

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR YOUTH

Centering Prayer

We are going to spend some time just being in God's presence. This isn't a meditation where you're walking on a beach with Jesus. It's just a time to be, right here, right now, in this place, in God's presence without any agenda. One leader calls it "wasting time with God." So if you find that your mind is wandering, slowly let go of the thoughts and try to refocus on your breathing. Just bring yourself back to this time and place.

Now, close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths. Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. Now, just be for a while...knowing that God is here too.

Allow 2 minutes for complete silence.

At the 2:00 mark, say "Amen."

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 4:1-11, selected verses

We are going to do a practice called “Divine Reading,” which in Latin is *lectio divina*. It’s a way of reading scripture not just to understand with our head, but to see how it speaks to us personally. The idea is to hear a passage several times, and to see if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you in any particular way. Sometimes there isn’t a clear message. Sometimes it seems to relate very directly. Either is ok.

So you will hear the passage from Ephesians 4, 1-4 and verse 7, three times. The first time, I want you to listen to what the passage says, try to get the meaning of it overall, and ask any questions about what things mean. Here is the first reading (read the passage):

4 Therefore I, [Paul], a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. 2 Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. 3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. 7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.

Ask for questions and offer any insights you or the group might have.

The second time you hear the passage, I want you to listen for what word or phrase jumps out to you.

4 Therefore I, [Paul], a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. 2 Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. 3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. 7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.

Invite everyone to share—if they want to—what jumped out at them.

Finally, this third time, I want you to listen again, and reflect on what you think God may be saying through that word or phrase you heard.

4 Therefore I, [Paul], a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. 2 Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. 3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. 7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.

Ask: Why did God make that word or phrase jump out at you? Invite responses as people are comfortable sharing.

Self-Examination: Ignatian Examen

Spend some time reflecting on the following questions. Journal silently your answers. Take note of where you were, what you were doing. Give them the journal sheets.

When have you felt most loved this week? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing?

When have you seen God at work this week? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing?

When have you felt most distant from God this week? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing?

When were you able to show love to others this week? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing?

Breath Prayers

We are going to practice a breath prayer. This is a way of praying that is tuned to your breathing. You will take slow, deep breaths, and when you inhale, you will say part of a phrase, and when you exhale, you will say the rest.

Let's practice breathing. Take a deep breath in. Now breathe out.

Take another deep breath in. Now breathe out.

Now, when you breathe in, say to yourself "Jesus, Son of God" (have them practice).

When you breathe out, say to yourself "let me know that you are with me."

So we will do this five times.

Breathe in ("Jesus, Son of God"). Breathe out ("Let me know that you are with me").

Breathe in ("Jesus, Son of God"). Breathe out ("Let me know that you are with me").

Breathe in ("Jesus, Son of God"). Breathe out ("Let me know that you are with me").

Breathe in ("Jesus, Son of God"). Breathe out ("Let me know that you are with me").

Breathe in ("Jesus, Son of God"). Breathe out ("Let me know that you are with me").

Amen.

When have you felt most loved this week? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing?

When have you seen God at work this week? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing?

When have you felt most loved this week? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing?

When have you seen God at work this week? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing?

When have you felt most distant from God this week? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing?

When were you able to show love to others this week? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing?

When have you felt most distant from God this week? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing?

When were you able to show love to others this week? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing?