

Journey

By Lee Yates



Regardless of the weather, winter often brings trips to visit friends and family. Often the journey home can be a stressful part of winter. Pilgrimage is an ancient practice and our modern travels can be more meaningful and less stressful if we make it a spiritual journey.

For

Young Adult

Season

Winter

Needed

Map of a place you are going to visit (can be as big as a city or small as a floor plan of a home), paper and pen, journal or notebook

Prepare in Advance

- Make or print out a map of the special place you will visit.
- Make a list of special locations on that map.
- Make a list of special people to see on your visit.
- If you have a long journey to this place, make a play list of songs that remind you of days spent in this location.

Activity Plan

1. Begin your journey with a prayer. Here are some words if you need some help:

God, you have journeyed with your people out of Egypt, into Judea, and on countless pilgrimages since. Be with me on my journey. May it draw me closer to you.

2. If you have a playlist, start your music. Every journey has a beginning and it is time to start yours. Start walking, driving, or flying.

3. When you arrive at your destination, say a prayer to center yourself. Here are some words if you need help:

God, help me see you and feel you in this place.

4. Make time during your visit to spend some time alone. In this alone time, visit the places on your list of locations. If your destination is a family home, spend time in different rooms and reflect on memories of that space (or the furniture in that space if "home" has moved). If your destination is a hometown, spend some time in different places in town and reflect on memories of those locations. Use some or all of these reflection questions for each stop on your visit.

- How has this place, or events that happened here, impacted my life?
- How has God been made known to me in this place?
- What questions or issues does this place bring to mind?
- What does this place make me feel and why?
- What does this place remind me about myself?
- What do I want to remember about this place and this moment in six months?

5. Before leaving a location or space, stop and say a prayer. Here are some words if you need help:

God, bless this space and may this stop on my journey be a blessing to me.

6. Journal about your experience at each location, making note of anything that came up in your reflection time.
7. Look back over your journal and notes and see if there are any reoccurring themes. Spend some time in prayer, asking how God might be strengthening or challenging you through this pilgrimage. Make a short list of actions you might take in response to this pilgrimage (i.e. talk with family about a difficult topic, spend more time with an old friend).

