitable petition on behalf of those gathered. What is your wish or desire for this moment?

## FINISH

End the prayer with “Through Christ, Amen” or “Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen” or “by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen” or “in God’s holy presence, Amen” or simply, “Amen.”

PUBLIC PRAYER EXERCISE

SCENARIO

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SALUTATION

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THANKSGIVING

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ASK

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FINISH

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PRAYER JOURNAL

1. How did you feel about praying in public before you knew about this formula?

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2. How does it feel now that you have completed the STAF exercise?

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3. What insights did you gain from this exercise about how to pray in public?

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4. What was your experience of God through this prayer?

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**HOMEWORK**

Try the Doodle Prayer at least three times during the week and write at least one public prayer using the STAF formula. It is important to record your thoughts and reflections.

**PRAYER JOURNAL**

List the time, date, place of prayer, type of prayer (Doodle Prayer and STAF) and the spiritual experience.

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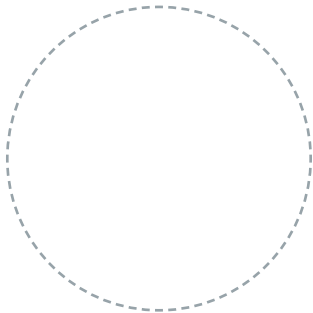
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# Setting Up a Prayer Space

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Provide tips on how to set up a prayer space
- Learn about *Lectio Divina* as a prayer form

“ But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. ”

– Matthew 6:6

## Setting Up a Prayer Space

**Prayer is a little like exercise: a bit of pre-arranging goes a long way to ensuring it happens.**

- Determine a time and space for prayer. If it doesn't work, try another
- Negotiate the use of space with others you live with
- Collect the prayer items you want
- Possibly use a tray to place the prayer items on so that they can be moved to different locations

## LECTIO DIVINA

***Lectio Divina* involves slow, repetitive reading of a Bible passage, allowing a deep encounter with God.**

- Created in the fifth century by Saint Benedict for the benefit of his monks
- Further developed by Guigo II, a Carthusian monk in the twelfth century
- Requires a Bible
- Can be very effective in small groups
- Takes about 10-30 minutes (or longer)

### Read the scripture passage four times:

- **READ (LECTIO):** Read slowly and deliberately, listening to the words of the text and noting if a word or phrase pops off the page or stands out for you. What does the Holy Spirit want you to notice?
- **MEDITATE (MEDITATIO):** Mentally chew over the text by purposefully savoring, analyzing, and pondering the meaning of the words of the text. What does Jesus want you to understand?
- **PRAY (ORATIO):** Pray and communicate with God for insight and clarity for how the text relates to you. What does God want you to do?
- **CONTEMPLATE (CONTEMPLATIO):** Be still, surrender and let all thoughts and feelings fade away and rest in the presence of God. How does God want you to be?

# Lectio Divina Guide

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1

## CHOOSE A PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE.

You might want to use a daily lectionary or a daily reading Bible. It is better if the passage is not too long.

2

## BE FULLY PRESENT.

Establish a comfortable position for prayer, relax your body, and take three deep breaths.

3

## FIRST SCRIPTURE READING: *Lectio*

Read the scripture passage while listening for a word or phrase that stands out. Be silent for a few moments. Write that word or phrase in your journal. Share with your group the word or phrase (without explanation).

4

## SECOND SCRIPTURE READING: *Meditatio*

Read the scripture passage again and reflect on the content. Analyze the structure of the text and the historical and literary context of the passage. You might find it's useful to augment the reading with a devotional reflection resource like Forward Movement's *Forward Day by Day* or a commentary. Take a few minutes for silent reflection. Now record your thoughts, impressions, and insights. Discuss your insights, reflections, and thoughts with the group.

5

## THIRD SCRIPTURE READING: *Oratio*

Read the scripture passage again, and this time speak and pray directly to God, asking for insight from the text. Be silent. Write a prayer to God that has been forming in your heart in response to this text. Discuss your insights, reflection, and thoughts with the group. Some may even wish to share their prayer.

6

## FOURTH SCRIPTURE READING: *Contemplatio*

Read the scripture passage a final time. This time, abandon speech and reflection and instead rest in the silent presence of God for between two and twenty minutes. If you start to get distracted, simply return to your breathing or the word or phrase from the first reading. After the silent period, record your reflections. Discuss your insights, reflections, and thoughts with the group.

LECTIO DIVINA JOURNAL

1. How was this prayer for you? Describe the experience.

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2. Did you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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3. What did you become aware of?

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE**

*Philippians 4:1, 4-9 (New Revised Standard Version)*

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

**LECTIO DIVINA PRACTICE**

**READ (LECTIO)**

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**MEDITATE (MEDITATIO)**

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**PRAY (ORATIO)**

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**CONTEMPLATE (CONTEMPLATIO)**

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SETTING UP TIME FOR PRAYER

- Where will you pray? \_\_\_\_\_
- When will you pray? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long will you pray? \_\_\_\_\_
- What do you want in your prayer space? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Will you need a Bible, journal, pen, icon, candle, etc.? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What prayer form will you use? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who do you need to coordinate with? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Where will you put your journal? \_\_\_\_\_
- What do you need to do to make your prayer space and time happen?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*May God's holy word be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path.*



# Meditation & Contemplation

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Learn the differences between meditation and contemplation
- Learn about Contemplative Prayer and Centering Prayer
- Practice leading public prayer

## Meditation and Contemplation

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEDITATION AND CONTEMPLATION?

- In the *Lectio Divina* there are two sections called *meditatio* and *contemplatio*, meditation and contemplation
- Often used interchangeably
- But for *Revive*, they are very different!

#### 1. MEDITATION IS TO CHEW OR RUMINATE UPON

- Read, mark, and inwardly digest information (a phrase taken from *The Book of Common Prayer*)
- Focus, study, reflect, pull apart, and analyze
- When we meditate, we use our reasoning capacity as we think and ponder

#### 2. CONTEMPLATION IS TO STILL THE THOUGHTS AND EMPTY THE MIND

- No achievement, no accomplishment, no judgment, no analysis, no goals
- Instead of doing prayers, contemplation is about being in prayer
- Rest in the sheer delight of Divine Love and Presence

“ Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ”

- Romans 8:26



## CONTEMPLATION

### 1. BEFORE GOD YOU HAVE NOTHING TO PROVE

- You cannot earn God’s love
- You are loved just because you were created
- You were created because you were loved
- You were loved into creation
- German philosopher Paul Tillich said, “Accept that you are accepted”
- Stop the worry about worthiness, the compulsion to judge, and the urge to achieve, and simply sit with silent love

### 2. CONTEMPLATION IS A DEEPLY CHRISTIAN PRACTICE

- Jesus went to a desolate place and spent many hours in a deep union with God (Mark 1:35, Matthew 14:23, Luke 5:16)
- Desert Fathers and Mothers, Christian hermits and ascetics of the third century
- Monastics and Christian mystics throughout the ages

### 3. DEALING WITH MENTAL DISTRACTION

- Our thoughts race to the future, making plans or ruminating about the past, recalling what was
- Do not get frustrated; distractions are to be expected
- Simply and gently push the distracting thoughts as if they were clouds floating across the sky
- Come back to your breathing

## CENTERING PRAYER

- Choose a sacred word and repeat it over and over again to express your prayer intention and to stay connected with God
- Thomas Keating, a Roman Catholic monk, developed this contemplative practice
- Repeating the sacred word helps cope with distractions
- Possible sacred words are peace, light, love, or surrender
- Simple, no need for books or accessories
- Difficult to stay mentally open and present

## DOES THIS PRAYER FORM WORK FOR YOU?

- You may feel calmer and rested but wonder if you really prayed
- There likely will not be a new Aha! insight or idea; you might just start to notice you are different
- In contemplation, healing and transformation comes through the heart

Your sacred word: \_\_\_\_\_

# Contemplative Prayer Guide

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1

**DURATION.** First, decide how long you want to contemplate. You might consider starting with five minutes and gradually move to twenty- or thirty-minute sessions. Set a timer or use a handy app so you don't have to pay attention to the clock during the duration of the session.

2

**SACRED WORD.** Choose a sacred word. This might be a word or phrase that came to you in the *Lectio Divina* exercise or another word that is significant for you.

3

**PRESENCE.** Sit comfortably with a good posture. Put both feet on the floor and let your hands rest on your lap, palms up or down as you choose. Relax your body, especially the muscles of your face and shoulders. Become aware of where you are tense or uncomfortable and begin to settle. Drop your gaze to the floor or gently close your eyes.

4

**BREATHE.** Take five deep, slow breaths. Imagine you are taking in God's love and light and breathing out anxiety and worry. Shift your mental focus and still your thoughts. Simply bask in God's peace.

5

**BE STILL.** Take a few moments and just be still. Don't do or think anything. Sometimes this is the hardest part of this form of prayer. Focus...on nothing.

6

**REPEAT YOUR SACRED WORD.** Silently begin to repeat your sacred word in time with the rhythm of your breathing.

7

**DISTRACTIONS.** After awhile, you might realize you are thinking. Slowly and gently push any thoughts aside. Let thought, feelings, and judgment float by. Come back to your sacred word or breathing and your sense of presence with God.

8

**FINISH.** Stay in this space until your timer goes off or the prayer leader says, "Amen."

## CONTEMPLATION PRAYER JOURNAL

1. How was this prayer for you? Describe the experience.

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2. Did you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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3. What did you become aware of?

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SESSION  
**4A**

# Who Is the God We Pray To?

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Reflect on the images of God and how they both facilitate and limit prayer
- Learn about *Visio Divina*

## OPENING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer an opening prayer.

“ We learn to look at all human faces with the rather disturbing knowledge that they are faces that God has already looked at, just like our own. ”

- Rowan Williams,  
former Archbishop of Canterbury

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you describe the ways you sense God when you pray?

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2. What does God look like to you?

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3. Which images of God are you comfortable with? Which images make you uneasy? Why?

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## IMAGES OF GOD

- God as father, mother, judge, comforter, shepherd, fire, woman who has lost a coin, father who has lost a son
- Images are beautiful and rich
- But limiting
- God is so much bigger than any one image
- Distorted by our experience
- Eg. Bad experience with father might influence relationship with God
- Jesus referred to God as Abba, Daddy, or Father
- How does your image of God help or limit your spiritual growth?

## IMAGES CAN BE TRANSCENDENT AND IMMANENT

### TRANSCENDENT

- Almighty God, Mighty Warrior, King, Creator, Mighty Rock, Ruler
- Awe-inspiring, respectful, set-apart

### IMMANENT

- Shepherd, Mother Hen, Friend, Birthing Mother, Breath, Nurturer
- Conveys a comforting, intimate, close relationship

## IMAGES OF GOD ARE PERSONAL

- May have strong feelings about particular images
- Is that a holy nudging or an invitation to go deeper?

“We make God after our own image: We think of God as we want to be if we were God.”

– Martin Luther  
15<sup>th</sup>-century theologian

## Who Is the God We Pray To?

### SCRIPTURE IMAGES

- **Protector**, Psalm 17:8: “Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me under the shadow of your wings”
- **King**, 1 Timothy 6:15: “He will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.”
- **Breadmaker**, Matthew 13:33: “ ‘The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.’”
- **Father**, Psalm 89:26-27 “He will say to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.’”
- **Healer**, Hosea 11:3 “Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them.”
- **Shield**, Psalm 18:31: “As for God, his ways are perfect; the words of the LORD are tried in the fire; he is a shield to all who trust in him.”
- **Lover or Bridegroom**, Song of Solomon 2:3: “As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among young men. With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
- **Mother Hen**, Luke 13:34: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”
- **Bird**, Deuteronomy 32:11-12: “As an eagle stirs up its nest, and hovers over its young; ... the LORD alone guided him”
- **Birthing Mother**, Isaiah 42:14: “For a long time I have held my peace, I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor, I will gasp and pant.”



## Visio Divina

Like *Lectio Divina* but with visual arts such as an object, piece of art, icon, sculpture, etc. rather than scripture

- Involves repeated viewing and gradual deepening in prayer

### USE OF IMAGES THROUGHOUT THE AGES

- Over the centuries prohibitions were in place because of the human tendency to worship the image
- Remember the third commandment: “You shall not make for yourself an idol...you shall not bow down to them or worship them” (Exodus 20:4-5)
- The Synod of Elvira (306 CE) passed a church law that prohibited depictions of Jesus
- Later, this prohibition was lifted, but it speaks to the power of images
- Many of our buildings include symbols and signs—along the walls, on the windows, and in the wood

### THE METHOD

- **GAZE (VISIO):** View slowly and deliberately, look for anything that stands out and note feelings. What does the Holy Spirit want you to notice?
- **MEDITATE (MEDITATIO):** Mentally chew over what you are seeing by purposefully savoring, analyzing, and pondering the image. What does Jesus want you to understand?
- **PRAY (ORATIO):** Pray and communicate with God for insight and clarity for how the object relates to you. What does God want you to do?
- **CONTEMPLATE (CONTEMPLATIO):** Be still. Surrender and let all thoughts and feelings fade away. Rest in the presence of God. How does God want you to be?

### VISIO DIVINA PRAYER

- Requires an image or object to either view or imagine
- Takes about 5-30 minutes (or longer)

# Visio Divina Prayer Guide

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1

## CHOOSE AN OBJECT OR IMAGE

You might want to use an icon, a picture from a book, or an object from nature. Hold the object or place it before you.

2

## PRESENCE

Establish a comfortable position for prayer, relax your body, and take three deep breaths.

3

## FIRST VIEWING: *Visio*

View the image and notice what aspect stands out for you and attracts your attention. Stay with that one thing and focus on it. Close your eyes and be silent for a minute. Record the thing that stood out for you in your journal or Participant Guide. Share this insight with your group.

4

## SECOND VIEWING: *Meditatio*

View the image again and reflect on it deeply. Analyze the structure, the color and contrast, the texture, its composition, its beauty, etc. Note your feelings and reflect on how the image makes you feel. What desires and meaning are being conveyed from the image? How is the Holy Spirit speaking to you through this image or object? Close your eyes and be silent for a minute. Now record your thoughts, impressions, and insights. Share with the group.

5

## THIRD VIEWING: *Oratio*

View the image again and this time speak and pray directly to God, asking for insight. Listen for God's word to you. What does God want you to do or be in response to this image? Close your eyes and be silent for a minute. Write a prayer to God that has been forming in your heart. Discuss your insights, reflections, and thoughts with the group. Some may even wish to share their prayer.

6

## FOURTH VIEWING: *Contemplatio*

View the image and this time abandon speech, thought and feeling. Instead, rest in the silent presence of God and listen for between two and twenty minutes. Don't worry about distractions. Simply return to your breathing and the image or object. Record your reflections. Discuss your insights, reflections, and thoughts with the group.

**VISIO DIVINA PRACTICE**

**VIEW (VISIO)**

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**MEDITATE (MEDITATIO)**

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**PRAY (ORATIO)**

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**CONTEMPLATE (CONTEMPLATIO)**

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“ Sometimes we choose the image of God most like ourselves but when we encounter God we get the image we most need. ”

- Amy Welin, Acting dean of St. Stephen's Episcopal Cathedral in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

VISIO DIVINA JOURNAL

1. How was this prayer for you? Describe your experience.

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2. Did you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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3. What did you become aware of?

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*May you see God's glory.*

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**PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. Do some images resonate more strongly with you than others? Which ones and why?

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2. How do your go-to images of God facilitate your relationship with the Divine and foster your ability to grow spiritually?

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3. How do your go-to images of God limit your relationship with the Divine and impede your ability to grow spiritually?

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4. Reflect on the statement: “Sometimes we choose the image of God most like ourselves but when we encounter God we get the image we most need.”

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5. What image of God are you interested in finding out more?

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# Praying with Music

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

Learn about music as a form of prayer

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite type of music? To listen to? To sing? To hear in church?

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2. What is your favorite hymn or sacred song? Why?

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## Praying with Music

### Music can be a powerful form of prayer

- Speaks directly to the soul
- Saint Augustine said: “To sing well is to pray twice”
- But for music to be prayerful, it should be appealing
- Beauty is definitely in the ear of the listener

### MUSIC PRAYER

- Select a suitable piece of music
- Choose from countless apps, radio stations, music libraries, CDs, and websites
- Do not be limited to sacred music, but knowing that the composition came from a place of faith can have a significant impact

“ Be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts. ”

- Ephesians 5:18b-19



# Praying with Music Guide

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1

## PRESENCE.

Establish a comfortable position for prayer. Do a body scan and be aware of places where you are tense. Relax your body, especially around your shoulders and face. Now take three to five deep breaths. Be conscious of placing yourself into a deeper awareness of God's presence.

2

## THANKFULNESS.

Recall something or someone you are thankful for.

3

## MUSIC.

Start the music and listen. Stop thinking and simply receive. Allow the music to speak for you and to you. Notice the words, if there are any, and the musical movement and structure of the piece and how it speaks to you. Notice the feelings and insights that come to the surface for you. Give thanks for the gift of music.

4

## END.

Stop the music. Say, "Amen."

“ I play the notes as they are written,  
but it is God who makes the music ”

– Johann Sebastian Bach, 17<sup>th</sup>-century composer

MUSIC PRAYER JOURNAL

1. How was this prayer for you? Describe the experience.

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2. Did you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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3. What did you become aware of?

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*May you find God's holy presence in the song of angels.*



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**Reminder:** Bring ear buds to the next session.



RESOURCES

- *Chants for Prayer*: the wonderful contemplative music of Keith Duke, Geoffrey Nobes, Margaret Rizza & Kevin Mayhew (KM Records, 2014)
- *Dánta Dé*: classic sacred music of Ireland by Michael James, Steve Warner and Craig Watz (Ave Marie Press, 1996)
- *Ukusindiswa* by Ladysmith Black Mambazo (Gallo Record Company, 2006)

“ I am strongly persuaded that after theology there is no art that can be placed on a level with music.... The devil...flees before the sound of music almost as much as before the Word of God. ”

- Martin Luther, 15<sup>th</sup>-century theologian

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# Praying through the Hurt

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Learn about forgiveness, confession, absolution, repentance, and reconciliation

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever tried to forgive someone? Was that easy or hard? What made it easy? Hard?

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2. Have you ever asked for forgiveness? Was that easy or hard? What made it easy? Hard?

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“ Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. ”

- Ephesians 4:31-32

## Praying through the Hurt

### A “how-to” manual for the best life would dedicate a lot to the topic of forgiveness

- Accumulate resentment, hurt, pain and anger as you get older
- Spiritual health depends on our ability to receive and offer forgiveness
- Shame, guilt, and resentment shackle and stifle spiritual growth

### JESUS KNEW THIS AND MANDATED DAILY FORGIVENESS, BOTH GIVEN AND RECEIVED

- Lord’s Prayer
- Prodigal son
- Turn the other cheek
- Love your enemy
- This is not “forgive and forget.” Jesus is saying: “Forgive and grow.”

### CHARACTERISTICS OF FORGIVENESS

- Forgiveness is deeply personal
- Cannot give or receive forgiveness until a person is ready
- No simple step-by-step, linear timeline or program to follow
- Forgiveness is a process

### DEFINE FORGIVENESS

From the perspective of the person who has experienced an offense—being the recipient of an insensitive statement, taken advantage of, abused or violated in some way — “forgiveness is the letting go of anger, hurt, and resentment and freely offering the wrongdoer compassion, love, and a desire for their good, which they likely do not deserve.”

- As Papa says in the movie, *The Shack*: “Forgiveness is not about forgetting. It is about letting go of another person’s throat...”
- Holding on to anger and resentment, even when justified, imprisons us
- As Anne Lamott, the author of *Traveling Mercies*, says: “Not forgiving is like drinking rat poison and then waiting for the rat to die.”

From the perspective of the person who has offended, “forgiveness is openly facing and owning the implications of a personal wrong that has been committed and seeking and respecting the well-being of the person offended against.”

- Requires repentance, an acknowledgment of the offense and the harm caused
- A willingness to apologize
- Reparation that may include punishment
- A commitment to change
- Patience to allow healing and trust to be re-established
- As Nobel Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu says: “Without forgiveness, there is no future.”



**NOTE:** When the offender seeks forgiveness and the person offended against is willing to extend forgiveness, then and only then is reconciliation possible. Reconciled people are not restored back to where they were but to a new place where there is a new beginning.

## I FORGIVE YOU

You will know that forgiveness has begun when you can recall those who have hurt you and realize that they no longer have power over you. You will know you have given them forgiveness when you can wish your enemies well.



**NOTE:** Sin is a loaded word today, but it is an important one. To better understand the word sin, replace it with the phrase “the things that separate us from God” or that “draw us from the love of God” (*The Book of Common Prayer*). Sin can be both systemic, as we participate in unjust societal wrongs, and personal, with individual guilt and shame.

# Forgiveness Process Guide

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## Offering Forgiveness

1

### ADMIT HURT

Examine what happened and face the pain that has been caused.

2

### DECIDE TO FORGIVE

Make the decision to forgive or, if you are not quite there yet, decide that you at least want to forgive. This must not be a coercive choice but a free, sacrificial offering.

3

### UNDERSTAND

Go through the process of understanding. This does not mean that you accept or condone bad behavior. It simply means you go through the effort of gaining a sense of what happened from the other person's perspective and the possible motivations involved.

4

### PRAY FOR SUPPORT

Ask Jesus for strength and help. Jesus knows this journey intimately and offers to be a sojourner with you.

5

### ALLOW HEALING THROUGH WORSHIP AND SACRAMENT

Meaningfully enter the confession in the worship service or meet with your minister and ask to participate in the Reconciliation of a Penitent (also known as private confession).

6

### WISH THE OFFENDER WELL

Holding onto resentment can be as spiritually crippling as guilt and shame. Open yourself up to the power of God's healing. A good way to become open is to try to pray for the person or situation that hurt you.

**You will know that forgiveness has begun when you recall those who have hurt you and realize they no longer have power over you. You know you have given forgiveness when you can wish your enemies well.**



## Receiving Forgiveness

1

### ADMIT HURT

Identify the wrong. Identify something that you have done that is wrong, has hurt another, and feels like a burden.

2

### REFLECT

Think about the impact of that wrong on others. This can be painful so ask Jesus to guide you through this process. Be gentle with yourself. Like the father of the prodigal son, God always welcomes you home.

3

### EXPLORE REPENTANCE

Ask yourself what it would mean to “turn around” your behavior.

4

### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Bring this situation to confession, private or general, and be prepared to let go of your shame and receive grace through absolution.

5

### RESTITUTION AND RECONCILIATION

Explore what it would mean to establish restitution and reconciliation. It is important to note that although you might have gone through a process of forgiveness with God, you cannot impose this process on the person whom you have wronged. In this case, reconciliation depends on the person who has experienced the offense. It would be a further sin not to honor and respect the dignity of their timing and spiritual needs.

“Before the truth sets you free, it tends to make you miserable.”

- Richard Rohr  
21<sup>st</sup>-century American theologian



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which is harder: forgiving or asking for forgiveness?

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2. What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?

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3. How do you feel about the confession and absolution that take place during the liturgy?

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4. Reflect on the quotation from Anne Lamott: “Not forgiving is like drinking rat poison and then waiting for the rat to die.” What do you think?

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5. Are there times when forgiveness is impossible? Can you forgive someone who has died?

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**JOURNEY WITH YOUR BURDEN**

You have taken a rock and are invited to live with it over the next week. Put it in your pocket, purse, by the bed, on your desk. Keep it with you throughout the week. Let it remind you of the burden of carrying unforgiven sin. Episcopal priest Hillary Raining, author of *Joy in Confession*, suggests you put the rock on your bed during the day so you are reminded of it, and then place it on the floor at night so you will encounter it again in the morning.



*Holy God, pour your blessing upon these rocks so that they may serve as a reminder of the heavy burdens we carry. Help and guide us on this journey of forgiveness and remind us that there is nothing beyond your redeeming power and love. In Christ and empowered by your Spirit. Amen.*

**NOTES**

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGES ABOUT FORGIVENESS**

- Psalm 51
- Psalm 139
- Matthew 18:23-35
- Matthew 28:18-20
- Mark 7:20-23
- Luke 15:11-32
- Luke 17:1-4
- Luke 23:32-43
- Romans 8:26, 27
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
- Galatians 5:22-24
- Colossians 3:12-14



**RESOURCES**

- *Joy in Confession: Reclaiming Sacramental Reconciliation* by Hillary Raining (Forward Movement, 2017)
- *Forgiveness Is a Choice: A Step-by-Step Process for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope* by Robert D. Enright (American Psychological Association)
- *How to Forgive When You Can't Forget: Healing Our Personal Relationships* by Charles Klein (Berkeley, 1995)

# Online Prayer/Body Prayer

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Discuss the connection between personal prayer and worship
- Learn about online prayer resources
- Learn about the Body Prayer

## PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer a prayer.

## Going to church

- Participating in the liturgy is an essential part of the Christian life
- Three essentials
  1. Worship
  2. Private prayer
  3. A place to speak about your spiritual experiences such as a small group, a spiritual director, or a mentor

## PRAYER IS LIKE EXERCISE

- If you don't use it, you will lose it
- To sustain vibrant spiritual growth, you must be actively and consistently engaged in prayer

Your minister can help guide your spiritual journey. Clergy often feel drawn away from their “first love”—fostering an intimate relationship with the “one who first loved us.” Speaking with your minister about your spiritual life may be a very welcome conversation.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

- Romans 12:2

## Online Prayer Resources

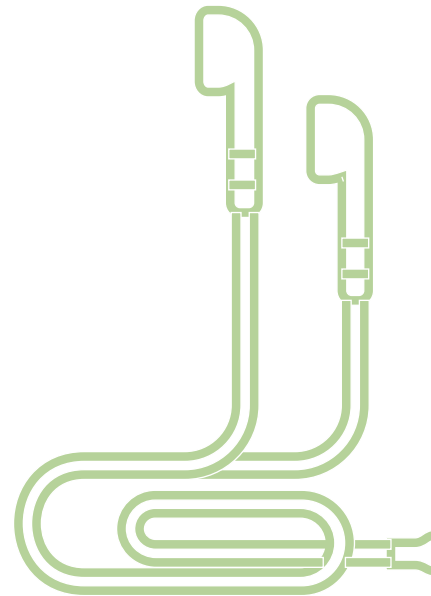
### TECHNOLOGY CAN BE BOTH A BLESSING AND A CURSE

#### BLESSING

- Your phone, laptop, or tablet can be a wonderful tool for prayer
- They are convenient for pulling together appropriate scriptural, musical, and liturgical resources

#### CURSE

- Warning! Watch the temptation to interrupt your prayer time to check email or social media
- Learn to turn off notifications. You will be better equipped to respond to family, friends, and colleagues once you have had your time alone with God
- The challenge of mastering the technology



### ONLINE PRAYER JOURNAL

1. How was this method of praying for you? Describe the experience.

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2. Did you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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3. What did you become aware of?

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## ONLINE PRAYER RESOURCES



### **FORWARD MOVEMENT ([prayer.forwardmovement.org](http://prayer.forwardmovement.org))**

A ministry of the Episcopal Church, Forward Movement offers many useful resources to inspire disciples and empower evangelists. The Forward Day by Day section provides daily meditations that help feed the soul. The meditations and scripture readings are also available in an app.

The chapel section offers daily scripture readings, prayers, and devotions and invites your (anonymous) prayer requests. Forward Movement staff gather each morning to pray together and lift up the concerns from the chapel.



### **CHURCH OF ENGLAND ([churchofengland.org/prayerandworship](http://churchofengland.org/prayerandworship))**

The Church of England is the mother church of Anglicanism and offers daily prayer services in traditional and contemporary versions. There are also daily prayer apps for morning, evening, and night prayers, Bible studies, and prayer with the psalms.



### **DEVOTIONAL 365 ([d365.org](http://d365.org))**

d365 provides daily prayer that includes scripture, reflections, quiet, prayer, and action. It is a resource targeted to youth but all ages can find it a blessing to their devotional life. Three denominations sponsor this site: the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Episcopal Church.



### **PRAY AS YOU GO ([www.pray-as-you-go.org](http://www.pray-as-you-go.org))**

Produced by Jesuit Media Initiatives, Pray as You Go offers a 10-15 minute daily prayer session that includes music, scripture, and reflective questions. This beautifully packaged and simple prayer resource is a must for those on the go.



### **PRAYERS ON THE MOVE ([prayersonthemove.com](http://prayersonthemove.com))**

This app is great for those who are just beginning to pray. It provides one, simple prayer for each day of the month drawn from a number of interfaith resources. It is pared down, easy to use and with few interactive features. It was developed by the UK-based Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.



### **SACRED SPACE ([www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie))**

This site attracts more than 5 million visitors a day and offers beautiful and simple daily prayer practices at your computer.



### **3-MINUTE RETREAT ([www.loyolapress.com/retreats/your-inner-sanctuary](http://www.loyolapress.com/retreats/your-inner-sanctuary))**

This very accessible app is another great product of the Jesuits of Loyola Press. It offers a few minutes of calm through soothing music, Scripture verse and reflective questions.



### **CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH ([www.contemplativeoutreach.org](http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org))**

This is an online network promoting Centering Prayer. It offers online groups and courses and publishes the works of Fr. Thomas Keating. The Centering Prayer app provides a framework for contemplation.

## Body Prayer

**There are many ways to use your body in prayer**

- Walking, kneeling, raising your arms in praise
- Holy Eucharist (or communion) is, in many ways, a profound body prayer

### BODY PRAYER JOURNAL

1. How was this prayer for you? Describe the experience.

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2. Did you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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3. What did you become aware of?

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# Body Prayer Guide

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This simple prayer form can be helpful in the morning when you are in a rush yet want to commend your day to God. Begin by standing up as it involves modest movement.



Stand up, put your hands in a prayer position and raise them to your forehead, saying...*I offer my thinking*



Then move your hands, still in the prayer position, to your mouth, saying...*I offer my speaking*



Then move your hands to your chest, saying...*I offer my longing*



Now open your hands and raise them to the sky, saying...  
*To serve you, O God*



Lower your arms midway, saying...*Your people*



And finally, lower arms to the ground, saying...  
*and your creation. Amen.*



## HOMEWORK

Prayerfully work on a situation where you have been offended against and/or a situation where you have offended against someone else and work through the process of forgiveness.

- Choose a situation where you have been offended against and hurt and where you need to forgive
- Choose a situation where you have offended or hurt someone else
- Try something small first
- Work through these two processes
- Choose one of your favorite prayer practices, (Everyday, *Examen*, Doodle Prayer, *Lectio Divina*, Contemplative and Centering Prayer, *Visio Divina* or Music Prayer) to help in the forgiveness process

Carry your rock with you throughout the week as a reminder of the burdens we all carry.

Also, try an online prayer app during the week. Or, if you do not have access to technology, pray the Body Prayer three times during the next week.

## CLOSING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer a prayer.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Has the experience of participating in *Revive* and learning various prayer practices changed your worship experience? If so, in what ways?

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2. What prayer practices have been most helpful to you?

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3. How will you structure your day/life to incorporate those practices?

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4. Who will check in with you, support you, and hold you accountable? Who can you talk to about your spiritual experiences and your life of faith?

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**PRAYER JOURNAL**

List the time, date, place of prayer, type of prayer, and the spiritual experience.

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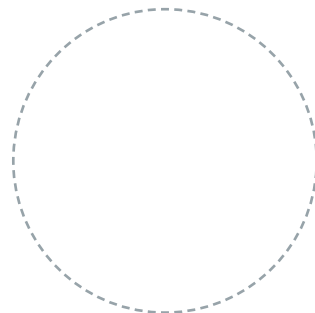
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**Reminder:** Bring ear buds to the next session.

*May you be renewed by Christ who is all and in all. Amen.*





# Labyrinth/Walking Prayer/ Prayer Beads

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Learn about Labyrinth
- Learn about Walking Prayer
- Learn about the Prayer Beads

## OPENING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer an opening prayer.

“ God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience but shouts in our pain. ”

- C.S. Lewis, 20<sup>th</sup>-century Christian writer

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How was the forgiveness process for you?

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2. Were there unexpected difficulties, joys?

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3. What insights did you gain?

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4. Did the process draw you closer to God?

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5. Could you see yourself using this process more?

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## Sensory Prayer Exercise

### LABYRINTH

- A labyrinth is a decorative walking pattern set in the ground and used as a tool for prayer
- A famous labyrinth is found in Chartres Cathedral and was constructed around 1750

### SET UP LABYRINTH

- In the best-case scenario, your church or a neighboring church has a labyrinth you can use
- Purchase one in the form of a canvas mat
- Make your own labyrinth with tape or rocks

### PRESENCE

- Begin by sitting outside the labyrinth
- Establish a comfortable position for prayer
- Do a body scan and be aware of places where you are tense
- Relax your body, especially around your shoulders and face
- Take three to five deep breaths
- Be conscious of placing yourself into a deeper awareness of God's presence

### THANKFULNESS

- Recall something or someone you are thankful for

### BEGIN THE JOURNEY

- Approach the labyrinth entrance
- Step inside and begin slowly walking the pathway
- Stop at any time along the way to pray
- Good etiquette: when you encounter another person step aside to allow them to pass.
- Arrive at the center, where you may choose to stay for a few minutes to pray

### END THE JOURNEY

- Leave the center and retrace your steps
- Stop for a moment before you exit the labyrinth for a prayer of gratitude
- Exit the labyrinth

## LABYRINTH JOURNAL

1. How was this prayer for you? Describe the experience.

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2. Did you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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3. What did you become aware of?

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### **WALKING PRAYER OR PILGRIMAGE**

- Simple prayer exercise for those who connect with God through nature
- Helps focus the mind by keeping the body active
- It is not a pleasant stroll in the park or a vigorous hike up a hill
- This is a prayer so there must be intentional focus and an awareness of God's presence



### **PREPARATION**

- Determine the trail and the duration of the walk
- Wear suitable clothing for the weather conditions

### **PRESENCE**

- Begin by paying attention to your breath and time your breathing to your footfall.
- Not about accomplishment or exercise, so slow down if this helps focus your prayerful intention

### **THANKSGIVING**

- Offer thanksgiving for the ability to walk and for all that is around you. Look up and see the sky. Look around you and see your surroundings. Look down and see your pathway and the ground beneath your feet
- Give thanks for the air, creation, the earth

### **AWARENESS**

- Become aware of your senses. What do you smell? What do you feel? What do you see? What can you touch? What do you hear? Stop and take in the experience
- The disciples were walking on the road to Emmaus when Jesus joined them. What would you say to Jesus if he joined you today on your walk? What would Jesus say to you?

### **DISTRACTIONS**

- If you begin to ruminate about the past or plan for the future, stop and focus on your breathing

### **NEIGHBORHOOD PETITIONS**

- Look around and pray for the people, homes, workplaces or nature sites. Ask God's



blessing upon them as they make their journeys through life

**END WITH A BLESSING**



*May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face;  
the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.*

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**WALKING PRAYER JOURNAL**

1. How was this prayer for you? Describe the experience.

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2. Did you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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3. What did you become aware of?

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## PRAYER BEADS

The Anglican Rosary is made up of thirty-three beads, the number of years of Jesus' life

- Designed by the Rev. Lynn Bauman in the 1980s
- Combines Roman Catholic Rosary and the Orthodox Jesus Prayer Rope
- Anglican Rosary is made up of a cross, an invitatory bead, four cruciform beads, and four groups of seven-week beads
- Allows for better concentration
- Many people pray through the cycle three times, signifying the Trinity
- Eventually memorize the prayers for the beads

At each part of the Anglican Rosary, you pray:

### THE CROSS

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. **Amen.**

Or cross yourself, saying, "In the name of God our Creator, Jesus our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit our Sanctifier"

### INVITATORY BEAD

Lord's Prayer

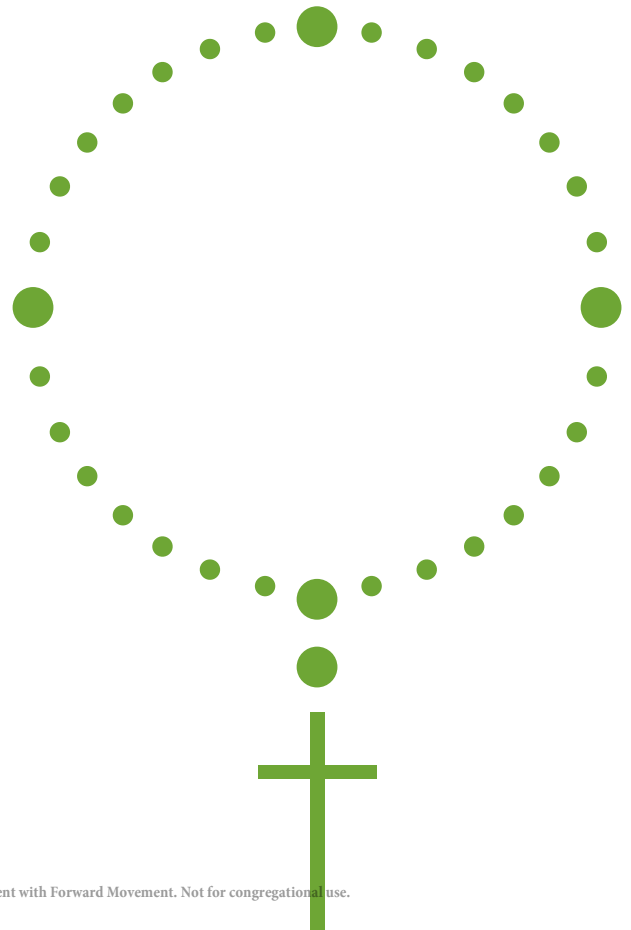
### CRUCIFORM BEAD

- Pray a specific concern at each bead
- Prayer of Saint Francis

### THE WEEKS

- "To you O Lord, my soul in silence waits."
- "Jesus, help!"

- From the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine,  
Toronto, Canada



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## ANGLICAN BEAD JOURNAL

1. How was this prayer for you? Describe the experience.

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2. Did you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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3. What did you become aware of?

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## PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer a prayer.

“ Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ... ”

- Ephesians 4:15



# Rule of Life

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Learn about a Rule of Life

## CONGRATULATIONS!

You have learned about and experienced at least ten different prayer practices:

- Everyday Prayer, *Examen*, Doodle Prayer, STAF, *Lectio Divina*, Icons, *Visio Divina*, Music, Contemplative, Confession, Body Prayer, and Sensory Prayers (the labyrinth, walking prayer, and prayer beads)

## OPENING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer an opening prayer.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which practices drew you to God? Which practices left you cold?

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2. Which practices do you expect to use after this program?

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3. What would you have liked to learn more about?

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“ It is great wisdom to know how to be silent and to look at neither the remarks, nor the deeds, nor the lives of others. ”

- Saint John of the Cross

## Rule of Life

Rule of Life is one way members of religious communities structure their spiritual practices

- around 530 CE, Saint Benedict was the first to write a Rule for his monastic community
- gave structure and fostered individual spiritual growth
- covered everything from prayer times to kitchen duty

### A RULE OF LIFE

- a document that holds all the intentions and disciplines you hope to incorporate into your life
- a game plan for how you want to be a Christian and live the Way of Jesus.
- Margaret Guenther, a writer on prayer, says that a Rule of Life
- should act like a trellis for a grapevine—it's supportive, not stifling
- a good Rule acknowledges our limitations, desires, and gifts and helps focus our life around our heart's desiring
- usually starts with devotional practices like prayer, meditation, spiritual reading, worship, and retreats
- Can also include other behaviors, practices, and disciplines that allow you to follow Christ in other parts of your life such as exercise, diet and spending, and sabbath time.
- should not be like New Year's resolutions, easily made and easily forgotten.

Here are some broad categories you might want to consider when creating your Rule of Life: Prayer Life, Family, Work Life, Environment, Mind and Body, Finances, Service to the World.

**Ask yourself:** Where do you sense God is calling you to grow further? What is the purpose of your life and calling? How can you best use the gifts God has given you?



*Important: make your intentions realistic and achievable build in accountability so that you are more likely to fulfill the Rule*

Refer to the Rule of Life template found at the back of the Guide. You can begin working on the Prayer Section. It does not have to be perfect, as it will likely change many times over the years as you grow in Christ's love.









# Module 2

## Engaging in Scripture



“The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever.”

- Isaiah 40:8



SESSION  
**7A**

# The Bible 101

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Overview of the Old and New Testament
- Navigate the Bible
- Discover popular scripture passages

“ The central fact of Christianity is not a book but a person. ”

- Michael Ramsey,  
20<sup>th</sup>-century Archbishop of Canterbury



## OPENING PRAYER

*Blessed Lord, who caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the holy spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

- The Book of Common Prayer

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Do you have a favorite Bible passage? If so, what is it and why is it your favorite?

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## The Bible 101

### Scripture reading is a strong catalyst for spiritual growth

However, most churchgoers struggle with reading the Bible. Scripture has been:

- center of church controversies
- used to defend widely divergent perspectives
- used to justify terrible atrocities

### THE BIBLE AT A GLANCE

#### The Bible

- has many literary forms, historic and cultural contexts
- is a library of at least 66 books
- was originally written on scrolls until the fourth or fifth centuries when handwritten in the form of a book
- was first printed in the 1450s, called the Gutenberg Bible
- is mostly Old Testament – the Old Testament makes up about four-fifths of the Bible
- is divided into chapters and verses, which were added in the 1550s

All English Bibles are translations from early manuscripts.

- New Revised Standard Version is a scholarly, ecumenical translation
- *The Message* is a paraphrase translated by Presbyterian minister Eugene Peterson
- *The Path* takes excerpts from the New Revised Standard Version to create the grand narrative of our biblical story
- your minister can help you choose the best translation for you

The Old Testament was written

- originally in Hebrew
- over a period of about 1,000 years by many authors

#### An Old Testament Overview

- the first five books are called the *Torah*, the Hebrew word for law. Also known as the *Pentateuch*, a Greek word meaning five scrolls.
  - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy
- the Torah establishes the covenant relationship between God and God’s people and God’s creation (Genesis 9:13).
- the psalms are found in the middle of the Bible and are the wonderful poems and hymns of the synagogue and the church that voice hurt, pain, lament, joy, desire, and praise
- right before the psalms is the book of Job, part of wisdom literature. Scholars believe Job is actually a play that asks the troubling question: “Why do the innocent suffer?”
- after the psalms are the prophets. The best-known prophet is Isaiah: “Prepare the way of the Lord,” “For unto us a child is born,” “They that wait upon the Lord.” Jesus quoted Isaiah when he said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.”
- the prophets railed against the authorities and point to the coming of the Messiah

The New Testament was written

- originally in Greek with a bit of Aramaic
- after the death and resurrection of Jesus
- between 20 and 90ce
- by more than 15 authors

New Testament overview

- the first four books are the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
- Acts provides a history of the early church and is written by the author of Luke
- the epistles—a Greek word for letters—are mostly written by Paul and a few other disciples
- Paul never met Jesus before he died but encountered him in a mystical experience on the road to Damascus
- the Bible ends with Revelation, a mystifying book of apocalyptic literature

### BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH THE BIBLE

1. The first chapter of Genesis says that God created. What did God say after each created effort?

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2. Where do you find the story of Adam and Eve?

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Noah?

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Abraham? (Hint: there are a number of places.)

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3. Look up Exodus 20. What is this passage called?

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4. There are four gospels. Three of them are called the synoptic gospels. Which ones are the synoptic gospels and why?

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5. Which gospel is believed to have been written last?

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6. Look up Matthew 5:3-12. What are these statements commonly called? Which one do you find the most challenging?

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7. Look up Matthew 7:12. What is this phrase commonly known as? Now look up Leviticus 19:18.

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8. Look up Matthew 28:16-20. What is this commonly known as?

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9. Where do we find this passage? “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Who or what is the Word?

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10. Where is: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.”

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11. What is the last word of the Bible?

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12. Optional, if time allows. There are two versions of the creation story, Genesis 1:1-2:4 and Genesis 2:5-24. Take a look at both of them. What are the differences between them? Which version do you prefer? Why do you think they were both included?

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**RESOURCES**

- *Walk in Love: Episcopal Beliefs and Practices* by Scott Gunn and Melody Wilson Schobe (Forward Movement, 2018)
- *The Word is Very Near You: A Guide to Praying with Scripture* by Martin L. Smith (Cowley, 1989)
- *Inwardly Digest: The Prayer Book as Guide to a Spiritual Life* by Derek Olsen (Forward Movement, 2016)
- *Opening the Bible* by Roger Ferlo (Cowley Publication, 1997)
- *Good Book: Discovering the Bible's Place in Our Lives* by Peter Gomes (HarperOne, 2002)
- *Bible Challenge: Read the Bible in a Year* by Marek Zabriskie (Forward Movement, 2012)
- *Heart of Christianity* by Marcus Borg (HarperOne, 2004)
- *The Path: A Journey through the Bible* (Forward Movement, 2017)

May you be blessed by God's Holy Word.

**NOTES**

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SESSION

7B

# The Word of the Lord

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- The Bible as spiritual text
- Scripture is “inspired,” which means “God-breathed”

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why is the “w” in “the Word of the Lord” capitalized? In what way is the Bible true? How is *true* different from *literal* or *factual*?

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“ So willing is he, infinite love, so willing to become involved with a person that he has written love letters to us in his word, has proposed to us and said: come, come... ”

- Søren Kierkegaard, 19<sup>th</sup>-century existentialist philosopher



## The Word of the Lord

After reading scripture, the person says, “The Word of the Lord.”

The congregation responds: “Thanks be to God.”

- What do we mean? Are these God’s words? What are we thankful for? How are these words true? How do these words shape our spiritual lives?

Richard Hooker, a priest and theologian in the 1500s, said the Bible should be interpreted in the context of the community that has experienced God’s transformative activity and has discerned together its meaning.

- no one person can claim the ultimate truth of scripture
- tradition is the discernment of the community over the age
- we bring our intellectual reasoning abilities to the text: appreciation for historical and cultural context, literary form, and an awareness of the author’s intent
- reason is a gift of the Holy Spirit
- John Wesley, one hundred and fifty years later, added experience

### TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

- Scripture
- Tradition
- Reason
- Experience



**WARNING!** Reading the Bible to spiritual grow is not an academic, rational task but an encounter with the text that allows the Holy Spirit to transform the heart toward God. The stories, poetry, history, law, and prophecies all help us draw closer to God and God’s message of love, justice, truth, faithfulness, peace, joy, and hope.

We read scripture to learn how to serve and follow Jesus so that we can be shaped and formed into the people God has created us to be. The Bible is a vehicle of communication that helps us connect with God. Once again, it is all about relationship!

THE BIBLE IS “INSPIRED” TEXT

- “God-breathed”
- God whispered into the hearts of the writer and the reader
- Søren Kierkegaard, a Christian philosopher, said that the Bible is God’s love letter to humanity

HOW DO WE READ THE BIBLE?

1. Find a scripture passage from
  - the daily lectionary
  - a daily reading Bible
  - or a daily devotional resource like *Forward Day by Day*
2. Use a good biblical commentary to determine historical context and literary form and how it fits into the grand narrative of God’s ever-redeeming love
  - online commentaries such as on [www.textweek.com](http://www.textweek.com)
  - New Interpreters Study Bible
  - some devotional resources like *Forward Day by Day* from Forward Movement.
3. Then shift focus away from the intellect and into the heart with prayerful presence
  - become aware of your breathing, body, and God’s presence
  - ask the Holy Spirit to teach and speak to you through the text

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How is the Bible “God-breathed”? Have you been “inspired” by a passage of scripture?

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THE BIBLE IS NOT PRIMARILY:

- a rule book
- a history book
- a moral guidebook



THE BIBLE IS:

- a living sacred text and a vehicle for God’s grace working in our lives

You will experience and learn to lead four Bible meditation methods:

- Inductive
- S.O.A.P.
- Ignatian Imaginative
- *Lectio Divina*

**BIBLE MEDITATION EXERCISE**

**PSALM 139:1-14A (NRSV)**

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.  
 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
 you discern my thoughts from far away.  
 You search out my path and my lying down,  
 and are acquainted with all my ways.  
 Even before a word is on my tongue,  
 O LORD, you know it completely.  
 You hem me in, behind and before,  
 and lay your hand upon me.  
 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
 it is so high that I cannot attain it.  
 Where can I go from your spirit?  
 Or where can I flee from your presence?  
 If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
 if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
 If I take the wings of the morning  
 and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
 even there your hand shall lead me,  
 and your right hand shall hold me fast.  
 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
 and the light around me become night,"  
 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night  
 is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light  
 to you.  
 For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
 you knit me together in my mother's womb.  
 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully  
 made.

*The passage is read:*

1. What word or phrase stood out for you?

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*The passage is read again:*

2. What is the literary form of this passage?

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3. Which verses are examples of parallelism (a literary device where a phrase is repeated but with different words)?

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4. What words or phrases signal movement, from being far away from the Lord to the Lord drawing near?

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Quiet your body and thoughts, breathe deeply, relax, and become aware of God’s presence.

What words, verse, or passage give you the most comfort? Which challenge you?

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What does it feel like to be known? Do you feel known by loved ones? Friends? Other parishioners? God?

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How close is God to you?

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How does it feel to be created with intent?

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Write a short prayer in response to Psalm 139:1-14a.

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**MY PRAYER ASSIGNMENT DATES**

I will lead the following:

Opening Prayer
Opening Prayer
Closing Prayer
Closing Prayer

**HOMEWORK**

Read the Gospel of Mark. It is the shortest gospel and should only take about one hour in total. You can use the questions below to help guide you through this book of the Bible.

What does the word “gospel” mean? (Mark 1:1) \_\_\_\_\_

In busy times, Jesus found time to pray. (Mark 1: 35)  True  False

Jesus spoke to a large crowd but still took the time in private to teach his disciples. (Mark 4:34)  True  False

Did Jesus have sisters? (Mark 6:3)  True  False

When Jesus brought about a miraculous healing, he often told others not to tell anyone. Why do you think he did this?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you see one or two feeding stories?  True  False

If so, what are the passages? \_\_\_\_\_

Who did Peter say Jesus was? (Mark 8:29) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In Mark 9:7, a voice was heard to say, “This is my Son, the Beloved.” When have you heard this before?

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What question does Jesus ask Bartimaeus? (Mark 10:51)

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Why did the chief priests and scribes want to kill Jesus? (Mark 11:18)

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What was your impression of Jesus through the lens of this gospel?

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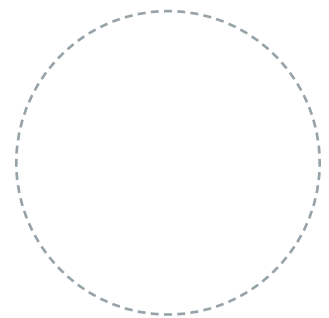
Would you describe the Gospel of Mark as slow or fast-paced? \_\_\_\_\_

Which stories or passages stood out for you or moved your soul?

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# Leading a Bible Meditation

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Learn how to lead a Bible meditation

## OPENING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer an opening prayer.

“ Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ”

– Hebrews 4:12

## Leading a Bible Meditation

The early followers of Jesus regularly met with their family and friends to pray, worship, eat together, learn, and share their spiritual experiences and stories about Jesus. Soon after his death, they recorded their stories in the form of the gospels and epistles (letters) in order to encourage, inform, and teach.

## THE GOSPEL OF MARK

- likely the first chronicle of Jesus' life
- written down thirty years after he died
- shortest gospel
- not sure who Mark was, possibly John Mark who accompanied Paul in his travels or the Mark who is mentioned in the first letter of Peter
- Mark was certainly someone close to the early followers of Jesus
- Mark was likely Jewish
- Gospel was written in Greek likely to a non-Jewish community as many of the Jewish religious references are spelled out



**Mark does not have a Christmas story**

- not much about the resurrection either
- scholars claim that the earliest texts end at chapter 16:8, with the women fleeing the tomb in fear
- the other gospels make up for Mark's omission
- is this a fabrication or simply a recognition of something important that Mark missed?

When we approach scripture from a perspective of faith, we shift the focus from a primary concern about textual scrutiny to spiritual connection and practice. In other words, we seek a deeper truth from the words than what comes from simply a literary and historical textual study. A prayerful reading of scripture asks, "How does God speak through this passage into my life?"

**BIBLE MEDITATION**

- is a short Bible study or reflection used at the beginning of meetings
- as spiritual leaders, you may be asked to lead a Bible meditation
- can help the group ground their activity and ministry in God's Holy Word

**BIBLE MEDITATION COMMITMENTS**

1. **PRAYER:** Begin with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to strengthen and guide you in this process and to give insight into the spiritual needs of the group. Close with prayer, giving thanks for new insights and a deeper sense of God's presence.
2. **NOT THE EXPERT:** Make sure you are prepared by reading the passage and checking the commentaries. Remember: You are not expected to be an expert in biblical studies.
3. **KEEP TRACK OF TIME:** Start and end on time and keep the discussion on track. A Bible meditation can be as short as ten minutes or as long as an hour.
4. **ALL VOICES:** Everyone should have a chance to speak. Finding words for the spiritual encounter is essential for growth. This is always a challenge as some are generous with their words and others hold onto them like they are protecting a precious pearl. As a facilitator, you may need to consider whether you need to lessen (or increase) your own input to make space so that everyone has a voice.
5. **SPACE TO GROW:** Where participants are now will likely not be where the Spirit will lead them in the future. Your small group should be an accepting, safe place where healthy ideas and gentle challenges reside.

- 6. **RESPECT DIVERSITY:** If we are learning about God’s love, then it is essential that God’s love be modeled through a sense of respect and care even when we are confronted with divergent viewpoints.
- 7. **BRAIN TRAP:** Sometimes people get too stuck in their heads. Gently encourage people to stop rationalizing and remind them that engaging with scripture is about relationship and connection with Jesus.

Leading Bible meditations can be a wonderful opportunity for you to go deeper into God’s Holy Word and to experience, firsthand, its transformative power.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Given this formation training, how comfortable do you feel leading a Bible meditation?

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What is the difference between Bible study and Bible meditation?

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How will you know if you have been successful in leading a Bible meditation?

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**MY BIBLE MEDITATION ASSIGNMENT DATE**

I will lead a Bible meditation
The type of Bible meditation I will lead



# Inductive Bible Meditation Method

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Learn about, experience, and reflect on the Inductive Bible Meditation method
- Become familiar with the gospel as a literary form within the Bible

## OPENING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer an opening prayer.

“ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ”

- John 1:1

## Inductive Bible Meditation Method

### THE INDUCTIVE BIBLE MEDITATION METHOD

- **OBSERVATION:** What do I see in the text?
- **INTERPRETATION:** What does it mean?
- **LISTENING:** What is God saying to me?
- **APPLICATION:** How does it apply to my life?
- **MEMORY VERSE:** What stays with me?

The first two steps are reason-based and involve a lot of open-ended, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank questions and answers. The last three steps require a shift into silence in order to be attentive to the workings of the Spirit.

The inductive method is a “roll up your sleeves and dig in” kind of Bible study. You will need:

- a Bible you are comfortable marking in (Reconsider using that splendid family Bible!) or a copy of the text
- highlighters
- some inductive questions about the text

# Inductive Method

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Mark 4:26-29

*Jesus also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”*

## BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Take a moment of silence and ask the Holy Spirit to be present in this process.

*Spirit of God, guide and inspire us with your understanding and love. Through Christ. Amen.*

## OBSERVATION

Read through the passage and simply be observant. What do you notice?

What is being conveyed?

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What is the context of this passage? Who is Jesus speaking to? What is Jesus speaking about before/after this passage?

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Now, using your highlighter, mark the word or phrases that describe the man’s activity. Use a different color highlighter to mark the words that describe the seed’s activity.

## INTERPRETATION

Who does the man represent? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the man’s responsibility? \_\_\_\_\_

What does this parable say about the kingdom of God? \_\_\_\_\_

What does this parable say about God? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think this parable is primarily about? (Circle)

TRUST      SHARING FAITH      SPIRITUAL GROWTH      FRUITFULNESS OF MINISTRY

OTHER (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Here are other passages to consider: Philippians 1:6, 1 Corinthians 3:6,7. How do these passages support or challenge the passage from Mark?

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**LISTENING**

Read the text one more time, and then be silent and listen. What is God saying to you?

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Is the message reassuring or challenging?

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**APPLICATION**

How does this passage apply to your life?

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What changes might you be asked to consider?

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**MEMORY VERSE**

“All by itself the soil produces grain.” -Mark 4:28

**END WITH PRAYER**

Commend the time and any insights to God.

*Spirit of God, we give thanks for your inspiration and your grace. Guide our way forward. In Christ. Amen.*

**HOMEWORK**

Try using the Inductive Bible Meditation method in your prayer time at least three times during the week. You might try the Inductive Bible Meditation method on these scripture passages: Genesis 2:4-7; Psalm 98; Isaiah 1:1-4; Matthew 19:13-15; or 1 Corinthians 2:1-10. It is important to record your thoughts and reflections. Prepare for the next session by reading Exodus 16:1-9.

**PRAYER JOURNAL**

List the time, date, and scripture passage

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May the word that has been planted in your soul grow and flourish, bringing forth new life.





# Leading an Inductive Bible Meditation

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Participate in an Inductive Bible Meditation method
- Become familiar with the narrative-historical form of biblical literature

## OPENING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer an opening prayer.

“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.”

- Psalm 119:103

## Inductive Bible Meditation Method

### THE INDUCTIVE METHOD INVOLVES:

- **OBSERVATION:** What do I see in the text?
- **INTERPRETATION:** What does it mean?
- **LISTENING:** What is God saying to me?
- **APPLICATION:** How does it apply to my life?
- **MEMORY VERSE:** What stays with me?

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

#### EXODUS 16:1-9

*The whole congregation of the Israelites set out from Elim; and Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.*

*The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” Then the LORD said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.*

*On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.” So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you shall*

*know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?"*

*And Moses said, "When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but" against the LORD.*

*Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, 'Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.'"*

## **INSTRUCTION**

### **Background on the Book of Exodus**

The Book of Exodus is the second of five books in the Torah (meaning "five scroll cases"). It tells the story of the Hebrew people's escape to freedom and God's leading them to the promised land. Exodus is the record of Israel's birth as a nation, and its title, "Exodus," means exit or departure in Greek. In chapters 1-15, Moses has followed the Lord's guidance and freed the Israelites from the oppressive rule of the Pharaoh. In Chapter 16, the Israelites find themselves in the wilderness—safe from the Egyptians but starving—and they wonder if it would have been better to stay as slaves in Egypt rather than to be free and die of hunger.

### **OBSERVATION**

Read Exodus 16:1-9 again. This time:

- Highlight in **BLUE**: a word or phrase that stands out to you
- Highlight in **YELLOW**: the word Israelite
- Highlight in **GREEN**: the word complaint
- Highlight in **ORANGE**: the words bread, meat, and eat

Who are the main characters?

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Where does the story take place?

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What is happening in the story?

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Write a concise summary of the events of the story.

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### INTERPRETATION

What is God's response to the people's grumbling?

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What three things do Moses and Aaron say the Lord will do to convince the people?

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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What do other scripture passages say about trusting the Lord?

(Read Psalm 138:7-8 and Jeremiah 29:11)

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Read Exodus 16:13-21. What further instructions are given to the people about how to handle manna?

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What New Testament story does this remind you of? (Matthew 6:9-13, The Lord's Prayer, John 6)

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What is the main lesson of the story?

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**LISTENING**

Read the text one more time, and then be silent and listen. What is God saying to you?

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Is the message reassuring or challenging? \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICATION**

How does the lesson apply to your life?

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When have you grumbled against the Lord?

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How does it feel to know that God provides for your life? What stands in the way of trusting in that provision?

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# S.O.A.P. Method

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Learn about the S.O.A.P. method
- Become familiar with the epistle as a literary form within the Bible

## OPENING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer an opening prayer.

“ I will tell you as best I can what I do personally when I pray. May our dear Lord grant to you and to everybody to do it better than I. Amen. ”

- Martin Luther,  
Leader in the Protestant Reformation

## S.O.A.P. Scripture Meditation Method

The S.O.A.P. method of scripture mediation method is simple, easy, and fast. All you need is a Bible, a journal, a pen, and a passage of scripture.

**S.O.A.P.** is a fun and easy-to-remember acronym that stands for:

**S**cripture

**O**bserve

**A**pply

**P**ray

**SCRIPTURE.** Find a short passage of scripture no longer than a verse or two. Write down “S,” and then copy the verse on the top of your page.

**OBSERVE.** What did you notice about the text? What is being said in this text? What is the literary form? The cultural and historical contexts? What came before and after this verse and how does it fit within the whole narrative? A commentary might be helpful at this step of the process. Write down “O,” and record your observations.

**APPLY.** How does this verse apply to your life? What are you being called to do or change in your life? This is when the verse becomes personal. If you create goal statements, make sure they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. Now write down “A,” and record your life applications.

**PRAY.** Offer a prayer in response to the verse. You may ask for strength, courage, and insight for moving forward. You can write this out or simply pray it. Write down “P,” and record your response to God.

# S.O.A.P. Bible Mediation

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Romans 14:13-20a

*Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling-block or hindrance in the way of another. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. If your brother or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. So do not let your good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval. Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual edification. Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for you to make others fall by what you eat.*

**S.O.A.P.** is a fun and easy-to-remember acronym that stands for:

**S**cripture

**O**bserve

**A**pply

**P**ray

It is an easy and effective way to engage with Scripture. All you need is a Bible, a journal, a pen, and a passage of scripture.

## INSTRUCTION

### Background on Paul's Letter to the Romans

The Book of Romans is a letter from Paul to the church in Rome. Through the letter, Paul was introducing himself as he traveled through Rome to Spain sometime between 56-57<sup>CE</sup>. The church in Rome was made up of both Jews and Gentiles, and tensions were starting to rise between the two groups as they worked out how to be in unity in Christ. The letter was intended to give guidance to the community on how to live according to the Way.

Romans 14:13-20a comes near the end of the letter and focuses on the distinction between the right for individuals to express themselves freely versus the corporate responsibility for maintaining relationships within the community. For both the Jews and the Gentiles, food and wine had significant ritualistic meaning and was part of the way they expressed their faithfulness. Jesus challenged ritual for its own sake and so opened the possibility of modifying the law.

Paul has a vision from God and realizes that all food is clean—in other words, blessed by God.

**SCRIPTURE:** Choose a verse from the passage.

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**OBSERVE:** What is being said in the scripture verse? What is the literary form? How does it fit into the larger scripture passage?

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**APPLY:** How does this apply to my life?

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**PRAY:** What is my response?

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**WARNING!** If you don't use a commentary or discuss your observations with other people you trust, you may end up relying only on your own understanding, which can be skewed by your feelings and personal circumstances at the moment. The scriptures will speak into your life, but make sure you are not misinterpreting or distorting the meaning of the text. Remember: God works through intellectual reason, experience, and the community to bring meaning.



**HOMEWORK**

Try the S.O.A.P. method at least three times during the week as a way to engage the scriptures. You might use the method on these passages: Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 6:25-33; Matthew 25:31-45; Ephesians 4:11-16; or Revelation 21:1-4. Be sure to record your thoughts and reflections. Prepare for the next session by reading John 6:1-14.

**PRAYER JOURNAL**

List the time, date, and scripture passage

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# Leading a S.O.A.P. Bible Meditation

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Participate in a S.O.A.P. Bible Meditation
- Become familiar with the epistle as a literary form within the Bible

## OPENING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer an opening prayer.

“Word with reverence and humility, without which no one can understand your truth.”

- John Calvin,  
Leader in the Protestant Reformation

## S.O.A.P. Bible Meditation Exercise

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

#### JOHN 6:1-14

*After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do.*

*Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?”*

*Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “his is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.”*

**INSTRUCTION**

The Gospel of John is the fourth gospel of the New Testament, found after the three synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Although the actual author of the Gospel of John is unknown, the text likely comes from the community that grew up around the teaching of John the Apostle. The scripture became the final version we read today around the end of the first century.

The feeding of the multitude—5,000 in John—is the only miracle story of Jesus that is found in all four gospels. In chapter 5, Jesus has just heard about the beheading of John the Baptist and withdraws to a quiet place. The crowds, however, follow him. When Jesus sees them, he has compassion on them and feeds them.

**SCRIPTURE:** Choose a verse from the passage.

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**OBSERVE:** What is being said in the scripture verse? What is the literary form? How does it fit into the larger scripture passage?

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**APPLY:** How does this apply to your life?

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**PRAY:** What is your response?

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SESSION  
10B

# Ignatian Imaginative Bible Meditation Method

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Learn about the Ignatian Imaginative Bible Meditation method
- Engage with a passage of scripture from the Gospel of Luke

## OPENING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer an opening prayer.

“ Lord, make me what you will. I put myself fully into your hands. Amen. ”

- John Wesley, Anglican priest and founder of the Methodist movement

## Ignatian Imaginative Bible Meditation Method

**The Imaginative Prayer was developed by Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556CE)**

- soldier convalescing after an injury
- read about God
- wrote the book *Spiritual Exercises*
- he chronicled how the imagination connects us with God

**Ignatius wanted people to experience Jesus, not just think about Jesus.**

**This process encourages people to:**

- use mental imagery
- place yourself inside the story and enter into the scene
- become an onlooker, one of the disciples, or a person encountering God or Jesus
- imagine the weather conditions, the feel of the ground, the smells, sounds, and sights of the surroundings, the emotions of those nearby, the impact of the words spoken, the sense of the divine presence
- go from a surface reading to a lived experience of the scripture passage

## LIMITATIONS

- best suited for scripture that is narrative like the gospels
- not helpful for engaging with the epistles
- challenging for those who find it difficult to use their imagination



# Ignatian Imaginative Bible Meditation Method

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Luke 5:27-35

*After this he went out and saw a tax-collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up, left everything, and followed him. Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax-collectors and others sitting at the table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax-collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance." Then they said to him, "John's disciples, like the disciples of the Pharisees, frequently fast and pray, but your disciples eat and drink." Jesus said to them, "You cannot make wedding-guests fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you? The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days."*

**Here are some questions to help guide the imaginative process.**

What sights did you see?

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What did you sense and smell? Were you sitting or standing? Was it warm or cold? Were you inside or out?

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What were the feelings of the people around you?

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What words were spoken?

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Were you at the table as one of the guests or disciples? Were you a member of the household or as one of the servants, or were you outside or at the door looking in?

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Did Jesus notice you? Did he say anything to you?

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# Leading an Ignatian Imaginative Bible Meditation

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Participate in an Ignatian Imaginative Bible Meditation

## OPENING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer an opening prayer.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

– Romans 12:2

## Ignatian Imaginative Bible Meditation Method

Ignatian Imaginative Bible Meditation method involves entering into the text, through the use of imagination, and assuming a character within the narrative and sensing all the physical elements of the scene.

## PREPARATION PRAYER

Take a moment of silent prayer. Be attentive to your breathing, relax your bodies, and become aware of God’s presence.

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

### JOHN 13:1-11

*Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.*

*Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"*

*Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."*

### INSTRUCTION

- Read the passage twice
- First reading
  - silently read along, noticing the activity described
  - pay attention to the sights, sounds, tastes, feelings, and words
- Second reading
  - close your eyes and assume a character within the narrative
  - imagine yourself inside the scene and looking out from the eyes of your character
  - take a few minutes of silence for your imagination to unfold

### RECORD YOUR REFLECTIONS.

What sights did you see?

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What did you sense and smell? Were you sitting or standing? Was it warm or cold? Were you inside or out?

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How did the people around you feel?

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What words were spoken?

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Were you present in the passage as a guest or disciple, a member of the household, a servant, or a bystander?

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Did Jesus notice you? Did he say anything to you?

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Write down additional reflections on John 13:1-11 and how God spoke to you through the experience. If you feel led, share your insights and reflections with your small group.

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# Lectio Divina

## Bible Meditation Method

### FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Learn about the *Lectio Divina* Bible Meditation method
- Become familiar with a psalm as a form of biblical literature

### OPENING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer an opening prayer.

“ Though we cannot think alike may we not love alike? ”

- John Wesley, Anglican priest and founder of the Methodist movement

## *Lectio Divina* Meditation Method

In Module 1, *Lectio Divina* was introduced as a prayer practice. It can also serve as a scripture meditation method.

### LECTIO DIVINA

- is Latin for divine reading
- involves slow repetitive reading of scripture up to four times
- dates to Jewish tradition and the early church
- continued to develop during the medieval monastic movement in Europe
- Guigo II, a Carthusian monk, developed the four-step method we use today
- Second Vatican Council in the 1960s renewed interest in the method

### Let's review the four steps of *Lectio Divina*:

**READING (LECTIO):** slow and deliberate reading and listening to the words of the text

**MEDITATING (MEDITATIO):** mentally chewing over the text by deliberately savoring and pondering the meaning of the words

**PRAYING (ORATIO):** praying and communicating with God for insight and clarity on what to do

**CONTEMPLATING (CONTEMPLATIO):** letting thoughts and feelings fade away and resting in the presence of God

The four steps can be summed up with these four words: *Notice. Understand. Do. Be.*

The *Lectio Divina* is a good Bible meditation method to start church gatherings, staff meetings or vestry sessions as it instantly takes you to an intuitive and Spirit-filled place, then to a rational exploration place, and finally back again to the Spirit-filled place of contemplation. This is different from the Inductive method, which is more of a roll up your sleeves and dig in method that starts with analysis and interpretation and eventually works toward a spiritual listening.

If you have less than 15 minutes for the meditation, you may wish to conflate the process and only use two readings of the scripture passage.

May your soul be satisfied by the richness of God's Word.



# Lectio Divina Bible Meditation Method

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## Psalm 63:1-8

**A Psalm of David, when he was in the Wilderness of Judah.**

*O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name. My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips when I think of you on my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.*

**Lectio Divina involves:**

**READING (LECTIO):** slow and deliberate reading and listening to the words of the text

**MEDITATING (MEDITATIO):** mentally chewing over the text by deliberately savoring and pondering the meaning of the words

**PRAYING (ORATIO):** praying and communicating with God for insight and clarity on what to do

**CONTEMPLATING (CONTEMPLATIO):** letting thoughts and feelings fade away and resting in the presence of God

### **LECTIO: FIRST SCRIPTURE READING**

Read Psalm 63:1-8 aloud and listen for a word or phrase that stands out as especially meaningful. Write it here:

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### **MEDITATIO: SECOND SCRIPTURE READING**

Read Psalm 63:1-8 aloud for the second time but this time, reflect on the content of the passage.

**INSTRUCTION**

The Book of Psalms is a collection of lyrics that have been attributed to King David, King Solomon, Moses and others. Their authorship, dating and purpose are highly debated by scholars, but they were likely composed at least 500 years and brought together in the form we have today around 400BCE.

The psalms express the depth of human experience in response to God and range from great rejoicing to profound lament. As Walter Brueggemann says, the psalms “function as voices of faith in the actual life of the believing community.”

A literary device that you will often see in the psalms is parallelism, where a phrase repeated in a similar cadence but with different words.

Psalm 63 is a psalm of trust attributed to King David while he was in the wilderness. (1 Samuel 22:5, 23:14) It speaks of a beatific vision of God’s presence in worship while the writer is in a current state of alienation. Brueggemann says: “The songs are not about the natural outcome of trouble, but about the decisive transformation made possible by this God who causes new life where none seems possible.”

**Some Meditatio Questions to consider:**

How are you feeling about the reading?

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What are your thoughts as you encounter the text?

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The writer says that God’s love is better than life. What does that mean?

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When have you felt far from God and recalled a sweeter day?

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What does “night watches” or “shadow of your wings” mean?

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**ORATIO: THIRD SCRIPTURE READING**

Read Psalm 63:1-8 for the third time. This time, speak directly to God, asking for insight, strength, support, and clarity about what to do in response to the reading.

Be silent for about three minutes, then write the prayer that has been formed in your heart with this third reading. Share your prayer with another person.

**CONTEMPLATIO: FOURTH SCRIPTURE READING**

Read Psalm 63:1-8 for the fourth time but this time, Do not focus on the words of the text but rather what God is saying through them. If you become distracted by thoughts, simply return to your breathing or the word or phrase of the first reading, so you can remain present to God.

Be silent (for about three minutes) and then briefly share your insights and reflections.



REFLECTIONS AND SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS

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May your soul be satisfied by the richness of God’s Word.



RESOURCES

- *Spirituality of the Psalms* by Walter Brueggemann (Fortress Press, 2002)
- *Lectio Divina: How to Pray Sacred Scripture* by Dan Korn, CSSR (Liguori Publications, 2011)

# Leading a *Lectio Divina* Bible Meditation

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Participate in a *Lectio Divina* Bible Meditation
- Become familiar with the prophetic writing style as a literary form in the Bible

“ One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. ”

- Matthew 4:4

## OPENING PRAYER

The facilitator asks the assigned participant to offer an opening prayer.

## *Lectio Divina* Meditation Method

### *Lectio Divina* involves

**READING (LECTIO):** slow and deliberate reading and listening to the words of the text

**MEDITATING (MEDITATIO):** mentally chewing over the text by deliberately savoring and pondering the meaning of the words

**PRAYING (ORATIO):** praying and communicating with God for insight and clarity on what to do

**CONTEMPLATING (CONTEMPLATIO):** letting thoughts and feelings fade away and resting in the presence of God

## OPENING PRAYER

Be attentive to your breathing, relax your body, and become open and focused on God's presence.

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

### ISAIAH 25:6-9

*On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away*

*the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*

**LECTIO: FIRST READING**

Read Isaiah 25:6-9 and listen for a word or phrase that stands out as especially meaningful to you. Write the word(s) here:

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Be silent (about a minute), and then briefly share your word or phrase.

**MEDITATIO: SECOND READING**

Read Isaiah 25:6-9 for the second time, but this time reflect on the content of the passage.

**INSTRUCTION**

Isaiah was a prophet from the Old Testament who spoke out against a society he thought had lost its way. At this time, the Hebrew people had split into two kingdoms: Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Israel had been taken over by the Assyrian Empire while Judah was able to maintain a fragile independence. Isaiah served the southern kingdom of Judah and spoke out against social injustices that were a result of unfaithfulness toward God, the Holy One of Israel.

The book of Isaiah likely had at least two (and possibly more) authors. The first author is believed to have written chapters 1 to 39 around 740-681<sup>BCE</sup> and the second author to have written chapter 40 to 66 sometime after 536<sup>BCE</sup>, at the time of the Babylonian captivity and downfall of Judah.

The book of Isaiah is quoted in the New Testament more than any other book of the Old Testament.

Isaiah 25:6-9 is part of a hymn of thanksgiving where Isaiah envisions a day when the Lord will ensure that the needy will be rescued, the homeless will find shelter, and all people will enjoy a feast of rich food and fine wines. In this vision, God is the one who has provided the celebration and is acting as host for all people and all nations. We yearn and crave for that vision of peace and contentment today.

**REFLECT ON THESE *MEDITATIO* QUESTIONS**

How do you feel about the reading?

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What are your thoughts as you encounter the text?

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Have you ever had the feeling of a shroud or sheet cast over the people?

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What is the vision of the future Isaiah is waiting for?

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In that vision of abundance, who is satisfied?

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Be silent (for about two minutes), and then share briefly your insights and reflections.

**ORATIO: THIRD READING**

Read Isaiah 25:6-9 for the third time and speak directly to God asking for insight, strength, support, and clarity about what to do in response to the reading.

Be silent (for about five minutes), and then write the prayer that has been formed in your heart with this third reading. Share your prayer with another person.







SESSION

12B

# The Bible and Me

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Review the various scripture meditation methods
- Develop a plan for how to incorporate scripture reading as a personal spiritual practice
- Develop a plan for how to incorporate scripture meditations into ministry leadership
- Update your Rule of Life for the scripture section of the Rule

“mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

- 1 Corinthians 13:12

## My Spiritual Practices

Review the four scripture meditation methods and discuss your personal insights and reflections.

## INDUCTIVE METHOD

- **OBSERVATION:** What do I see in the text?
- **INTERPRETATION:** What does it mean?
- **LISTENING:** What is God saying to me?
- **APPLICATION:** How does it apply to my life?
- **MEMORY VERSE:** What stays with me?

What do I like about this method?

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What do I dislike about this method?

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Where do I connect with God in this method?

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How could I use this method in my ministry?

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**S.O.A.P.**

Scripture

Observe

Apply

Pray

What do I like about this method?

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What do I dislike about this method?

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Where do I connect with God in this method?

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How could I use this method in my ministry?

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**IGNATIAN IMAGINATIVE**

Ignatian Imaginative: Use your imagination to enter into the passage and become immersed in the sights, sounds, tastes, and feelings of scripture.

What do I like about this method?

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What do I dislike about this method?

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Where do I connect with God in this method?

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How could I use this method in my ministry?

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**LECTIO DIVINA**

- **READING (LECTIO):** slow and deliberate reading and listening to the words of the text.
- **MEDITATING (MEDITATIO):** mentally chewing over the text by deliberately savoring and pondering the meaning of the words.
- **PRAYING (ORATIO):** praying and communicating with God for insight and clarity on what to do.
- **CONTEMPLATING (CONTEMPLATIO):** letting thoughts and feelings fade away and resting in the presence of God.

What do I like about this method?

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What do I dislike about this method?

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Where do I connect with God in this method?

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How could I use this method in my ministry?

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**OVERALL**

What new insights did I gain through scripture meditation?

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Did the scripture meditation methods help me draw closer to God and grow spiritually?

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What scripture meditation methods do I hope to use in my personal life and ministry?

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### BUILDING A RULE OF LIFE

Reading scripture is a powerful vehicle of God's grace that transforms the heart. The Word informed Jesus' ministry and can have a profound impact on yours.

Please turn to your Rule of Life and complete the scripture section of your spiritual practices. You can also review and update your Rule so that it reflects your current situation.

A practical change you and your minister might consider is to start all of your church meetings with a short Bible meditation. This may seem like a big change for some who want to get down to business right away. But it is important to remember this is God's church. If we try to run it on our own, our efforts will be in vain. Engaging in scripture is our business!



May you be renewed and empowered by the Spirit so that you might grow into the fullness of Christ, serving and loving God and God's world. **Amen.**



### RESOURCES

- *Note to Self: Creating Your Guide to a More Spiritual Life* by Charles LaFond (Forward Movement, 2018)
- *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us, Revised and Expanded* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun (IVP 2005)
- *Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way* by Stephen A. Macchia (IVP 2012)



**CONGRATULATIONS** for completing the second module of *Revive*.



# Module 3

## Called to Ministry



“ Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ ”

- Matthew 16:16





# Creeds

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Compare and contrast the Apostles' and Nicene creeds
- Explore the benefits and limitations of creeds
- Pray through the Baptismal Covenant and reflect on how it connects with your life as a Christian

“ Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. ”

– 1 Peter 3:15, 16a



## OPENING PRAYER

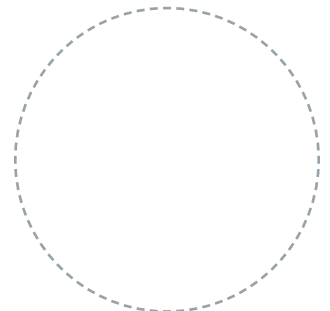
*Almighty and most merciful God, grant that by the indwelling of your Holy Spirit we may be enlightened and strengthened for your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

– The Book of Common Prayer

## MY PRAYER ASSIGNMENT DATES

I will lead the following:

Opening Prayer
Opening Prayer
Closing Prayer
Closing Prayer



## Presentation

Welcome to Module 3 of *Revive: Called for Ministry!* This module will help equip leaders for ministry. We will explore topics about our faith, including creeds, spiritual gifts, discernment, death and dying, stewardship of leadership, and spiritual direction.

### CREEDS

#### A CREED IS SIMPLY A STATEMENT OF FAITH OR BELIEF

- ✔ Latin for “I believe”
- ✔ expresses our knowledge of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit
- ✔ helps us share our faith with others and pass on our beliefs
- ✔ helps steer beliefs in a healthy direction

#### CHALLENGES OF A CREED

- ✔ uses words for something that is beyond words
- ✔ formed in particular political, cultural, and theological contexts
- ✔ can act as a boundary, saying who is in and who is out
- ✔ we are not spiritually mature until we can say what we believe

#### ONE OF THE EARLIEST CREEDS

- ✔ Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 3-7
- ✔ written about twenty years after Jesus’ death and resurrection
- ✔ likely quotes a statement already in use by the early church

#### THE CHURCH DEVELOPED A QUESTION-AND-ANSWER TEACHING METHOD CALLED *CATECHESIS*

- ✔ by about the year 180 CE, this develops into a “rule of faith”
- ✔ the Apostles’ Creed does not say anything about the divinity of Jesus
- ✔ Emperor Constantine calls a meeting—a synod—in the city of Nicea in 325
- ✔ Synod develops Nicene Creed, which says that Jesus was “begotten,” “of the same substance” of the Father, and not created

**HOLY SPIRIT**

- ✔ sixty years later, another synod is called
- ✔ Nicene Creed is further expanded to better define the role and characteristics of the Holy Spirit

**NICENE CREED**

- ✔ has not changed much since the last Council of Nicea
- ✔ remains the foundational statement of belief for most Christians in the world

**NICENE AND APOSTLES' CREEDS DO NOT DIRECTLY SAY ANYTHING ABOUT**

- ✔ the love of God
- ✔ Jesus' teachings
- ✔ wealth
- ✔ protecting the vulnerable
- ✔ our need for a relationship with God based in prayer

**BAPTISMAL COVENANT**

- ✔ contains a catechesis style of questions and answers
- ✔ gives a broad perspective on how to be a follower of Jesus

**DO YOU HAVE DOUBTS?**

- ✔ These are normal
- ✔ Jesus does not rebuke Thomas for doubting
- ✔ Jesus does rebuke Peter for giving him a pat answer
- ✔ God gives us a gift: the ability to reason and ask questions
- ✔ to grow, we must continue to ask questions

If someone asks you, "What do you believe in?", how would you answer?  
How would you describe God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit to another person?

## AFFIRMATIONS OF FAITH EXERCISE

Most Western churches recognize the Apostles' and Nicene creeds as official statements of belief. Orthodox Christians use the form of the Nicene Creed (below) approved by the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE.

### APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only  
Son, our Lord, who was conceived  
by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin  
Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead. On the  
third day he rose again; he ascended  
into heaven, he is seated at the right  
hand of the Father, and he will come  
to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.

**Amen.**

### NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen  
and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only  
Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from  
true God, begotten, not made, of one being with  
the Father. Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down  
from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he  
became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was  
made man. For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again in accordance  
with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and  
is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will  
come again in glory to judge the living and the  
dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver  
of life, who proceeds from the Father. With the  
Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic  
Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the  
forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection  
of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

**Amen.**

What do these creeds say about God the Father?

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What do these creeds say about God the Son?

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What do these creeds say about God the Holy Spirit?

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Father and Son are masculine terms for God. How does this help or limit your understanding of God?

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What are the activities attributed to the persons of the Trinity? Is this consistent with your relationship to and experiences of God?

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Dr. Theodore Wedel, a former canon of Washington National Cathedral, said that the creed is a love story. Do you agree? Why or why not?

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### BAPTISMAL COVENANT PRAYER EXERCISE

The Baptismal Covenant is a form of question-and-answer teaching called *catechesis*. It is found in the church's liturgies of initiation. The Baptismal Covenant includes the Apostles' Creed with three questions about each person of the Trinity and then five (sometimes six) questions about the Christian life and practices. The first three questions ask, "Who do we believe in?" The rest of the questions ask, "How will we live out these beliefs?" Each time we attend a baptismal service, we recommit to our original Baptismal Covenant and reclaim ourselves as followers of Jesus.

*Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?*

**Response: I will, with God's help.**

*Will you persevere in resisting evil and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?*

**Response: I will, with God's help.**

*Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?*

**Response: I will, with God's help.**

*Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbour as yourself?*

**Response: I will, with God's help.**

*Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?*

**Response: I will, with God's help.**

An additional question was added to the Anglican Church of Canada's Baptismal Covenant at General Synod, 2014:

*Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation and respect, sustain, and renew the life of the earth?*

**Response: I will, with God's help.**

### PREPARATION PRAYER

Take a moment of silent prayer and be attentive to your breathing. Relax your body and become open and focused on God's presence.

**Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?**

First Reading: Listen for a word or phrase that stands out.

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Second Reading: What do the words and phrases mean?

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Third Reading: Where am I challenged by this question?

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How does it apply to my life?

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**Will you persevere in resisting evil and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?**

First Reading: Listen for a word or phrase that stands out.

---

Second Reading: What do the words and phrases mean?

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Third Reading: Where am I challenged by this question?

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How does it apply to my life?

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**Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?**

First Reading: Listen for a word or phrase that stands out.

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Second Reading: What do the words and phrases mean?

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Third Reading: Where am I challenged by this question?

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How does it apply to my life?

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**Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?**

First Reading: Listen for a word or phrase that stands out.

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Second Reading: What do the words and phrases mean?

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---

Third Reading: Where am I challenged by this question?

---

---

How does it apply to my life?

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**Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?**

First Reading: Listen for a word or phrase that stands out.

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Second Reading: What do the words and phrases mean? (2 min)

---

Third Reading: Where am I challenged by this question? (2 min)

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---

How does it apply to my life?

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**CANADIAN BONUS QUESTION:**

**Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation and respect, sustain, and renew the life of the earth?**

First Reading: Listen for a word or phrase that stands out.

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Second Reading: What do the words and phrases mean? (2 min)

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Third Reading: Where am I challenged by this question? (2 min)

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How does it apply to my life?

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What new ideas and learnings stand out to you?

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Do any questions stir up your heart?

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Where do you feel the most confirmation? The most challenged?

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How is “I will, with God’s help” a good response?

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HOMework AND CLOSING PRAYER

I BELIEVE, I LIVE EXERCISE

SCENARIO: A young woman named Heather is attending a religious studies course and must complete a paper on how values and behaviors shape belief. She has to interview people who practice their religion, so she has asked you to talk with her about how your faith has shaped your personal values and behaviors. Using the Baptismal Covenant, what would your answer be?

I BELIEVE...

Horizontal lines for writing responses.



Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father, who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

- The Book of Common Prayer



RESOURCES

- The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why it Matters by Luke Timothy Johnson (Image, 2004)
• 'I Believe': Exploring the Apostles' Creed by Alister McGrath (IVP Books, 1998)
• The Apostles' Creed for Today by Justo Gonzales (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007)
• Living the Questions: An Exploration of the Nicene Creed by Marianne Micks (Seabury Press, 2004)
• Walk in Love: Episcopal Beliefs & Practices by Scott Gunn and Melody Wilson Shobe (Forward Movement, 2018)
• Inwardly Digest: The Prayer Book as Guide to a Spiritual Life by Derek Olsen (Forward Movement, 2016)

# Spiritual Gifts

## FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Complete a spiritual gifts inventory
- Reflect on your spiritual gifts
- Reflect on the connection between your deepest desire, passions, God’s call, and your spiritual gifts

“ Take delight in the Lord, and God will give you the desires of your heart. ”

- Psalm 37:4 (NRSV)

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

The facilitator leads a Bible meditation of Ephesians 4:11-16. Any method can be used that seems suitable. A Lectio Divina method is provided below.

### EPHESIANS 4:11-16

*The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.*

## LECTIO, FIRST READING

List a word or phrase that stands out: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**MEDITATIO, SECOND READING**

The facilitator asks a participant to read Ephesians 4:11-16 aloud for the second time but this time to reflect on the content of the passage.

What roles did God give gifts for? Compare with 1 Corinthians 12

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What is the ultimate purpose for these gifts?

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What is Paul talking about when he says we must “grow up into Christ?”

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The last verse says that individuals and the community (the church) must “build up in love.” What does this mean?

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ORATIO, THIRD READING

What does God want you to do in response to this reading?

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Prayer

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CONTEMPLATIO, FOURTH READING

Read Ephesian 4:11-16 for the fourth time, rest in the silence and presence of God rather than focusing on the words or reflection. Hold the silence for a few minutes.

CLOSING PRAYER

The facilitator offers a prayer, giving thanks to God for insight and inspiration.

“ The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet. ”

- Frederick Buechner, American writer and pastor

## Presentation

### SPIRITUAL GIFTS

You are a gifted person!

**Church positions are sometimes filled because of need and not because of a calling**

- ✔ this sometimes results in a match made in heaven
- ✔ but can also turn a beloved ministry into a grudging job
- ✔ ministry based on gifts transforms a church job into a beloved ministry/vocation

**Saint Ignatius—the one who offered the Examen and the Imaginative Meditation Method—said that before we can understand our gifts, we first have to discover our heart’s desire.**

- ✔ heart’s desire is not selfish whims, addictions, and surface needs
- ✔ heart’s desire is the deep desire beneath surface cravings and longings
- ✔ deep desires may include: to be at peace, to be known, to belong, to be accepted, to be loved, to love, to be valued, to contribute, or to create
- ✔ these are not easy to name
- ✔ self-knowledge is essential if we are to steward our gifts
- ✔ ultimately, the heart’s desire is to love, commune with, and serve God.

**The early church realized that everyone has a calling and is uniquely gifted to respond through community to the needs of the world.**

- ✔ glamorous or tedious, spiritual or mundane, scholarly or menial, all are blessed by God
- ✔ Saint Paul says, “There are different gifts but the same Lord” (1 Corinthians 12:5)
- ✔ this perspective separates the church from other volunteer organizations



**You have been created in the image of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit with talents and abilities.**

- ✔ when we use our gifts, we experience a “more-than” philosophy in our ministry
- ✔ we become the active embodiment of prayer, empowered by God and moving with God to enact God’s will and desire
- ✔ transformation comes from people who are serving from a place of joy, abundance, and connection
- ✔ we will never be content until we fulfill our calling

**Can we claim whatever ministry we want?**

- ✔ ministry is a privilege
- ✔ discernment of gifts is an individual process done within community
- ✔ sometimes individuals believe they have gifts the community does not affirm

**Can the community see gifts in a person that the individual is unaware of/denies?**

- ✔ we all have blind spots
- ✔ when wise and trusted people affirm our gifts, we should listen

**Do affirmed gifts always give us joy?**

- ✔ sometimes not—having a gift does not always mean fulfilling those gifts right now
- ✔ the Holy Spirit links our gifts to a sense of joy

**Does God call us beyond our comfort and joy?**

- ✔ definitely
- ✔ these holy nudgings can take us beyond our imagining
- ✔ being a follower of Jesus is an incredible journey



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Do you experience joy in your church activities?

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Do you consider your church activity a calling? Why or why not?

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Can you identify a deeper desire that draws you into ministry?

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What cause or situation do you feel passionately about?

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# Spiritual Gifts Inventory

## Discernment for God's Empowerment

### LEADERSHIP

*A person with this gift:*

- cares for God's people and their relationship with Christ and each other
- helps others succeed and grow in their spiritual walk with Jesus
- is able to accomplish tasks and objectives
- is "visionary," seeing beyond the day-to-day details
- is entrepreneurial and willing to take risks to see the kingdom of God advanced

### ADMINISTRATION

*A person with this gift:*

- motivates, directs, and inspires God's people to work harmoniously and effectively
- can bring creativity and order out of chaos
- assumes oversight for the proper execution of a task, project or program
- is able to put things together, tie up loose ends, and get things done
- is adept with finances, planning, organizing, delegating responsibilities, and problem-solving

### COMMUNICATION

*A person with this gift:*

- can communicate about God with ease and clarity
- can use creative and innovative means to communicate scripture, prayer, and church life to others
- is able to appreciate how messages are heard and interpreted
- knows how to write and/or design newsletters and communicate broadly
- may have comfort in another language

### CRAFTSMANSHIP

*A person with this gift:*

- is imaginative, creative, and artistic
- experiences creativity as prayer
- uses hands and minds to build up the kingdom of God
- possesses a skill, hobby, or vocation
- shares this ability with others, either with finished products or by teaching

### EXHORTATION

*A person with this gift:*

- stands beside others in need and brings comfort, counsel, and encouragement
- inspires others to dare greatly for the kingdom of God
- calls forth the best from others
- helps others live out their faith and challenges them to fulfill God's calling

### GIVING

*A person with this gift:*

- hears a call to give and responds immediately with a plan to fulfill the need through their own and other resources
- offers energy, abilities, and material resources with exceptional willingness, cheerfulness, and generosity
- offers time, energy, talent, skills, material possessions, and money
- possesses a spirit of selflessness, requiring no recognition or reward

### FAITH

*A person with this gift:*

- possesses extraordinary confidence in God's promises, power, and presence
- has a deep trust in God, and inspires others
- takes heroic stands for the future of God's work in the church
- has a healthy prayer life and sensitivity to the will of God

**HEALING*****A person with this gift:***

- shares in restoring the sick
- possesses a healthy prayer life and prays for God's help and wholeness wherever and however it may manifest
- feels called to pray for the sick and situations of human brokenness
- has a confidence in God's power and wellness of spirit

**HOSPITALITY*****A person with this gift:***

- offers lodging, food, and fellowship cheerfully
- offers own home for ministry
- shows concern for the comfort of others and has a knack for putting people at ease
- enjoys being in the presence of strangers

**MERCY & CAREGIVING*****A person with this gift:***

- has insight into God's compassion and communicates God's love and care through scripture, presence, and prayer
- feels exceptional empathy and compassion for those who are vulnerable, weak, in crisis, or suffering
- devotes large amounts of time and energy to alleviating suffering
- gives assistance or relief from distress
- shows readiness to forgive those who have erred
- can become a peacemaker

**MUSICIAN*****A person with this gift:***

- praises God through various forms of music
- experiences composing, singing, conducting, or making music as prayer
- is able to enhance the worship experience
- has skill in singing, playing an instrument, and/or selecting music for worship

**MISSIONARY*****A person with this gift:***

- is comfortable with people of different heritages, customs, economic backgrounds, and experiences
- can minister in a second culture or second community
- desires not to impose own beliefs on others, but to faithfully and mutually share what he or she has learned and experienced about God
- is as willing to listen as to speak
- respects all people as children of God

**PROPHET*****A person with this gift:***

- is able to interpret and apply God's revelation to current situations
- has a keen sense of the dignity of all people
- has a sense of passion and call for the kingdom
- has a sense of timing, knowledge of scripture, and the workings of the church
- has an appreciation for community or societal trends and dynamics

**SERVING**

*A person with this gift:*

- is willing to share burdens of others and help them with tasks
- identifies closely with the needs and problems of others, often providing possible solutions
- works with others regardless of the size of task
- is willing to pitch in and do what is needed

**TEACHER**

*A person with this gift:*

- is able to communicate so that others can learn
- inspires people to greater faith and transformation through their teaching
- imparts information or proclaims precepts of truth—either vocally, visually, or by example
- helps people perceive God’s teaching

**WISDOM**

*A person with this gift:*

- is able to draw away from own desires and see more clearly where God is leading
- is able to combine life experience and knowledge of God and scripture to give guidance
- can discern God’s will and analyze problems
- helps others discover the wisdom they have within themselves

**TOTALS**

**LEADERSHIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADMINISTRATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMUNICATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CRAFTSMANSHIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EXHORTATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GIVING:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FAITH:** \_\_\_\_\_

**HEALING:** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOSPITALITY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MERCY & CAREGIVING:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MUSICIAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MISSIONARY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PROPHET:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SERVING:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WISDOM:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Spiritual Gifts Worksheet

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My top five spiritual gifts are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Do the results confirm what you already know about yourself? Explain.

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Are there surprises? Explain.

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Do any of the results pique your interest? Which spiritual gifts would you like to learn more about? Explain.

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List your five highest-scoring spiritual gifts, and then list your church ministries and activities. Draw lines to connect the gifts with the ministry activities. Note where there are connections and where there are none. Your top three gifts are likely your “bread and butter” gifts that you will always need to engage. The latter two gifts may likely come and go as roles and tasks change.

**MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

**MY MINISTRY TASKS,  
ROLES & ACTIVITIES**

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Are there any mismatches between your gifts and your ministry activities?

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Which ministry activity gives (or would give) you joy?

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How are you being asked to grow?

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What are your next steps?

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For the small group: Were the results from the inventory consistent with your understanding and experience of this participant?

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A DEEPER DIVE (Optional)

The My Ministry, My Calling Worksheet is a helpful guide for the discussion. This requires some intentional soul work, so any effort to engage in this process should be considered part of a longer, ongoing process of discernment.

HOMEWORK AND CLOSING PRAYER

- 1. Find at least three times during the week for prayer (if possible, incorporating these passages of scripture: Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 25:14-30, Mark 1:16-20, John 10:27-29, Romans 12:4-13). Pray specifically for insight and discernment about your calling.
2. Share your Spiritual Gifts Worksheet with someone you trust and who knows you well. Listen for confirmation, questioning, and discernment.
3. Come to the next session with a situation in mind where you are struggling to make a decision. What is one thing in your life where you would like to ask God for help in order to discern the way forward?

REFLECTIONS

Reflection writing area with horizontal lines.



RESOURCES

- After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters by N.T. Wright (HarperOne, 2012)
• Inner Compass: An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality by Margaret Silf (Loyola Press, 2007)
• Discerning Your Spiritual Gifts by Lloyd Edwards (Cowley, 1988)
• The Holy Spirit by Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon (Abingdon Press, 2015)
• The ELCA Spiritual Gifts Inventory: www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Faith-Practices/Spiritual-Renewal/Assessment-Tools



A special note of thanks to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and Neal Boese for giving permission to use and modify the ELCA Spiritual Gifts Inventory. Thank you to Canon Claire Woodley for modifying the ELCA Gifts Inventory to produce the Spiritual Gifts Inventory: Discernment for God's Empowerment.

May you let your light shine and faithfully serve God's call!



# My Ministry, My Calling Worksheet

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Discerning our gifts, passions, and calling takes time—and this discernment is a work in progress. It will likely be completed over a number of weeks or months of prayerful reflection, both alone and with trusted loved ones.

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS** are abilities and talents that are empowered by the Holy Spirit. They enable us to work with God, fulfill God’s intentions, and give us firsthand experience of God’s creativity and joy. Working through our heart’s desire and passions, our spiritual gifts help us fulfill our calling. They are shaped by genetic inheritance, temperament, wounds, accomplishments, and life choices. A Spiritual Gifts Inventory can help identify your spiritual gifts. The top three gifts are likely your “bread and butter” gifts that you will always need to engage. The latter two gifts may come and go as roles and tasks change.

## MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**PASSIONS** are emotional drivers that make us tick. We sense or feel our passions when our hearts are drawn toward a particular person, cause, situation, or need. This God-placed response is for specific kinds of people and for specific issues that may change over time. To help you identify your passions, think about pictures of people in need or news reports on different issues that tug at your heartstrings or repeatedly catch your attention. What issue do you hear about and say, “Something really needs to be done,” and then imagine yourself responding?

## MY PASSIONS ARE:

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**HEART'S DESIRE** is the deep yearning of the soul often associated with a longing to have peace, to be known, to belong, to be accepted, to be loved, to love, to be valued, to contribute, and to create. It is the desire beneath the desire. Margaret Silf, author of *Inner Compass*, says that "Desire is not easy to draw...not easy to describe...not easy to think about...not easy to live with." She suggests two ways of determining your heart's desire: 1. Remind yourself of something you really want and then ask yourself to go beneath it. 2. Ask: How do I delight you God? Jesus turns to blind Bartimaeus and asks him, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mark 10:51). Jesus is asking Bartimaeus to identify his heart's greatest desire. How would you answer Jesus?

**MY HEART'S DESIRE IS:**

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**CALLING** is the doing or the outward activity of our lives in response to the heart's desire and passion. This can include our vocational roles and tasks in our career, work, and volunteer activities to serve the church and the world. It can also be relational and expressed through the activities and spiritual practices we take on. Call is not limited to the ordained ministry. Everyone is called.

What is my calling to God? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is my calling to myself? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is my calling to my family? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is my calling to my church? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is my calling to my neighbor and the world? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Spiritual Discernment

## FOCUS OF SESSION

- Identify an area where you are struggling to make a decision
- Learn about, experience, and reflect on the Ignatian Discernment Method
- Develop a plan for being open to the working of the Holy Spirit in your life and in church decisions

“ But we speak God’s wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory...These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ”

- 1 Corinthians 2:7,10

## Presentation

### SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

#### How do we make faithful, wise, God-filled decisions?

- ✓ How do I handle a difficult relationship? Who do I vote for? Should I accept a new position? When is the right time to move? What do we cut in order to balance the budget? What should the focus of our church be?

#### Saint Ignatius says moving decision-making to spiritual discernment requires us to invite God into the process.

- ✓ we begin by quieting our personal, inner anxiety and making room to listen to God
- ✓ prayer, Bible study, community consultation, an awareness of gifts, our heart’s desire, and our passions all come together

#### Become aware of times of consolation and desolation

- ✓ consolation is when we feel God is close
- ✓ can be times of happiness and contentment—but not always
- ✓ sense an increase in the presence and awareness of God

- ✔ desolation is a moving away from God
- ✔ prompts feelings of hopelessness and fear
- ✔ never make an important decision from a place of spiritual desolation
- ✔ wait, pray, read, consult, listen, and be patient

**How do you know when it is time to make a decision and what the best decision might be?**

- ✔ watch for patterns around you
- ✔ consistent messages from various places
- ✔ feelings of lightness and joy

Here are a few simple ways to invite God into our church decisions. We can:

1. Always start church meetings with prayer and a short Bible meditation.
2. Leave the Bible open to the passage and at the center of the meeting space for committee members to draw strength from—and as a visible reminder of God’s Word in our midst.
3. Actively engage in hearing from many differing perspectives.
4. Always stop for silent prayer before a vote is taken or a decision is approved.
5. Be aware and honest about our own anxieties, fears, and motivations.
6. Be humble. Sometimes our best choices have unintended consequences, and our mistakes prompt wonder and joy. Trust that God will direct, support, and redeem all our decisions.

“ Our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God’s deepening life in me. ”

- Saint Ignatius of Loyola

DISCUSSION

*Rational Functionalism is a tendency in our denominations to subscribe to a view that is rooted in a restrictive, logic-bound theology that ignores the possibility of spiritual experiences...It turns faith into an intellectual endeavour rooted in an excessively rational, empirical, quasi-scientific approach...Robert's Rule of Order has been a blessing... [however it] can stifle the life of the church....When academic inquiry and scientific scepticism become stronger than an emphasis on forming faith and leading people to an encounter with God, the church declines because people are no longer led to form a living faith in God that can transform their lives.*

- *Becoming a Blessed Church* by Graham Standish

How is this statement true for me?

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How is *rational functionalism* different from *spiritual discernment*?

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How do the rational and intellectual aspects fit with the spiritual when making a decision?

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# Ignatian Discernment Method

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Discerning God’s will is not simple: Our motivations are complex and layered, our knowledge is never perfectly informed, and our emotions are often varied and circumstantial. In addition, we can never completely know the mind of God. Yet we have been invited into a relationship with God who gives us free choice and wants us to use our decisions to live into our fullness in serving the kingdom.

The goal of discernment is not to make a decision but to draw closer to God.

Consolation is about sensing a closeness with God or a “coming home” through a decision. Consolation can include feelings of contentment, joy, and happiness. It can also include feelings of sacrifice and suffering.

Desolation is about sensing a separation or distance from God. Desolation can include feelings of suffering and pain, such as loss, hopelessness, depression, or loneliness. Desolation might also arouse feelings of immediate happiness, such as when an addiction is first satiated.

## DISCERNMENT PROCESS

**STEP 1: PRAY.** Take a moment of silence to be attentive to your breathing. Relax your body and become open and focused on God’s presence.

**STEP 2: THE QUESTION.** State the question you are wanting to discern. Should I take a new job? Should we move to a new community? How should I respond to a particular situation?

**STEP 3: PROS AND CONS.** Imagine the advantages and disadvantages for choosing one way and then the other. Use your imagination. Play out, intellectually analyze, and predict the eventualities for each scenario. Include your life circumstances, prior commitments, the people who will be affected, the impact, and repercussions of each decision.

**STEP 4: CONSOLATION AND DESOLATION.** Review all the pro and con situations again but this time pay specific attention to your feelings. Monitor where you sense consolation and desolation.

**STEP 5: SPIRITUAL GIFTS.** Review the Spiritual Gifts Worksheet (and/or My Calling for Ministry Worksheet) and reflect on which path best fulfills your gifts and calling.

**STEP 6: CONSULTATION.** Bring the results of this process to a trusted person who knows you (family member, friend, spiritual director, clergy) and can speak with wisdom and insight.

**STEP 7: GOAL.** Ask yourself which decision will bring you closer to God.

**STEP 8: DECISION.** Make the decision. Trust in God’s providence but also be open to ongoing reflection and discernment.

# Spiritual Discernment Exercise

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## STEP 1: PRAY



*Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

- The Book of Common Prayer

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## STEP 2: THE QUESTION

I am discerning whether I should... \_\_\_\_\_

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## STEP 3: PROS AND CONS

Yes, I will		No, I won't	
PROS	CONS	PROS	CONS

## STEP 4: CONSOLATION AND DESOLATION — YES, I WILL

Where do I feel consolation? \_\_\_\_\_

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Where do I feel desolation? \_\_\_\_\_

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**STEP 4: CONSOLATION AND DESOLATION – NO, I WON'T**

Where do I feel consolation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where do I feel desolation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 5: SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

My spiritual gifts \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will my spiritual gifts be fulfilled and utilized in this decision?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 6: CONSULTATION**

Who will I speak with? \_\_\_\_\_

How did they respond? What insights and wisdom did they share?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 7: GOAL**

Which decision will draw me closer to God? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 8: MAKE THE DECISION**

Trust in God!



REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Was the Ignatian Discernment Method helpful?

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Could you feel consolation and desolation in the various decisions?

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How could this method be useful in other areas of your life and in church decisions?

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EXAMEN PRAYER

We first explored the *Examen* Prayer during the Opening Retreat. To review, the elements of the *Examen* Prayer are:

- 1. Presence
- 2. Thankfulness
- 3. Review of the day and identify consolation and desolation  
Ask for forgiveness where necessary
- 4. Commit
- 5. Lord’s Prayer

Using the *Examen* Prayer Guide found in the Opening Retreat, pray the *Examen*.

**HOMEWORK AND CLOSING PRAYER**

Pray at least three times during the week using the *Examen* method, with a particular focus on reviewing each day and looking for times of consolation and desolation. Continue to reflect on the Ignatian Discernment Method and the decisions you have to make.

May you be prompted by God’s holy whispering.

**REFLECTIONS AND SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS**

Reflection area with 18 horizontal lines for writing.



**RESOURCES**

- *Discernment: Reading the Signs of Daily Life* by Henri J.M. Nouwen (HarperOne, 2013)
- *What is Your Decision: How to Make Choices with Confidence and Clarity; An Ignatian Approach to Decision Making* by Michael Sparough, Jim Manney, and Tim Hipskind, SJ (Loyola Press, 2010)
- *Discernment: A Path to Spiritual Awakening* by Rose Mary Dougherty (Paulist Press, 2009)
- *Becoming a Blessed Church, Forming a Church of Purpose, Presence, and Power* by Graham Standish (Alban, 2005)
- Desires of the Heart: Themes of Ignatian Spirituality from <https://ignatianresources.com/catalogue/desires-of-the-heart/>

# Death and Dying

## FOCUS OF SESSION

- Bible meditation on passages from Job
- Reflect on the question: Why do bad things happen to good or innocent people?
- Reflect on the dying process and how to live—and die—well
- Begin to plan for your funeral

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

During the first reading, listen for a word or phrase that stands out.

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”

– Romans 6:3

### FIRST READING: JOB 1:13-22

*One day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the eldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell on them and carried them off, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, another came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, another came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three columns, made a raid on the camels and carried them off, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, another came and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, and suddenly a great wind came across the desert, struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; I alone have escaped to tell you."*

*Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshiped. He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong-doing.*

**Silence**

**SECOND READING: JOB 19:1-12**

*Then Job answered: "How long will you torment me, and break me in pieces with words? These ten times you have cast reproach upon me; are you not ashamed to wrong me? And even if it is true that I have erred, my error remains with me. If indeed you magnify yourselves against me, and make my humiliation an argument against me, know then that God has put me in the wrong, and closed his net around me. Even when I cry out, 'Violence!' I am not answered; I call aloud, but there is no justice.*

*"He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass, and he has set darkness upon my paths. He has stripped my glory from me, and taken the crown from my head. He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone, he has uprooted my hope like a tree. He has kindled his wrath against me, and counts me as his adversary. His troops come on together; they have thrown up siegeworks against me, and encamp around my tent."*

**Silence**

Where have you experienced loss?

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When have you railed against injustice, like Job?

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Is this a moment of consolation or desolation for Job?

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**THIRD READING: JOB 38:1-13; 40:1-5**

*Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind: “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me.*

*“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy? Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb?—when I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors, and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped’?*

*“Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, so that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?”*

*And the LORD said to Job: “Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Anyone who argues with God must respond.” Then Job answered the LORD: “See, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but will proceed no further.”*

**Silence**

How do you feel about God’s response?

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What does this response mean for your relationship with God?

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**WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?**

- ✔ most challenging theological question of all time
- ✔ different theories are called theodicies
- ✔ all theodicies attempt to balance: an all-loving God, an all-powerful God, and an all-knowing God

**THEODICIES**

1. Suffering is here to teach us a lesson. This theory was proposed by Saint Irenaeus, a bishop of the church who died around 200 CE. The problem with this theory is an inherent sense of injustice. How could one's personal spiritual growth and fulfillment justify the death or suffering of an innocent child?
2. God must want another angel in heaven. The problem with this theory is that God gives and takes on a whim and therefore seems capricious and unjust.
3. Suffering and evil came into the world through humanity's free will. The problem with this is that it does not explain natural disasters or diseases, which are beyond humanity's control.
4. Suffering, evil, and death are part of the natural ordering of things. This position was proposed by C.S. Lewis, a Christian writer. This theory begs the question: What kind of God would design a system with natural disease and evil behavior?

**SPIRITUAL CONUNDRUM**

- ✔ no satisfactory philosophical, theological, or spiritual answer
- ✔ dead end
- ✔ however, the experience of God's deep compassion, in the midst of tragedy is transformative
- ✔ brings hope of new and redeemed life
- ✔ we are immersed in a great Mystery

## DEATH AND DYING

### Death is a far-off phenomenon removed from the realities of everyday living

- ✔ average age of death was 60 in 1920; 80-plus years today
- ✔ advances in medical science, technology, and standards of hygiene
- ✔ sudden and tragic deaths of young people are rare
- ✔ the dying process is relegated to a highly technological hospital setting
- ✔ few people in North America come face-to-face with the dying process until they reach midlife or later

### When we remove death from our everyday reality, we do not live a full life

- ✔ we are all dying
- ✔ by recognizing this, we can embrace life and live with a deeper sense of intention and purpose

### For Christians, death holds a central place in the story of our faith

- ✔ Jesus lived and died and transformed death
- ✔ Jesus continues to remind his disciples about his impending death
- ✔ his death is part of his—and their—spiritual journey
- ✔ Jesus speaks openly about his dying, which helps those around him prepare
- ✔ following Jesus' example, we should live with death as a reality and natural part of our spiritual journey

### Given the statistics, most of us will die a slow, progressive death when we are well into our eighties

- ✔ we will likely need assistance and care
- ✔ this has implications for our family and community
- ✔ how do we follow Jesus' example and equip our loved ones for our death?





DISCUSSION

What is your experience of death?

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Have you ever had an end-of-life conversation with someone? Have you told someone your end-of-life wishes? What do you want your last days to look like?

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How does your faith support, give meaning, and spiritually prepare you for life after death?

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“ Time is our most important and most limited resource, but we act as though no economizing were necessary. ...In many ways, our life is no different from that of the peasant in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The peasant missed a fully human life because he or she was inundated with death. We do not live fully because we reject death. ”

- Dr. John D. Morgan, a pioneer in the death awareness movement

# My Funeral Planning Worksheet

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Recognizing that the liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy, and having the sure and certain hope of resurrection in the Lord Jesus Christ, I make the following requests, that my funeral may be a testimony to my Christian faith.

Full Name	Date of Birth
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At the present time, and circumstances permitting, I wish my funeral/memorial service to take place at:

Church	Clergy
Address	City

I would like a vigil at the church.  Yes  No

I would like to be cremated.  Yes  No

I am an organ donor.  Yes  No

I would like the service in the church.  Yes  No

I would like the service to include the celebration of Holy Eucharist.  
Rite I or Rite II?  Yes  No

I would like a service for interment at a graveside or a columbarium.  
If yes, where?  Yes  No

Place	
Address	City

I have made arrangements with a funeral home. If yes, where?  Yes  No

Name of funeral home	Contact name
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I have arrangements with a florist. If so, who?  Yes  No

Name of florist	Contact name
-----------------	--------------

Do the arrangements include flowers for the altar?  Yes  No

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**SERVICE PLANNING**

Please choose one or more lessons from the Old Testament, the New Testament, or the Gospels. If you plan to celebrate Holy Eucharist, a gospel lesson needs to be selected.

**FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT**

- Isaiah 25:6-9 (He will swallow up death for ever)
- Isaiah 61:1-3 (To comfort those mourn)
- Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33 (The Lord is good to those who wait for him)
- Wisdom 3:1-5, 9 (The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God)
- Job 19:21-27a (I know that my Redeemer lives)

**FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT**

- Romans 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39 (The glory that shall be revealed)
- I Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 53-58 (The imperishable body)
- 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:9 (Things that are unseen are eternal)
- I John 3:1-2 (We shall be like him)
- Revelation 7:9-17 (God will wipe away every tear)
- Revelation 21:2-7 (Behold, I make all things new)

**THE GOSPEL**

- John 5:24-27 (He who believes has everlasting life)
- John 6:37-40 (All that the Father gives me will come to me)
- John 10:11-16 (I am the Good Shepherd)
- John 11:21-27 (I am the resurrection and the life)
- John 14:1-6 (In my Father's house are many rooms)

I suggest the following people who might say a few words on behalf of the family.

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DESIRED HYMNS

You may use hymn number or the first line in the hymn for identification.

Two horizontal lines for writing hymn information.

I would like this additional music to be included:

One horizontal line for writing additional music information.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

These are my suggestions for Lay Readers (up to four) and/or Chalice Bearers (usually two).

Two horizontal lines for writing suggestions for Lay Readers and Chalice Bearers.

I would like photos or memorabilia displayed at the entrance to the church.  Yes  No

I have a favorite poem or non-biblical reading that I would like to be included in the service bulletin.  Yes  No

Will there be a reception? If yes, where?  Yes  No

Location of reception	
Address	City

Some families choose to select a charity where contributions can be made in lieu of flowers.

I would like to designate this charity:

My family can choose the charity. \_\_\_\_\_

This form is not binding and may be changed at any time. We recommend discussing these arrangements with the person you expect to be in charge of them (the executor of the arrangements). Please include that person’s name and phone number below.

Executor of Arrangements	Phone
Signed	Date

Special thanks to the Rev. Catherine Thompson and The Church of the Annunciation, Lewisville, Texas, for sharing this resource.

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DISCUSSION

What was it like to think about your own funeral?

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What other matters associated with your death do you need to talk about with family and loved ones?

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What do you need to do now?

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HOMEWORK

Find at least three times during the week to reflect on the topic of death, through the scripture passages provided: Matthew 16:21-26, Matthew 26:36-46, John 11:1-44, John 20:11-18, or Revelation 21:3-7

Continue to work on the My Funeral Planning Worksheet and share it with the church and/or a loved one.



God speaks to each of us as he makes us, then walks with us silently out of the night. These are the words we dimly hear:  
You, sent out beyond your recall, go to the limits of your longing. Embody me.  
Flare up like a flame and make big shadows I can move in.  
Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror. Just keep going. No feeling is final.  
Don't let yourself lose me.  
Nearby is the country they call life. You will know it by its seriousness.  
Give me your hand.

- Rainer Maria Rilke, 19<sup>th</sup>-century German poet and author



# Group Spiritual Direction

“ The first service one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. Just as the love of God begins with listening to God’s word, so the beginning of love for others is learning to listen to them. ”

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German pastor and anti-Nazi dissident

## FOCUS OF SESSION

- Reflect on one area that God is working on in your life
- Participate in a group spiritual direction session

## Presentation

### GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Spiritual direction is prayerful listening to God in the context of community

- stories are shared, listened to, and reflected upon
- helps deepen the spiritual life
  - not psychotherapy: primary focus is not on psychological health
  - not mentoring: primary focus is not on experience and skills
  - primary focus: discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit

Spiritual direction can be between two people or in a group

- many clergy and lay people have spiritual directors
- being a spiritual director requires training
- an accreditation process requires supervision and a required number of hours of experience
- spiritual directors and directees may meet for a couple of hours once a month or a few times during the year, perhaps in a retreat setting
- normally face-to-face, but may also occur over the phone
- spiritual direction is personal in nature and requires a high degree of confidentiality
- can be supportive, perceptive, and challenging

This model has three roles: convener, peers, and presenter

# Spiritually Guided Conversation Model

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A Group Spiritual Direction session is a peer-group listening and discernment process. A presenter offers a personal situation in which he or she needs help to discern God's direction. The situation could be about prayer life, family, friends, relationships, vocational issues, etc. This is not a problem-solving process but instead a time for listening for spiritual concerns, feelings, blind spots, and confusions in discerning the Holy Spirit's presence in the presenter's situation. The focal points are spiritual awareness and attentiveness to God's activity.

This is a personal and confidential process, so it is important to remember the Small Group Commitment. The presenter must be careful to protect the anonymity of people who are involved in the situation.

The group should not involve more than six participants, and everyone should have the opportunity to present.

## CONVENER

- opens and closes the discernment time
- leads the prayer
- is the timekeeper and keeps the group discussion on track
- moderates the discussion if needed and ensures everyone adheres to the Small Group Commitment

## PRESENTER

- brings a personal life situation in which he or she is seeking spiritual guidance and clarity
- considers these questions in determining a situation to share: Am I personally involved in this situation? How do I feel about this situation? How do I feel about God in this situation? Have I been able to pray about this situation? What do I hope will be accomplished by presenting this situation?

## PEERS

- are the listeners
- attempt to remove their own personal opinions and emotions
- focus on discerning the activity of the Holy Spirit and the presenter's awareness of God's presence and love
- stay focused on the presenter and not on the particulars of the situation
- avoid advice-giving, problem-solving, and offering autobiographical experiences
- offer remarks humbly, with phrases like "I wonder..." or "I sense..."

*May you see with God's eyes, hear with God's ears, and speak with God's holy and life-giving word.*

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## MEETING FORMAT

- Opening Prayer and a moment of silence
  - Presentation (10 min) The presenter shares the situation. Peers listen silently.
  - Clarification (2 min) Peers and convener ask questions for clarification only.
  - Silence (1 min)
  - Discussion (20 min) Peers discern the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit within the situation presented.
  - Closing Prayer
-



**HOMWORK AND CLOSING PRAYER**

Pray at least three times this week.

**REFLECTIONS AND SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS**

A large light green rectangular area containing 20 horizontal lines for writing reflections and spiritual insights.



**RESOURCES**

- *Seeking God Together: Introduction to Group Spiritual Direction* by Alice Fryling (IVP, 2009)
- *Group Spiritual Direction: Community for Discernment* by Rose Mary Dougherty, SSND (Paulist Press, 1994)
- *Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation*, workshops and retreats on group spiritual direction. <https://shalem.org>

# Spiritual Leader as Steward

## FOCUS OF SESSION

- Explore how spiritual leadership is guided by the principles of stewardship
- Reflect on personal stewardship practices for creation, time, talent, treasure, and mental and physical well-being
- Reflect on how leaders model practices and values
- Learn about, experience, and reflect on the African Bible Study Method

“ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. ”

– John 10:10

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION EXERCISE: AFRICAN BIBLE STUDY

While this meditation method is used throughout the world, it is particularly prevalent in Africa and South America. It is an unusual approach: There is no discussion between participants. Individuals prayerfully reflect on a particular scripture passage, which is read three times from three different translations. Reflections and insights are offered without elaboration or community input. The process is concluded with individuals praying for one another.

## PREPARATION PRAYER

Take a moment of silent prayer. Attend to your breathing, relax your body, and become open and focused on God’s presence.

## NOTICE: FIRST READING 1 Peter 5:1-4 (NRSV)

### Peter 5:1-4 (NRSV)

*Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.*

Name a word or phrase that stands out.

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**Silence.**

Share the one word or phrase that stood out but without explanation or elaboration.

**CONNECT: SECOND READING**

Read the scripture passage aloud for the second time using a different translation.

**1 Peter 5:1-4 (The Message)**

*I have a special concern for you church leaders. I know what it's like to be a leader, in on Christ's sufferings as well as the coming glory. Here's my concern: that you care for God's flock with all the diligence of a shepherd. Not because you have to, but because you want to please God. Not calculating what you can get out of it, but acting spontaneously. Not bossily telling others what to do, but tenderly showing them the way. When God, who is the best shepherd of all, comes out in the open with his rule, he'll see that you've done it right and commend you lavishly.*

How does the passage intersect with your life?

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**Silence.**

Share but without discussion, questions, or comments.

**APPLY: THIRD READING**

Read the scripture passage aloud for the third time from another translation.

**1 Peter 5:1-4 (Inclusive Bible)**

*I send a word of advice to the elders among you. I, too, am an elder, as well as a witness to the sufferings of Christ and a partaker of the glory that will be revealed. Shepherd the flock entrusted to you. Shepherd it, not just out of duty, but eagerly, as God would have it. Don't do it for money, but do it freely. Don't be pompous or domineering, but set an example for the whole community to follow. Then when the chief Shepherd comes, you will receive a crown of unfading glory.*

What is God calling you to do in light of this passage?

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**Silence.**

Share but without discussion, questions, or comments.

Pray for the person next to you.

**CONCLUDE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER**



Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. **Amen.**

DISCUSSION

How was this scripture meditation method for you? Describe the experience.

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Did you feel like you connected with God? Describe the experience.

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Did you gain any insight or sense a response through this process?

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Are you a spiritual leader or elder in your community?

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## SPIRITUAL LEADER AS STEWARD

**Do you consider yourself a spiritual leader? Do you recognize that you have a responsibility to model and mentor spiritual growth and development in others?**

- ✔ often people point to those who are ordained as spiritual leaders
- ✔ many lay people do not recognize themselves as spiritual leaders
- ✔ yet, you are in this program because you were discerned to be a spiritual leader

**You have been entrusted with this faith community.**

- ✔ you proclaim your faith by: how you use your time, gifts, and money; how you pray and tell your faith story; and how you care for people, the world, and creation
- ✔ you help others grow and come to know God through Jesus
- ✔ stewardship is a key element of leadership

### Stewarding of time

- ✔ critical to regularly connect with God
- ✔ misguided assumption that taking time with God is frivolous or selfish
- ✔ Jesus pushed away from busyness of the world to be in the company of God

### Stewarding of finances

- ✔ proportional giving
- ✔ if the church community is important to you, your finances (and giving) should reflect this priority

### Stewarding of service

- ✔ discern (within the community) your talents, spiritual gifts, and calling
- ✔ be able to answer: “How am I following Jesus by serving the world?”

**Following Jesus is not a hobby or another volunteer activity.**

- ✔ values and practices of Jesus impact every aspect of our lives
- ✔ we are spiritual leaders and stewards of God’s abundant gifts

# Spiritual Leader as Steward Worksheet

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Psalm 24:1 (NRSV)

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.*

In our creeds and in the Baptismal Covenant, we state that God has created all things. We have been entrusted to care for God's creation. We do this when we model:

- love and compassion
- generosity and hospitality
- intentional living and proportional giving
- care for others, the church, creation, and for ourselves

How do you steward? Reflect on the following questions:

## YOUR TIME

Do you make time for prayer? Are you using your time well? Do you feel anxious, pressured, and under a time constraint? What would you like to have more time for?

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## YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND TALENTS

Reflecting on your spiritual gifts, what activities do you feel drawn toward? What activities would you like to stop?

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## YOUR FINANCES

What proportion of your financial resources do you give to the church to serve God's world?

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**YOUR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH**

Do you eat healthily and exercise regularly? Do you take care of yourself with regular medical attention?

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**GOD’S CREATION**

What efforts do you take to care for the environment? What political involvement do you take on to ensure there is a healthy living environment for all people and generations to come?

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**YOUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS**

Do others perceive that I pattern my life as a follower of Jesus? What might I do differently to make this more apparent?

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# Liturgical Tradition

“ The chief end of worship is the same as those of the spiritual practices, the human moves towards its Origin...and accepts their tiny place in that secret life of Creation, which consists in the praise, adoration, and manifestation of God. ”

- Evelyn Underhill, 20<sup>th</sup>-century Christian mystic

## FOCUS OF SESSION

- Explore the church's spiritual heritage in an experiential process
- Reflect on key elements of the liturgical space traditions
- Learn to pray the liturgy

## DISCUSSION

How are we spiritually formed through worship services?

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What are other ways we are spiritually formed?

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What are the benefits and limitations of being spiritually formed through worship?

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# Sacred Stations Exercise

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We are spiritually formed through our worship. The architecture, liturgies, prayers, and music come together to nurture spiritual growth and help people draw closer to God.

How does your church space and liturgy draw you to God?

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Which station(s) helped you connect with God?

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Did you gain any new insights through this exercise?

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Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”  
And I said, “Here am I; send me!”

- Isaiah 6:8

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# Closing Retreat



“ Day by day, dear Lord, of thee  
three things I pray: to see thee  
more clearly, love thee more dearly,  
follow thee more nearly, day by day. ”

- Richard, Bishop of Chichester

# Agenda

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## Friday Evening

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SESSION 19

### GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT

- Welcome and Hospitality
- Opening Prayer
- *Revive* Program Review Icebreaker
- African Bible Study Meditation
- Presentation 19A
- Spiritual Continuum

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Break

- Spiritual Continuum (*continued*)
- Rule of Life
- Compline

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Closing Prayer

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## Saturday

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SESSION 20

### MY NEXT STEPS AS A SPIRITUAL LEADER

- Welcome, Morning Prayer, and Discussion
- Spiritual Storyboard
- Telling the Spiritual Story
- Noonday Prayers

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Lunch

- Affirmed as a Child of God

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Closing Eucharist

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# Guided by the Spirit

## FOCUS OF SESSION

- Reflect on the experience of spiritual formation during the program
- Finalize the Rule of Life, pulling together the heart's desire, spiritual practices, stewardship intentions, discerned spiritual gifts, and vocational call

“What the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies.”

- Thomas Cranmer, Leader of the Reformation, Archbishop of Canterbury

## AFRICAN BIBLE STUDY MEDITATION

Read the scripture passage three times, each time from a different translation. Participants offer their insights after a period of silence between each reading. There is no discussion, elaboration, or further comment.

## FIRST READING

### 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-20 (NRSV)

*From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

What does this say about God?

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## SECOND READING

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-20 (THE MESSAGE)**

*Because of this decision we don't evaluate people by what they have or how they look. We looked at the Messiah that way once and got it all wrong, as you know. We certainly don't look at him that way anymore. Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life burgeons! Look at it! All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other. God put the world square with himself through the Messiah, giving the world a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins. God has given us the task of telling everyone what he is doing. We're Christ's representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God's work of making things right between them. We're speaking for Christ himself now: Become friends with God; he's already a friend with you.*

What does this say about me?

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## THIRD READING

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-20 (THE INCLUSIVE BIBLE)**

*And so from now on, we don't look on anyone in terms of mere human judgment. Even if we did once regard Christ in these terms, that is not how we know Christ now. And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old order has passed away; now everything is new! All of this is from God, who ransomed us through Christ—and made us ministers of that reconciliation. This means that through Christ, the world was fully reconciled again to God, who didn't hold our transgressions against us, but instead entrusted us with this message of reconciliation. This makes us Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making the appeal directly through us. Therefore we implore you in Christ's name: be reconciled to God.*

What does this say about what we should be doing?

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## Presentation

### GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT

You are on a spiritual journey!

#### Spiritual continuum

- behavioral research shows that there are stages of spiritually growth, like with our physical and emotional development
- four distinct categories for spiritual growth: explore, grow, deepen, and center
- based on a relationship of love of God, through Christ and love for what God loves

The difference between doing church work and being on a spiritual journey with Jesus is like the difference between reading a menu and eating the meal

- not expected to just attend church and have a church job
- invited to be spiritually fed, offered the gift of new life and in Christ
- growing in a relationship with Christ transforms us into fullness of life
- this process is called discipleship
- you are being formed as disciples—as confident spiritual leaders

Thank you for bringing your gifts to ministry in the church and enriching our common life together. Congratulations for completing the *Revive* program, for going on a spiritual journey and for being equipped as a spiritual leader for Jesus’ mission to the world.

### DISCUSSION: SPIRITUAL CONTINUUM

What best describes your spiritual life **before** *Revive*?

- Non-existent
- Stalled
- Seeking/Wandering
- Growing
- Alive/Strong
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What best describes your spiritual life **now that you have completed** *Revive*?

- Non-existent
- Stalled
- Seeking/Wandering
- Growing
- Alive/Strong
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

To what do you attribute this growth—or lack of growth?

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EXCERPT



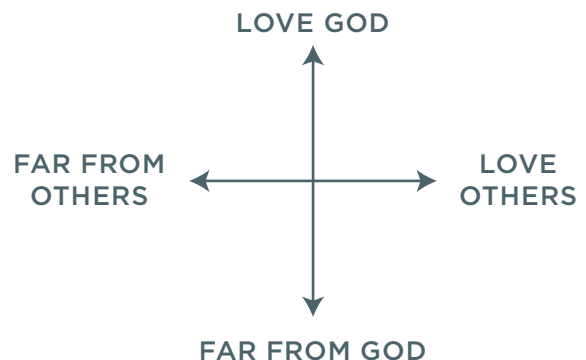
**THE SPIRITUAL CONTINUUM**

Research indicates there are four distinct groups in the spiritual continuum, centered on the idea that the Christian life is really about relationship, about increase in love of God and neighbor, and specifically that the Christian journey is one of discipleship of Christ.

**What does it mean to grow spiritually? To move along the spiritual continuum?**

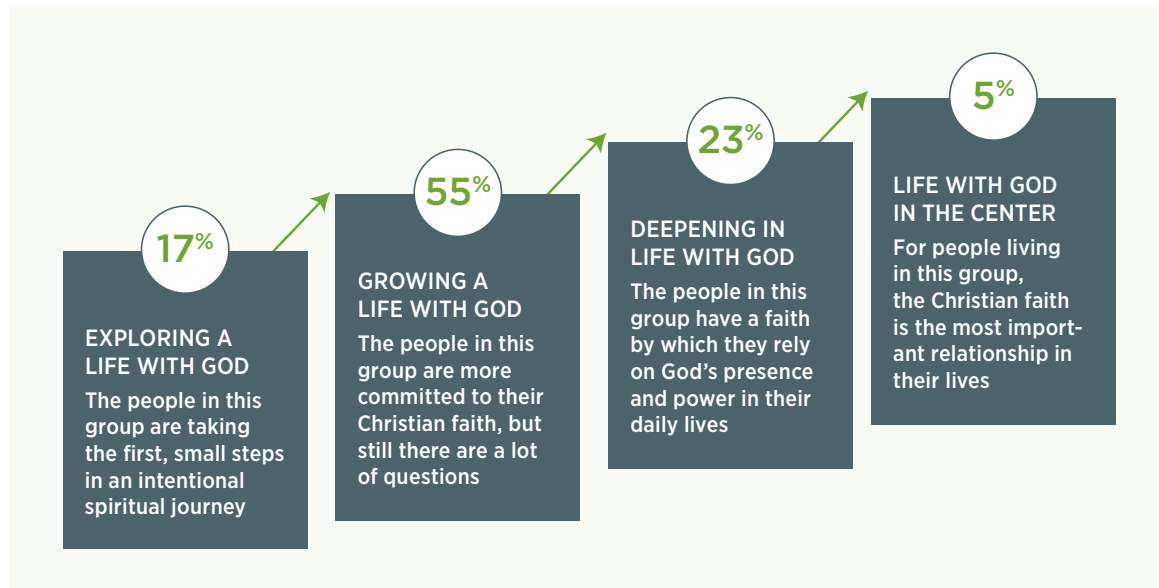
The process of growing as disciples of Christ—spiritual growth—requires that we always are growing in love of God and love of others. We can think of loving God as the vertical dimension of spiritual growth and loving others as the horizontal dimension. Through our cooperation with the work of the Holy Spirit, we grow from the bottom left quadrant toward the upper right quadrant. Love of God and love of others feed off each other as we grow. The more we love God, the more we love others. The more we show love to others, the more we grow in loving God.

Researchers discovered that by looking at where people are in their spiritual journey using both the vertical and the horizontal dimensions, they could create this four-stage continuum of spiritual growth shown on the next page.



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## SPIRITUAL GROWTH CONTINUUM

**So what gets people moving? What helps them grow?**

These questions were explored in depth through identifying over fifty variables. Very clear patterns emerged, helping us understand the catalysts for movement and spiritual growth. These top five variables include:

1. Reading and reflecting on scripture
2. Embracing core Christian beliefs
3. Engaging in personal spiritual practices
4. Serving those in need
5. Being in a spiritual community

Written by the Rev. Jay Sidebotham, the *Footsteps* workbook outlines a broader process called RenewalWorks that encourages congregations to have spiritual growth as a common goal and aspiration. Learn more about RenewalWorks at [www.renewalworks.org](http://www.renewalworks.org) or order *Footsteps* at [www.forwardmovement.org](http://www.forwardmovement.org).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Where do you see yourself on the continuum?

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What would help you move further along the spiritual continuum?

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How will we move forward together toward a deeper life with God?

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RULE OF LIFE EXERCISE

Review and complete the Rule of Life Worksheet.

PRAYER

Conclude this session with Compline.

“ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. ”

- Matthew 28:18-20

# Rule of Life Worksheet

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A Rule of Life is a document where we record our activities and spiritual practices that will keep us connected to God in our daily living. It was developed by Saint Benedict around 530 CE to help his monastic community draw closer to God. It can cover all parts and facets of life as it is meant to be a comprehensive and intentional effort to provide reasonable and life-giving structure to our daily lives.

Margaret Guenther, a writer on prayer, says that a Rule of Life should act like a trellis for a grapevine—supportive, not stifling. So, make sure your rules are:

- realistic
- achievable
- consistent with your lifestyle
- considerate to your loved ones who may be affected by them
- accountable

Building upon earlier drafts of your Rule, ask yourself:

- Where do you sense God is calling you to grow further?
- What is the purpose of your life and calling?
- How can you best use the spiritual gifts God has given you?

***I intentionally take on these disciplines and practices out of love for God, myself, and God's world and to order my life for Christ's service to the world.***

## PRAYER LIFE

Describe the time, place, type of prayer life you want to commit to (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly)

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## SCRIPTURE

Describe the commitment you want to make in incorporating scripture meditation into your life (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly)

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**FAMILY LIFE**

Describe the commitment you want to make to fulfilling your calling to your family (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly)

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**WORK LIFE**

Describe the commitment you want to make to fulfilling your calling to your family (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly)

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**CREATION, SUSTAINABILITY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Describe the commitment you want to make to fulfilling your calling to being a steward of creation (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly)

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**HEALTHY MIND AND BODY**

Describe the commitment you want to make to fulfilling your calling to steward your mental and physical body (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly)

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**FINANCES**

Describe the commitment you want to make to fulfilling your calling to live generously and to form a spirit of enough (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly)

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**SERVICE TO OTHERS AND THE WORLD**

Describe the commitment you want to make to fulfilling your calling to love God's world (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly)

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**OTHER**

Description

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# My Next Steps as a Spiritual Leader

## FOCUS OF SESSION

- Expand your Spiritual Storyboard
- Explore next steps for ministry and spiritual growth
- Affirm ministry capacities in others
- Design and participant in a closing eucharist

## MORNING PRAYER

The facilitator calls the group together for Morning Prayer.

## SPIRITUAL STORY

Reflect on your Spiritual Storyboard from the Opening Retreat—or start a new one. Create a depiction of your spiritual journey over the duration of the program and where you feel you are being called into the future.

“Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break. And all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you.”

– L. R. Knost, Author and activist



*Creative and loving God, you fashioned each one of us while we were in our mother's womb, and you have been as close to us as our very breath ever since. You know our thoughts before we are aware of them. Give us insight as we reflect on your call in our lives as we move forward. Calm our anxiety and strengthen our trust in you. In Christ and empowered by the Spirit. Amen.*

Some prompting questions:

- Mark times when you felt consolation and desolation during the program.
- What areas of your life are you now being called to focus on?
- What changes will you have to make?
- How will your ministry change in the future?



Your Spiritual Story

STRONG CONNECTION WITH GOD

FELT DISTANT FROM GOD



# Affirmed as a Child of God

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I affirm \_\_\_\_\_ as a spiritual leader.  
(insert name)

# Closing Eucharist Worksheet

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## COLLECT

The collect is an opening prayer that collects the sentiments of the day and focuses the worship. It usually is four to six lines and takes the form of our STAF prayers.

Here is an example:

*God of power, whose Holy Spirit renews your people in the bread and wine we bless and share: may the boldness of the Spirit transform us, the gentleness of the Spirit lead us, and the gifts of the Spirit equip us to serve and worship you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Now, it's your turn to write a collect. Be creative and have fun!

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At the appropriate moment in the service, please stand and read your collect. Thank you.

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## FIRST READING

1. Please choose one of the translations of Psalm 150 that best speaks to this gathering.
2. You may choose to read the text or you may choose to enliven it somehow with something creative. Conclude with the phrase, "the Word of the Lord." The people answer, "Thanks be to God."

## PSALM 150

### New Revised Standard Version

Praise the Lord!

Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament!

Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing greatness!

Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!

Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!

Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord!

### **The Message**

Hallelujah!

Praise God in his holy house of worship, praise him under the open skies;

Praise him for his acts of power, praise him for his magnificent greatness;

Praise with a blast on the trumpet, praise by strumming soft strings;

Praise him with castanets and dance, praise him with banjo and flute;

Praise him with cymbals and a big bass drum, praise him with fiddles and mandolin.

Let every living, breathing creature praise God!

Hallelujah!

### **The Inclusive Bible**

Alleluia! We praise you, YHWH, in your sanctuary;

We praise you in your mighty skies!

We praise you for your powerful deeds;

We praise you for your overwhelming glory!

We praise you with the blast of the trumpet;

We praise you with the lyre and harp!

We praise you with the timbrel and dance:

We praise you with strings and flute!

We praise you with clashing cymbals;

We praise you with resounding cymbals!

Let everything that has breath praise Yahweh! Alleluia!

## GOSPEL READING

1. Please choose one of the translations that you feel best speaks to this gathering.  
The person reading the gospel asks the worshipping community to stand for the reading and says, “the Gospel according to Matthew.” The people respond, “**Glory be to thee, O Lord.**”
2. The gospel reading is concluded with, “the Gospel of Christ.” The people respond, “**Praise be to thee, O Christ.**”

### MATTHEW 28:16-20

#### New Revised Standard Version

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

#### The Message

Meanwhile, the eleven disciples were on their way to Galilee, headed for the mountain Jesus had set for their reunion. The moment they saw him they worshiped him. Some, though, held back, not sure about worship, about risking themselves totally.

Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: “God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.”

#### The Inclusive Bible

The Eleven made their way to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had summoned them. At the sight of the risen Christ they fell down in homage, though some doubted what they were seeing. Jesus came forward and addressed them in these words: “All authority has been given me both in heaven and on earth; go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the name of Abba God, and of the Only Begotten, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, even until the end of the world!”





Celebrant: Gracious God, in the fullness of time you sent Jesus the Christ to share our fragile humanity. Through Jesus' life, death and resurrection you open the path from brokenness to health, from fear to trust, from pride and conceit to reverence for you.

Rejected by a world that could not bear the Gospel of life, Jesus knew death was near. His head anointed for burial by an unknown woman, Jesus gathered together those who loved him.

He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it and gave it to his friends, saying, "Take and eat: this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper, Jesus took the cup of wine, gave you thanks, and said, "Drink this all of you, this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

And now we gather at this table in response to his commandment, to share the bread and cup of Christ's undying love, and to proclaim our faith.

**All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Celebrant: Breathe your Holy Spirit, the wisdom of the universe, upon these gifts that we bring to you: this bread, this cup, ourselves, our souls and bodies, that we may be signs of your love for all the world and ministers of your transforming purpose.

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, Creator of all, and we bless your holy name for ever. **Amen.**

Supplemental Eucharistic Prayer #S1, from Supplemental Eucharistic Prayers, Services of the Word and Night Prayer. ©The General Synod of The Anglican Church of Canada, 2001.





# Closing Worship Bulletin

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**OPENING SONG** *(optional)*

**COLLECT** *(Written and led by participant(s))*

**FIRST READING** *(Offered by participant(s))*

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL** *(Offered by participant(s))*

The Gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory be to thee, O Lord.**

At the conclusion of the gospel...

The Gospel of Christ.

**Praise be to thee, O Christ.**

**GRADUATION CEREMONY**

A certificate is offered to participants to honor their participation and completion of the *Revive* program.

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE** *(Written and led by participant(s))*

**EUCHARIST**

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

**People And with thy spirit.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

**People We lift them up unto the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

*Gather around the table with the celebrant. The preface is read by the assigned participants.*

Celebrant

**All Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

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**Celebrant** Gracious God, in the fullness of time you sent Jesus the Christ to share our fragile humanity. Through Jesus' life, death and resurrection you open the path from brokenness to health, from fear to trust, from pride and conceit to reverence for you.

Rejected by a world that could not bear the Gospel of life, Jesus knew death was near. His head anointed for burial by an unknown woman, Jesus gathered together those who loved him.

He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it and gave it to his friends, saying, "Take and eat: this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper, Jesus took the cup of wine, gave you thanks, and said, "Drink this all of you, this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

And now we gather at this table in response to his commandment, to share the bread and cup of Christ's undying love, and to proclaim our faith.

**All** **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

**Celebrant** Breathe your Holy Spirit, the wisdom of the universe, upon these gifts that we bring to you: this bread, this cup, ourselves, our souls and bodies, that we may be signs of your love for all the world and ministers of your transforming purpose.

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, Creator of all, and we bless your holy name for ever. **Amen.**

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The celebrant turns to a participant and offers the bread saying: The Body of Christ. The celebrant gives the paten to the participant who in turn offers the bread to another participant, saying: The Body of Christ...*

*The celebrant turns to a participant and offers the wine saying: The Blood of Christ. The celebrant gives the chalice to the participant who in turn offers the wine to another participant, saying: The Body of Christ...*

### DOXOLOGY

*In a circle holding hands...*

**Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.**

### BLESSING

The celebrant offers the final blessing.

**DISMISSAL** (*Written and led by participant(s)*)

### THE PEACE

*The celebrant concludes with...*

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**









**Forward  
Movement**

inspire disciples. empower evangelists.

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