



CREATING A CULTURE OF CALLING

Adolescent Faith Formation Program ***The Stories We Live - Adolescent Version***

This adolescent faith formation program uses the book, *The Stories Will Live*, as the primary content for the eight sessions. The sessions do not follow the book chapter-by-chapter like the adult program, but both programs draw upon the same foundational content. The one hour activities are designed for a large group gathering led by one or more facilitator(s) leading the sessions and using small groups for discussion. Activities can be combined in a multi-hour program, full day program, and overnight and retreat program.

Leaders should be familiar with the content in *The Stories We live* by Kathleen Cahalan (Eerdmans, 2017) to lead the sessions. All of the leaders will need a copy of *The Stories We Live* by Kathleen Cahalan (Eerdmans, 2017). Preparation and resources needed for each session are included with the session

- Activity 1. Discovering the Ways We Are Called
- Activity 2. Calling Stories of People in the Bible
- Activity 3. Calling Stories of People Today
- Activity 4. Called to be Followers of Christ
- Activity 5. Discovering Your Calling as a Young Person
- Activity 6. Called by the God Within

Additional Sessions

If you want to conduct additional activities, consider adapting Session 6 - Called through Each Other, and Session 7 - Called in Suffering from *The Stories We Live* Adult Faith Formation Program.

Program Introduction

Vocation embraces who we are, how we live, and what we do—identity, relationships, and work. Vocation includes the diverse ways God calls people within their particular circumstance. It embraces how to find mean and purpose in work and relationships, how to balance multiple responsibilities, how to connect personal concerns to the common good, how to listen deeply to God, and how to respond with faith and courage. (Laura Kelly Fanucci)

Vocation is a central part of the Christian life, encompassing:

- *who we are called to be*—the core of our identity, as created by God and baptized in Christ, and sent forth to serve by the power of the Holy Spirit;
- *how we are called to live*—our commitments of lifestyle and relationships, including marriage, parenting, or the single life;
- *what we are called to do*—the work, service and activities that fill our daily lives, including paid or professional work, volunteering, homemaking, raising children or caregiving.

As a theological concept, vocation has received renewed attention in recent years, expanding beyond traditional definitions of ordained ministry to include the diverse ways we are called:

- by the God who created us
- to particular kinds of work and relationships
- as the people we are, with our gifts, talents and resources
- in a variety of circumstances, whether joyful or difficult
- from difficult situations or times of transitions
- through the example, invitation or mentoring of other people
- for the service of others
- within the life of God who is love

We are called *by* God, who is the source of our callings. We are called *to* follow the way shown by Jesus and taken up by his disciples; this calling we share with each other. We are called *as* unique persons with a particular history and circumstance. We are called *from* the losses and grief we suffer over time, so that we can embrace life again. We are called to give our lives *for* others, not simply for our self-improvement or fulfillment. We are even called *in* our deepest suffering to carry out God's purposes in mysterious ways. We are called *through* the people in our lives, because vocation takes root in community. And, finally, we are called together to live *within* God's loving embrace, both now and in the life to come. (From: *The Stories We Live: Finding God's calling All Around Us*. Kathleen Cahalan. Eerdmans, 2017.)

Activity #1: Discovering the Ways We Are Called

Resources Needed

- Leader: Introduction and Chapter 1 in *The Stories We Live*
- Prayer Resource: *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation*. Laura Kelly Fanucci (Wipf & Stock, 2017)
- 1 Set of Visual Faith Images: Calling and Vocation (purchase from www.VibrantFaith.org)

Opening

- Select a prayer from *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation* or a resource of your choosing.
- Be sure to include a community building activity to open the session.

Introduce: What is a Calling?

Begin the session by introducing the concept of “calling.” Ask the young people to share their responses to the following questions:

- When you hear the word “calling” or “vocation” what comes to mind?
- What are illustrations of the use of the word “calling.” Who does it apply to? What situations is applied?

Then share with them how the dictionary defines “calling” in the following way (see (Cambridge Dictionary and Oxford Dictionary):

- *A strong wish to do a job, usually one that is social valuable* (I’m glad she’s going into medicine. It’s a very worthy calling.)
- *An activity that is persons’ most important job, especially one in which the person has an unusually strong interest and ability* (She believes the medical professional should be thought of as a calling)
- *A strong urge towards a particular way of life or career; a vocation* (Those who have a special calling to minister to others' needs.)
- *A profession or occupation* (He considered engineering one of the highest possible callings.)

The dictionary defines “vocation” in the very similar ways to “calling.”

- *a strong feeling of suitability for a particular career or occupation*
- *a person's employment or main occupation, especially regarded as particularly worthy and requiring great dedication.*
- Synonyms: calling, life’s work, mission, purpose

Ask the group who they think has a “calling” or “vocation.”

Explore: Calling in Images

Use the visual faith process to help people name their experience of calling. Spread the “Calling Images” on the table for all to see. Organize people into groups of 4-6 people.

Ask the young people to select an image that reflects their experience of calling. Then ask them to share their story in small groups:

- How does this image capture your experience of calling?
- What emotions/feeling surface in you as you look at this image?
- What does this image tell you about your view of God and how God is involved in your life and how God is calling you?

When all of the groups have concluded storytelling, invite people to share their insights about calling and vocation that emerged from their image experience.

Explain: Callings and Vocation

Use the following information to present a brief understanding of calling to the group. Emphasize the diverse ways people experience callings. For more information consult: *The Stories We live* by Kathleen Cahalan (Eerdmans, 2017).

Vocation is a central part of the Christian life, encompassing:

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- *what we are called to do*—the work, service and activities that fill our daily lives, including paid or professional work, volunteering, homemaking, raising children or caregiving.

Vocation includes all of us – it’s more than people who are in ordained ministry. It includes diverse ways we are called:

- by the God who created us
- to particular kinds of work and relationships
- as the people we are, with our gifts, talents and resources
- in a variety of circumstances, whether joyful or difficult
- from difficult situations or times of transitions
- through the example, invitation or mentoring of other people
- for the service of others
- within the life of God who is love (prayer, silence, reflection)

We are called *by* God, who is the source of our callings. We are called *to* follow the way shown by Jesus and taken up by his disciples; this calling we share with each other. We are called *as* unique persons with a particular history and circumstance. We are called *from* the losses and grief we suffer over time, so that we can embrace life again. We are called *to* give our lives *for* others, not

simply for our self-improvement or fulfillment. We are even called *in* our deepest suffering to carry out God's purposes in mysterious ways. We are called *through* the people in our lives, because vocation takes root in community. And, finally, we are called together to live *within* God's loving embrace, both now and in the life to come. (From: *The Stories We Live: Finding God's calling All Around Us*. Kathleen Cahalan. Eerdmans, 2017.)

Illustrate: Three Images of Vocation

Present the three images of calling from Chapter 1 of *The Stories We Live*. Illustrate each image with examples of people whose calling in life an Acorn, a Pilgrimage, or a Surprising Discovery.

Is your calling more like an ACORN, PILGRIMAGE, or SURPISING DISCOVERY?

Vocation like an acorn: experiencing God's call as a precise plan, or at least having a strong sense from children that God has called you to a particular role, relationship, or gift. Something has been given to people to do. A person's life could only become one thing like an acorn becoming an oak tree.

Vocation as a pilgrimage: experiencing God's call as a journey. Pilgrims experience a call to follow a particular way and trust that what they need will emerge as part of the journey. Pilgrims must walk to figure it out: to learn as they go, to struggle under difficulty, and even to fail at times. As a pilgrim, being called by God means trusting in God's companionship no matter what happens along the way. Callings become a response that requires that we discern the path with God's guidance.

Vocation as a surprising discovery: "Aha!" experiences can reveal a direction or purpose that people might not have seen or understood, even though it was right in front of them. People discover an ability or develop a passion; they are awakened to a gift, and they fall in love in way that never leaves them. Regardless of whether that gift becomes paid employment, many people find that callings are rooted in something they are given to do and love doing for others.

Each of these images—acorn, pilgrimage, and surprising discovery—is a key way to experience God's call. The images tell us that vocation is something we make with God, who can be known and named as planner, walking companion, and gift giver. In these sense our experiences of God and vocation are better understood on a continuum from the highly detailed to the less precise, with everything in between.

Some people experience callings as a choice they make, while others sense that they have no choice but are born into their vocation or given gifts they must use. When you hear God's call in your life and in the lives of those around you, remember to affirm that God has many ways, not just one way.

God does not create us *with* a vocation (one single plan that God has made), but with the capacity for vocations (that ability to engage in dialogue with God and others to create a plan for our life).

Vocation becomes then, a creative act, something we create with God and others, unique to each of our lives.

Emphasize that *everyone has a calling from God and we experience difference callings as we grow and mature.*

Conclude

Invite the young people to share what they learned calling and what they learned about how they understand and experience calling in their lives.

Activity #2: Calling Stories of People in the Bible

Resources Needed

- Leader: Introduction and Chapter 1 in *The Stories We Live*
- Prayer Resource: *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation*. Laura Kelly Fanucci (Wipf & Stock, 2017)
- Bibles for each person

Opening

- Select a prayer from *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation* or a resource of your choosing.
- Be sure to include a community building activity to open the session.

Explore: Callings in the Bible

This activity engages young people in exploring how people are called by God in the Bible

Assign the following 14 Bible stories on calling to each young person (for more than 14 people organize the group into pairs or small groups).

Review the seven ways God calls people using the information from *The Stories We Live* (see the Introduction and Chapter 1 in particular). Put this on a sheet of paper, white board, or PowerPoint slide for all to see.

1. Called by God in Multiple Ways
2. Called as We Are
3. Called from People, Places, or Situation
4. Called for Service and Work
5. Called through Each Other
6. Called in Suffering
7. Called by the God Within

Ask the young people to read the story assigned to them and then discuss which of the seven ways God calls people applies to their story. One story might illustrate multiple ways God calls people.

Bible Stories

1. Abraham: Genesis 17:1-9
2. Moses: Exodus 3:1-17
3. Deborah: Judges 4:1-16
4. Ruth: 1:1-17
5. Samuel: 1Samuel 3:1-10
6. Elijah: 1Kings 19:1-16
7. Jeremiah: Jeremiah 1:4-10
8. Isaiah: Isaiah 6

9. Mary: Luke 1:26-38
10. Disciples of Jesus: John 1:35-51
11. Zacchaeus: Luke 19:1-10
12. Samaritan Woman at the Well: John 4:1-42
13. Paul: Acts 9:1-30
14. Timothy: 1Timothy 4:6-16

Here are examples of how these stories seek to capture one or more of the ways that God calls us.

- Called by God in Multiple Ways (e.g., Mary—Acorn, Timothy—Pilgrimage, Paul – Surprising Discovery,
- Called as We Are (e.g., Moses)
- Called from People, Places, or Situation (e.g., Abraham)
- Called for Service and Work (e.g., Paul)
- Called through Each Other (e.g., Deborah)
- Called in Suffering (e.g., Ruth and Naomi)
- Called by the God Within (e.g., Elijah)

Present

After the young people have read and discussed their Bible story, invite them to share a brief summary of the story and which of the seven ways God calls us was illustrated in that story. You might want to record the answers on newsprint or on a PowerPoint slide.

Conclude

After all 14 Bible stories have been presented, invite the young people to share their insights on how God calls us, what these people in the Bible can teach us about calling, and how it can influence the way they think about calling.

- What did you discover about calling from the people in the Bible stories?
- Which of the seven ways God calls us was the most common in the stories from the Bible and from people today?
 1. Called by God in Multiple Ways
 2. Called as We Are
 3. Called from People, Places, or Situation
 4. Called for Service and Work
 5. Called through Each Other
 6. Called in Suffering
 7. Called by the God Within
- How did the stories from the Bible help you identify your own calling and how you might live your calling?

Activity #3: Calling Stories of People Today

Preparation

- The first option – A Panel on Callings and Vocation – requires inviting and preparing people for a panel interview. The second option – Video Stories on Calling and Vocation – requires selecting and previewing videos to show during the session.

Resources Needed

- Leader: *The Stories We Live*
- Prayer Resource: *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation*. Laura Kelly Fanucci (Wipf & Stock, 2017)

Opening

- Select a prayer from *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation* or a resource of your choosing.
- Be sure to include a community building activity to open the session.

Overview

This activity is designed to guide young people in exploring how people are called today through stories. Once again you will use the seven ways God calls to select and analyze stories of calling. Review the seven ways God calls people using the information from *The Stories We Live* (see the Introduction and Chapter 1 in particular). Put this on a sheet of paper, white board, or PowerPoint slide for all to see.

1. Called by God in Multiple Ways
2. Called as We Are
3. Called from People, Places, or Situation
4. Called for Service and Work
5. Called through Each Other
6. Called in Suffering
7. Called by the God Within

Here are two ways to engage young people in the activity. You can do one or both of these activities.

Option 1. A Panel on Callings and Vocation

The purpose of this panel presentation is to expose young people to the stories of calling from people in the church community. To organize your panel, use the following process. You will serve as moderator for the panel. Consider video or audio recording the panel presentations.

1. Identify 4-6 people from the church community, representing different age groups, to share their stories of being called by God.. Try for a mix of ages and lifestyles. Involve single and married people, 20s through 90s.

2. Contact the people you've selected asking about their availability and willingness to take part in an educational program. Emphasize the informal nature and brevity (7 or 8 minutes) of the presentation. Let them know you will provide them with several key questions to guide their presentation and that you are willing to meet or work with them as they gather their thoughts and ideas. Invite them to bring information about their ministry or agency to distribute to the young people.
3. Share with the panelists an overview of the session and the role they will play in it. Meet or talk with them beforehand to make sure they are comfortable and prepared. The format around which the panelists will build their presentations is simple. Here is a basic process. Feel free to add questions for them to prepare.
 - Introduce yourself. (Who are you? Where do you live? What do you do?)
 - Share your story of how God is calling you today? How did you recognize God's call? When?
 - Is this a new calling or vocation (e.g., becoming a parent, beginning a career, entering retirement)?
 - How do you live your call or vocation in everyday life?
4. Gather the panelists just prior to the session to meet each other and decide the order in which they will speak.
5. Introduce the panel members to your group at the start of the panel presentation. Explain that you have asked them to share their story of God's calling in their life. Ask group members to write down any comments or questions that come to them as the panelists are speaking.
6. Allow each panelist 7 or 8 minutes for his or her presentation (total time: approximately 30 -40 minutes). When the panelists are finished, allow time for a stretch or refreshment break.
7. Invite the group members to ask questions to explore calling and vocation in the lives of the panelists. Keep the questions focused on calling and vocation.
8. Have the group think about the kind of kinds of calling and vocation stories they heard using the seven ways God calls:
 - Called by God in Multiple Ways
 - Called as We Are
 - Called from People, Places, or Situation
 - Called for Service and Work
 - Called through Each Other
 - Called in Suffering
 - Called by the God Within
9. Thank the panelists for their contributions.

Option 2. Video Stories of Calling and Vocation

Video stories are a great way to explore calling and vocation in the lives of people today. Select several videos from the following sources. After each video ask the young people to reflection on what kind of calling and vocation they saw reflected in the story using the seven ways God calls:

- Called by God in Multiple Ways
- Called as We Are
- Called from People, Places, or Situation
- Called for Service and Work
- Called through Each Other
- Called in Suffering
- Called by the God Within

In addition to your own research of people in your community and church, here are video sources to consult in preparing for the session:

Current Events: Think back over the past year to see people who have demonstrated a call. For example the young people of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School have demonstrated a call born out of suffering to take a stand for peace over violence. They were listed in the 100 most influential people of 2018 in *Time* Magazine: <http://time.com/collection/most-influential-people-2018/5217568/parkland-students>.

CNN Heroes: Each year CNN selects the heroes of the year – many, if not all, of whom demonstrated a special calling and vocation. The 2018 CNN Heroes (and past year’s Heroes) can be found at <https://www.cnn.com/specials/cnn-heroes>. They have also selected CNN Young Heroes. You can find them at: <https://www.cnn.com/2017/12/12/us/gallery/cnn-young-wonders-2017/index.html>.

Lives Explored Videos on Calling and Vocation (Collegeville Institute Lives Explored Video Program): <https://collegevilleinstitute.org/vocation-projects/resources-for-congregations/lives-explored> and YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCR5ELYhtrvW7rnThE8aBnYQ>. There are several videos in this collection that focus on stories that can connect with young people. Here are a few suggestions. You can preview all of these on the Collegeville Institute website.

- **Obey’s Story:** As a young child, Obey felt a calling to serve. Watch how his community led him into new (and messy!) service he never expected.
- **Sarah’s Story:** In college, Sarah decided to step outside her comfort zone—even with the risk of failure. Discover how she brought her authentic self to her work in corporate America.
- **Jane’s Story:** Jane had just gotten her biggest break as a Hollywood actor. But when she walked onto Sunset Boulevard, she felt empty. See what happened when Jane made a surprising career change.
- **Francois’ Story:** As a new immigrant in New York City, Francois found himself in crisis, wondering what God wanted from him. Discover how a career he never expected brought him deep joy.

- **Lauren’s Story:** Lauren struggled in her 20s with loss and uncertainty. Hear how work became her saving grace.

Vocation: How Does God Call Us to Live our Faith?—Visual Poems (Faith and Leadership, (Duke Divinity): <https://www.faithandleadership.com/vocation-how-does-god-call-us-live-our-faith> and YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/FaithandLeadership/videos>. There are four videos in this collection to review. You can preview all of these on the Faith and Leadership website.

- **Vocation as Worship:** Ella Russell, the creator and owner of E-dub-a-licious Treats, sees each task of her work in the bakery as an opportunity to honor God. As God provides Ella with the resources and opportunities to do good work, Ella returns to God thanksgiving and praise and leads a community of people to delight in what God is doing in her life. Ella compels us to reflect on how our daily lives become an act of worship.
- **Vocation as Service:** Entrepreneur and boot-maker Joshua Bingaman encourages us to reflect on how Christian vocation goes beyond service to the self and connects to the deep needs of the community. Joshua’s story of healing and transformation in community is creatively retold through his work as a boot-maker. Joshua challenges us to humbly serve others in all that we do.
- **Vocation as Obligation:** Jillian “JJ” Simmons invites us to consider how Jesus’ love obligates us to live differently, reflecting Christ in the world. JJ’s faith in Jesus compels her to go about her work as a radio personality, nonprofit leader and mother with a drive to bring change in the world. Her grateful obligation inspires a renewed courage to follow the call God places in our lives.
- **Vocation as Commission:** Sculptor Anthony Suber challenges us to get to the work of telling the story of God’s love in tangible ways, fulfilling Jesus’ Great Commission. When we answer God’s call and begin to see the imperfect parts of ourselves and others with new eyes—God’s eyes of love—we are able to tell a different story about those imperfections. With God’s eyes of love, we are commissioned to live differently.

Conclude

Conclude by engaging young people to share what they learned from the two activities. You can do this in small groups or the large group.

- What did you discover about calling from the stories of people today?
- Which of the seven ways God calls us was the most common in the stories from people today?
 1. Called by God in Multiple Ways
 2. Called as We Are
 3. Called from People, Places, or Situation
 4. Called for Service and Work
 5. Called through Each Other
 6. Called in Suffering
 7. Called by the God Within
- How did the stories from people today help you identify your own calling and how you might live your calling?

Information for “Calling & Vocation” Panelists

Concept of Calling and Vocation

Vocation embraces who we are, how we live, and what we do—identity, relationships, and work. Vocation includes the diverse ways God calls people within their particular circumstance. It embraces how to find meaning and purpose in work and relationships, how to balance multiple responsibilities, how to connect personal concerns to the common good, how to listen deeply to God, and how to respond with faith and courage. (Laura Kelly Fanucci)

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Questions to Prepare

- Introduce yourself. (Who are you? Where do you live? What do you do?)
- Share your story of how God is calling you today? How did you recognize God’s call? When?
- Is this a new calling or vocation (e.g., becoming a parent, beginning a career, entering retirement)?
- How do you live your call or vocation in everyday life?

Activity #4. Called to be Followers of Christ

Preparation

- The first option – A Panel on Callings and Vocation – requires inviting and preparing people for a panel interview. The second option – Video Stories on Calling and Vocation – requires selecting and previewing videos to show during the session.

Resources Needed

- Handout: “Following Jesus Today”
- Leader: Chapter 2 in *The Stories We Live*
- Leader Reference: *Living Your Discipleship: Seven Ways to Express Your Deepest Calling*. Kathleen Cahalan and Laura Kelly Fanucci. Twenty Third Publications, 2015.
- Prayer Resource: *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation*. Laura Kelly Fanucci (Wipf & Stock, 2017)
- Bibles for each person

Opening

- Select a prayer from *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation* or a resource of your choosing.
- Be sure to include a community building activity to open the session.

Introduce

Introduce the concept of *called to follow Jesus* using this information from Kathleen Cahalan:

Jesus called his disciples to follow him rather the disciples choosing to follow him. Jesus’s “way” was radical, requiring disciples to give up loyalty to job, family, friends, and nation in order to embrace Jesus’ way of life. As disciples of Jesus today, we are called in the following ways: to be a follower, a worshipper, a witness, a neighbor, a forgiver, a prophet, and a steward.

Present: Called to Be a Follower

Read the story: “Jesus Calls the First Disciples” in Matthew 4:18-5:2:

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. When

Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying. . . .

Share with the group:

The opening scene of Jesus' ministry after his baptism is all action—he walks, calls, teaches, proclaims, cures, hikes, sits down, and speaks. If you are going to follow, you have to get and get going even if you are in the middle of something. If you don't follow immediately, you are going to miss it: you won't hear his teaching or witness him cure the sick or see the great crowds coming or finally sit at his feet to listen.

Explore: Six Ways of Following Jesus

Assign one of six ways we follow Jesus—worshipper, witness, neighbor, forgiver, prophet, and steward—to each group (if you have at least six groups) OR divide the large group into six groups of 4-6 people. For very large groups, you can have multiple small groups for each of the six ways. Keep group size to 4-6 people.

Using the handout as a resource, ask each group to reflect on the focusing question and commentary. They might also want to read the suggested Scripture passage (or another one of your choosing). Ask each prepare a brief summary of their reflections with the whole group.

After groups have finished their work, ask each group to share their summary reflections with the whole group.

The commentary for each question is adapted from *Living Your Discipleship: Seven Ways to Express Your Deepest Calling* by Kathleen Cahalan and Laura Fanucci.

1. How can people follow Jesus as a **worshipper**—one whose heart is filled with adoration and love for the source of life, the One on whom we depend?
 - Suggested Scripture: Matthew 8:1-13

Traditionally, Christians have worshipped God through different types of prayer: praising God in adoration, seeking God's forgiveness through confession, thanking God for blessings, and petitioning God for our needs and those of others (ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication).

2. How can people follow Jesus as a **witness** to what God has done for us?
 - Suggested Scripture: Luke 24:36-49

To be a witness means to give testimony, to proclaim, or to announce a message. Witness is to give testimony to the truth about what God has done for us, in and through Jesus Christ.

When we live our call to follow Jesus, when we tell each other how God has called us, or when we admit how hard it can be to figure out what to do and what God wants—that is to be a witness. It is to tell a truth about our lives, about our certainties, and our doubts, our fears, and our joys.

3. How can people follow Jesus as a *neighbor* to those around you?

- Suggested Scripture: Luke 14:12-14, Luke 10:25-37

Jesus neighbor ethic is built on the Great Commandment that unites love of God and love of neighbor. Jesus expands his teaching on neighbor to the point of embracing love for one's enemies. Jesus tackles the question of who is the neighbor in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

Neighbors are neighbors (people we know), strangers (whether near or far), and enemies (critics and opponents). By stretching our instincts past our comfort zone to include these widening circles of neighbors, strangers, and enemies, we enter into discipleship's view of "neighbor-hood" as a state of being in which all are drawn together in the household of God.

4. How can people follow Jesus as a *forgiver*—to forgive those who harm us and seek forgiveness when we harm others.

- Suggested Scripture: Luke 7:36-50,

Learning to be a forgiver begins with first recognizing that I am a sinner and that my actions hurt other people. I have to start with seeking forgiveness. When I am forgiven, then I know love and I can learn to practice forgiving others. Forgiving others for their sins against me requires great love.

5. How can people follow Jesus as a *prophet*—to declare what is wrong with our communities and world, and call people back to right relationship through justice and mercy.

- Suggested Scripture: Matthew 21:10-14

To be a prophet is to see what is wrong, broken, missing, or unjust in our society and to speak a word of truth that shines light on the situation. Prophets see the world as God sees the world and seek to share their vision with others.

Acting prophetically is at the heart of what it means to follow Christ. To be a prophet can be an uncomfortable part of the call to discipleship. But it is also what I cannot *not* do as a follower of Christ. What is unjust about our time and place? How are we complicit in systems that contribute to the oppression of others? Where do we need to help call people back to God's ways of mercy, forgiveness, justice, and peace?

6. How can people follow Jesus as a *steward*—caring for God's creation and the goods of the household.

- Suggested Scripture: Matthew 25:14-29

The call to stewardship means receiving gifts gratefully, nurturing their growth, and sharing them with others. The call to stewardship is the call to take care—of people, of places, and of talents and

skills we have been given to share. Like the stewards in Jesus' parable, we have been entrusted with God's gifts in the expectation that we will allow them to grow over time. So we are called to be steward with our whole lives: stewards of our work and of our world around us.

Conclusion

Conclude by engaging young people to share what they learned from exploring the six ways to follow Jesus. You can do this in small groups or the large group

- What did you discover about following Jesus from this activity?
- Which of the six ways of following Jesus are easier for you to live? Why?
- Which of the six ways of following Jesus are harder to live? Why?
- Which of the six ways of following Jesus do you want to start (or do better) living today?

Following Jesus Today

1. How can people follow Jesus as a *worshipper*—one whose heart is filled with adoration and love for the source of life, the One on whom we depend?
 - Suggested Scripture: Matthew 8:1-13

Traditionally, Christians have worshipped God through different types of prayer: praising God in adoration, seeking God’s forgiveness through confession, thanking God for blessings, and petitioning God for our needs and those of others (ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication).

2. How can people follow Jesus as a *witness* to what God has done for us?
 - Suggested Scripture: Luke 24:36-49

To be a witness means to give testimony, to proclaim, or to announce a message. Witness is to give testimony to the truth about what God has done for us, in and through Jesus Christ.

When we live our call to follow Jesus, when we tell each other how God has called us, or when we admit how hard it can be to figure out what to do and what God wants—that is be a witness. It is tell a truth about our lives , about our certainties, and our doubts, our fears, and our joys.

3. How can people follow Jesus as a *neighbor* to those around you?
 - Suggested Scripture: Luke 14:12-14, Luke 10:25-37

Jesus neighbor ethic is built on the Great Commandment that unites love of God and love of neighbor. Jesus expands his teaching on neighbor to the point of embracing love for one’s enemies. Jesus tackles the question of who is the neighbor in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

Neighbors are neighbors (people we know), strangers (whether near or far), and enemies (critics and opponents). By stretching our instincts past our comfort zone to include these widening circles of neighbors, strangers, and enemies, we enter into discipleship’s view of “neighbor-hood” as a state of being in which all are drawn together in the household of God.

4. How can people follow Jesus as a *forgiver*—to forgive those who harm us and seek forgiveness when we harm others.
 - Suggested Scripture: Luke 7:36-50,

Learning to be a forgiver begins with first recognizing that I am a sinner and that my actions hurt other people. I have to start with seeking forgiveness. When I am forgiven, then I know love and I can learn to practice forgiving others. Forgiving others for their sins against me requires great love.

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Acting prophetically is at the heart of what it means to follow Christ. To be a prophet can be an uncomfortable part of the call to discipleship. But it is also what I cannot *not* do as a follower of Christ. What is unjust about our time and place? How are we complicit in systems that contribute to the oppression of others? Where do we need to help call people back to God’s ways of mercy, forgiveness, justice, and peace?

6. How can people follow Jesus as a *steward*—caring for God’s creation and the goods of the household.
 - Suggested Scripture: Matthew 25:14-29

The call to stewardship means receiving gifts gratefully, nurturing their growth, and sharing them with others. The call to stewardship is the call to take care—of people, of places, and of talents and skills we have been given to share. Like the stewards in Jesus’ parable, we have been entrusted with God’s gifts in the expectation that we will allow them to grow over time. So we are called to be steward with our whole lives: stewards of our work and of our world around us.

Activity #5: Discovering Your Calling as a Young Person

Preparation

- Leaders should view the video, “Discerning God’s Call” with Jennifer Haworth in preparation for Activity #2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVq3DBiYOYw>.

Resources Needed

- Paper and pens
- Prayer Resource: *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation*. Laura Kelly Fanucci (Wipf & Stock, 2017)

Opening

- Select a prayer from *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation* or a resource of your choosing.
- Be sure to include a community building activity to open the session.

Introduce

Explain to them: *Discovering your call and vocation is the not the work of one season of life, but is central to each and every stage from childhood through older adulthood. We are called to discover God’s calling and our vocation in each season of life including youth.*

Video Presentation: *Discerning God’s Call* with Jennifer Haworth

Show the video *Discerning God’s Call* with Jennifer Grant Haworth from the Practicing Our Faith project. Go to YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVq3DBiYOYw>.

After watching the video, invite the group to share insights about calling and discernment they discovered while watching the video.

Jennifer draws on Frederick Buechner’s definition of vocation as “the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet” (*Wishful Thinking: A Seeker’s ABC*). *Can you think of someone who seems to be living exactly in that place? What is appealing about his or her life?* Ask for examples of people who are living their “deep gladness.”

Conclude with these words from Jennifer Haworth:

At its core, vocation is a call from God to love and to grow in love—with self, others, and God. We respond to this invitation by listening carefully to our own experience in the light of God’s loving presence. In doing so, we discern what the writer and theologian Frederick Buechner says “is the place where deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” Each person’s unique calling

gathers together those talents and passions that bring joy; and it discloses where, how, and with whom sharing those talents and passions will bring more love and life into the world.

(Jennifer Haworth. “Discerning God’s Call” in *On Our Way*, edited by Dorothy C. Bass and Susan R. Briehl. Upper Room Books, 2010. Page 37)

Explore: Jesus Discerning God’s Call

Use the following introduction and questions to engage the young people in the story of Jesus’ temptations in the desert after his baptism by John.

Immediately after Jesus is baptized by John in the Jordan River he is “led by the Spirit” into the wilderness where the devil tempts him.

Read Matthew 3:13-4:17.

Suggest that the young people pay attention to who is speaking and who is acting. Notice the various settings or locations.

Discuss the Scripture passage in small groups of 4-6 people. Use several of the following questions to discuss the story.

- In what ways is this story about Jesus “discerning God’s call?”
- How is “listening” part of discernment for Jesus? for you?
- Why is the wilderness the setting for Jesus’ temptation? What has wilderness looked like for you during a time of discerning God’s call in your life?
- Do you think “fear and doubt” were part of Jesus’ discernment? How have you experienced fear and doubt in discernment?

Invite people to reflect on how Jesus’ story can inspire, support, sustain, and challenge their own sense of calling and vocation.

Conclude with reflections from the group: What new insights did they gain about Jesus discerning his call?

Explore: Discovering Your Calling and Vocation

Begin with the video presentation and then select one or more of the options for helping young people discover their calling. Select the one(s) you think is most appropriate for your group. Feel free to combine activities and adapt the handouts for your purposes.

Video Presentation

Begin by showing the short video clip from the 2009 **Star Trek** movie (the 2009 reboot of the Star Trek story with Chris Pine and Zachary Quinto).

Star Trek Movie Clip (3 minutes): <https://c3project.weebly.com/youth.html>

After showing the clip, ask the young people to share their insights on how this story illustrates people discovering their call. Ask them if there have been people in their life who helped them see their calling and potential.

Option 1

Ask the young people to close their eyes for a moment and silently think about the questions you are about to ask them. After each of the following questions, pause for a few moments to give the young people time to think about their response before moving on. When you have completed the questions, give them time to summarize their thoughts. You can also create a worksheet with these questions and have the young people answer each question as you guide them through the process.

- If you woke up one morning and were told you could do one activity for as long as you wanted all day, what activity would it be?
- When in your life do you feel happiest? What are you doing at those times?
- Are there times when you lose track of time because you are so absorbed in an activity? What are you doing then?
- Is there something you are really interested in?
- Is there an activity you are really good at?

Conclude by giving them time to summarize their thoughts and identify some of their gifts, talents, and skills.

Ask the young people to complete the “Discovering Your Calling as a Young Person: An Inventory of Gifts, Talents, and Skills.” Explain that one way to discover God’s calling in their lives is to reflect on the gifts, talents, and skills they possess.

After they complete the inventory, have them share with the group two or three of their gifts, talents, and skills. Then discuss how these gifts point to how God is calling them today. Ask each person to think about how God is calling them today and how God is asking them to use their gifts, talents, and skills. Invite those who are comfortable to share their insights.

Option 2

Ask the young people to complete the “Discovering Your Calling as a Young Person: An Inventory of Gifts, Talents, and Skills.” Explain that one way to discover God’s calling in their lives is to reflect on the gifts, talents, and skills they possess.

After they complete the inventory, organize young people in small groups to share their most significant gifts, talents, and skills.

Then discuss, with the whole group, how these gifts, talents, and skills point to how God is calling them today. Ask each person to think about how God is calling them today and how God is asking

them to use their gifts, talents, and skills. Invite those who are comfortable to share their insights.

Option 3

Ask the young people to complete the “Where Am I Called” questions. Explain that one way to discover God’s calling in their lives is to reflect on their life today and their hopes for the future.

After they complete the questions, have them identify their most significant gifts and talents on the handout.

In small groups of six invite the young people to share responses to some of their favorite questions, and then share with the group their most significant gifts and talents.

As a large group discuss how these gifts point to how God is calling them today. Ask each person to think about how God is calling them today and how God is asking them to use their gifts, talents, and skills. Invite those who are comfortable to share their insights about God calling them today.

Option 4

Guide the young people through the process on “Discovering Your Calling and Vocation” at this time in their life. Organize people into groups of 4-6 people.

Introduce the activity by saying: *Uncovering your God-given desires is key to discovering your calling. For many of us, discovering your passion can seem like an overwhelming task, but there are questions you can answer that will help with your quest.* Explain the process and give people quiet time to reflect on the questions.

When they have completed the questions, have them share their story with their group. Remind each person to be attentive listeners. This is not a group discussion, but a storytelling experience.

Concluding by asking each person to think about how God is calling them today and how God is asking them to use their passions and gifts. Invite those who are comfortable to share their insights about God calling them today.

Discovering Your Calling as a Young Person

An Inventory of Gifts, Talents, and Skills

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> loving / charitable <input type="checkbox"/> joyful <input type="checkbox"/> kind <input type="checkbox"/> generous <input type="checkbox"/> loyal <input type="checkbox"/> hopeful <input type="checkbox"/> detail oriented <input type="checkbox"/> organizes others <input type="checkbox"/> helps others to work together <input type="checkbox"/> works behind the scenes <input type="checkbox"/> good with finances <input type="checkbox"/> likes to work with hands <input type="checkbox"/> leads / handles responsibility <input type="checkbox"/> good listener <input type="checkbox"/> sensitive to unspoken needs of others <input type="checkbox"/> handles conflict well <input type="checkbox"/> comforts sick people <input type="checkbox"/> seeker of justice for the weak <input type="checkbox"/> seeks truth despite resistance <input type="checkbox"/> merciful <input type="checkbox"/> prays for others persistently <input type="checkbox"/> encourages others, lifts people's spirits <input type="checkbox"/> good sense of humor <input type="checkbox"/> dedicated and determined in work <input type="checkbox"/> healer (spiritually, emotionally, or physically) <input type="checkbox"/> hospitable to strangers <input type="checkbox"/> curious about new people and cultures <input type="checkbox"/> musician <input type="checkbox"/> artist <input type="checkbox"/> singer <input type="checkbox"/> writer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> dancer <input type="checkbox"/> athlete <input type="checkbox"/> care for animals <input type="checkbox"/> public relations and public speaking <input type="checkbox"/> humility <input type="checkbox"/> teacher <input type="checkbox"/> courageous <input type="checkbox"/> reverent for God's people and nature <input type="checkbox"/> insightful about people's behavior <input type="checkbox"/> grateful <input type="checkbox"/> passionate <input type="checkbox"/> compassionate <input type="checkbox"/> self-control and integrity <input type="checkbox"/> serves others freely <input type="checkbox"/> resilient <input type="checkbox"/> photographer <input type="checkbox"/> videographer
 <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
|---|---|

Where Am I Called?

What are two or three careers I would consider? Why?

What are two or three careers I would never consider? Why?

In my ideal life, my career . . .

People call on me to help with . . .

When people compliment me, they typically say . . .

I feel like I am good at . . .

I am happiest when I am . . .

I often bring happiness to others when . . .

I feel most unhappy or discouraged when . . .

When I look at the world around me, the needs of _____ (a group of people or something from the natural world) most moves my heart . . .

I feel like God is with me or is really proud of me when . . .

My Gifts and Talents

Discovering Your Calling and Vocation

Uncovering your God-given desires is key to discovering your calling. For many of us, discovering your passion can seem like an overwhelming task, but there are questions you can answer that will help with your quest.

What are you passionate about? For some people this is an easy question to answer. For others it is difficult. Use the following prompts to help identify your passions.

- What gives you energy?
- What catches and keeps your attention?
- How do you choose to use your free time?
- What are you doing when you feel “fully alive”?
- How would your friends or others you trust answer this question for you?
- When were you last amazed with joy, overwhelmed with gratitude?
- What breaks your heart?

What are doing to live your passion? Is it something that calls forth your gifts, engaging your abilities and talents, using them fully?

Does your passion serve others? Is this genuine service to others and to the wider society?

Are their fears and doubts that impact discovering and living your calling and vocation? How do you deal with this? Is there a community of people who can help you in times of fear and doubt?

How have you experienced God in the midst of your discovering and living your calling and vocation, and in dealing with fears and doubts? How has your relationship with God sustained and developed your calling and vocation?

Session 6. Called by the God *Within*

Preparation

- Leader: Chapter 8 in *The Stories We Live*

Resources Needed

- Handout: “Paying Attention to God in Daily Life”
- Resource: “The Practice of Prayer” from *Living Well: Christian Practices for Everyday Life* (LifelongFaith Associates) – several of the prayer activities are from this book (included with the session)
- Prayer Resource: *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation*. Laura Kelly Fanucci (Wipf & Stock, 2017)

Opening

- Select a prayer from *To Bless Our Callings: Prayers, Poems, and Hymns to Celebrate Vocation* or a resource of your choosing.
- Be sure to include a community building activity to open the session.

Part 1. Introduce

Introduce the concept of *called by the God within* using this information from Kathleen Cahalan:

God’s callings can come to you in many ways—through others, through recognizing your gifts in service and work that make a difference for others, in your sorrows and pain, and at times in your dreams. But the call *within* takes some effort on your part. You have to attend to and build your capacity to listen to the One who dwells *within* you.

God comes to dwell within our midst, abiding *within* us, and God calls each of us to abide *within* the One Holy Mystery. The call *within* is God’s sheer graced goodness, a gift of pure love, a boundless power that is source and destiny.

But how? The call *within* is often difficult to hear because of the many distractions that keep you from listening to this source. How do you cultivate your awareness of the divine presence within you? How do you pray and listen?

In this session you will experience several practices that can help you cultivate a sense of God’s calling within.

Part 2. Experience: Spiritual Life Practices to Cultivate and Sustain God’s Calling Within

- This session provides a variety of prayer and spiritual life experiences that you can incorporate in this session. Start with “Paying Attention to God in Daily Life,” and then select one or more additional experiences from the other activities. Many of these activities use “The Practice of Prayer” from *Living Well: Christian Practices for Everyday Life* (LifelongFaith Associates).

Activities

1. Paying Attention to God in Daily Life
2. One-Minute and Five-Minute Experiments in Prayer
3. Contemplative Center Prayer
4. Scriptural Prayer
5. Intercessory Prayer
6. Praise Prayer #1
7. Praise Prayer #2
8. Prayers of Thanksgiving
9. Praying the Psalms
10. Lectio Divina: Prayerful Bible Reflection

Paying Attention to God in Daily Life

(Adapted from *The Art of Discernment: Spiritual Practices for Decision-Making* by Elizabeth Liebert)

Introduce people to the Prayer of Examen and then lead them through the process as a group. Create a PowerPoint presentation or use the handout with the five elements of the Prayer of Examen. Play reflective music in the background during the prayer.

Introduce the Examen

The Prayer of Examen helps us look for traces of God's actions in our daily life, individually or as a household. It is usually done in the evening, looking back over the day, or it can be done as a household at the evening meal. Allow between five and fifteen minutes for this spiritual exercise. Eliminate distractions during this time: no TV, radio, phones, social media, etc. This is a time of quiet to spend alone or with each other in the presence of God.

Use the following information to guide people through the process.

Note the gifts God has given you today. Give thanks for all God's gifts and benefits.

Pause for reflection.

Ask God that this reflection be a time of special grace and revelation. You can use these words:

Be near us now Lord. Let us look together at the day.

Pause for reflection.

Review the day with God. Look at the stirrings of your heart, your thoughts, your choices as the day progressed. Which have been of God? Which not? What does God want to say to you about both?

Pause for reflection.

Give God thanks and ask for forgiveness for any failure or omission, and for healing from their effects. Use these or similar words:

Gracious God, everything is a gift from you.

I give you thanks and praise for the gifts of today, such as

I ask your forgiveness and mercy for

I ask your healing in

Pause for reflection.

Look forward to the next day, and plan concretely with God how to live it according to God's desire for your life. Ask for the graces you desire for tomorrow.

Lord God, continue to be present with me in my life each day.

Pause for reflection.

Part 3. Conclude

Close the session by inviting people to share reflections on what they learned about cultivating and sustaining God's call within.

Conduct the program evaluation.

Additional Activities

One-Minute and Five-Minute Experiments in Prayer

(pages 11.10—11.11 in *Living Well*)

1. Conduct a demonstration of each of the “experiments in prayer” on pages 11.10—11.11 in *Living Well*.
2. Explain the One-Minute process and then provide a demonstration. Do the same for the Five-Minute process.
3. Give the participants examples of how they can integrate each prayer practice into their daily lives. Then give them a few minutes to consider how they can use each of these prayer practices in their daily lives.

Contemplative Centering Prayer

(page 10.12 in *Living Well*)

1. Prepare an environment that is conducive to Contemplative Centering Prayer (instrumental music, dimming the lights).
2. Introduce Contemplative Centering Prayer using the description on page 10.12.
3. Share the two Scripture passages: Psalm 63:1-5 and Romans 8:26-27.
4. Explain the process and then guide people through an experience of Contemplative Centering Prayer.
 - Choose a quiet space where you can be comfortable and where you can be uninterrupted and uninhibited.
 - Once you are comfortable, light a candle, take a few deep breaths, and relax. Then set the timer or stop watch for twenty minutes.
 - Close your eyes and recall your desire to just be in God’s presence.
 - Choose a simple word, phrase or verse from Scripture that expresses your desire for God (e.g., love, peace, grace, Jesus, Good Shepherd).
 - When thoughts or feelings come into your mind, let them go. Do not give into them or allow them to take you away from God’s presence. Distractions will come; this is normal. Think of this kind of prayer as the prayer of “letting go.” Don’t be surprised if you spend the whole prayer period letting go of thoughts and feelings. Over time you will experience something happening in your life: a new sense of peace, a new awareness of God’s great love for you. Be patient! Prayer takes practice.
 - Rest in the center of God’s love. Trust that the Holy Spirit, who abides in the depths of your spirit, will connect you with God.
 - When your prayer has ended, slowly come back to the here and now.
5. Give the participants examples of how they can integrate a contemplative prayer practice into their daily lives. Then give them a few minutes to consider how they can use this prayer practice in their daily lives.

Scriptural Prayer

(page 10.12—10.13 in *Living Well*)

1. Prepare an environment that is conducive to Scriptural Prayer. Light one or more candles.
2. Introduce Scriptural Prayer using the description on pages 10.12—10.13.

3. Share the two Scripture passages: Psalm 119:105-106 and Ephesians 5:19-20.
4. Explain the process and then guide people through an experience of Scriptural Prayer.
 - Choose a passage from Scripture, about five to ten verses in length. You might choose one of your favorite passages, a Scripture reading from the previous or coming Sunday, or use an index to help you locate a passage that seems to be appropriate for the time or occasion.
 - Choose a comfortable place where you can be uninterrupted and uninhibited.
 - Light a candle. Take a few moments to get your body in harmony with your spirit. Sometimes it helps to take a few deep breaths or stretch your body, then relax.
 - Acknowledge God's presence with you. Ask God to send the Spirit to be with you and guide you in this time of reflection.
 - Read the passage you have chosen slowly, out loud, listening carefully to it. You might want to pause after a sentence or phrase.
 - Say the words or phrases that struck you. Do not discuss them, just say them.
 - Read the passage a second time, slowly and prayerfully.
 - Consider the message the passage might have for you: a challenge, an affirmation, or an insight. If you are doing this with others, you could invite them to share what comes to mind.
 - Read the passage a third time, slowly and prayerfully.
 - Pause for about ten minutes of silence and allow the Spirit to speak to you. If no words or thoughts come, just sit in the silence. Sometimes God touches us in ways we cannot know.
 - Following your quiet time, consider how the passage calls you to action. Is there something you need to do to make the Scripture alive for you here and now?
 - Close with a brief prayer of thanksgiving or praise to God for the gift of the Spirit.
5. Give the participants examples of how they can integrate a scriptural prayer practice into their daily lives. Then give them a few minutes to consider how they can use this prayer practice in their daily lives.

Intercessory Prayer

(page 10.13 in *Living Well*)

1. Prepare an environment that is conducive to prayer. Light one or more candles.
2. Introduce Intercessory Prayer using the description on page 10.13.
3. Share the two Scripture passages: Ephesians 6:18 and Philippians 4:4, 6-7.
4. Invite people to take several minutes to recall the needs and concerns they want to pray for. Provide the group with the following categories to guide their reflection:
 - the needs and concerns of your family/household and friends,
 - the needs and concerns of people in your local church and community,
 - the needs and concerns of people around the world.
5. Begin with an opening prayer and then ask people to offer their prayer intentions. The response to each prayer petition can be "Lord, hear us."
6. Close by praying the Our Father together as a group.
7. Give the participants examples of how they can integrate an intercessory prayer practice into their daily lives. Then give them a few minutes to consider how they can use this prayer practice in their daily lives.

Praise Prayer #1

(page 10.14 in *Living Well*)

1. Prepare an environment that is conducive to prayer.
2. Introduce Praise Prayer using the description on page 10.14.
3. Share the Scripture passage: Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7.
4. Invite people to take several minutes to compose one or more prayers of praise. Provide the group with the following examples:
 - “God, you are good and wonderful. We praise you.”
 - “God, we praise you for the mystery that is you.”
 - “God, we believe that you are holy and awesome.”
 - “We praise you for your majesty, O God.”
5. Begin with an opening prayer and then ask people to offer their prayers of praise.
6. Close by praying Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7. or other Psalm of praise.
7. Give the participants examples of how they can integrate a praise prayer practice into their daily lives. Then give them a few minutes to consider how they can use this prayer practice in their daily lives.

Praise Prayer #2

(Everyone will need a Bible or a copy of Psalm 103.)

1. Introduce this prayer experience by saying: *Many of us pray when we want to ask God for something either for ourselves or someone else. Sometimes it is difficult to just give compliments to God. Prayers of praise give praise to God for being good, for the mystery and majesty of God. Prayers of praise can be a challenge for us to think about God in terms of someone who deserves our praise. It forces us to not take God for granted. Prayers of praise reflect our own attitude and ability to recognize others for their goodness, especially our ability to just praise God for being God.*
2. Explain to the group that they will be using Psalm 103 as a Prayer of Praise. Psalm 103 is one of those priceless treasures that becomes more precious as we spend time with it in reflection and contemplation. The Psalm has four main parts:
 - Personal blessings received from God (1-5)
 - National blessings received from God (6-14)
 - A reminder of our human frailty and utter dependence upon God (15-18)
 - A declaration that all creation praises God (19-22)
3. Pray the Psalm with the group. (You may want to reproduce the Psalm so that everyone can pray it together. You can also organize the participants into two groups. Ask group one to read verses 1-5 and 15-18; group two reads verses 6-14 and 19-22.)
4. Ask the participants to use Psalm 103 to write their own psalm of praise to God. Invite them to use the four-fold structure of Psalm 103 in their own prayer. Remind them that prayers of praise give praise to God for being good, for the mystery and majesty of God. Prayers of praise can be a challenge for us to think about God in terms of someone who deserves our praise. It forces us to not take God for granted. Prayers of praise reflect our own attitude and ability to recognize others for their goodness, especially our ability to just praise God for being God.
5. After the individuals have composed their prayer of praise to God, ask them to take a few moments to reflect (and perhaps talk) about how it felt to offer God praise.
6. Invite the participants to share their psalms of praise.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

(page 10.14 in *Living Well*)

- Prepare an environment that is conducive to prayer.
- Introduce Thanksgiving Prayer using the description on page 10.14.
- Share the Scripture passage: Psalm 92:1-4.
- Invite people to take several minutes to compose one or more prayers of thanksgiving. Families can work together to compose their prayers.
- Begin with an opening prayer and then ask people to offer their prayers of thanksgiving. Respond to each prayer of thanksgiving with: “We thank you, God” or “We are grateful for your goodness.”
- Close by praying Psalm 92:1-4 or other Psalm of thanksgiving.
- Give the participants examples of how they can integrate a thanksgiving prayer practice into their daily lives. Then give them a few minutes to consider how they can use this prayer practice in their daily lives.

Praying the Psalms

Select five to eight Psalm passages in advance. The passages can reflect a common theme, or they could be diverse. Participants should have Bibles or you will need to write the passages on a sheet of newsprint or provide copies of the Psalms on a handout. It is important to identify each passage with a brief excerpt from the Psalm so that the participants will have some basis on which to make a choice. Provide each person with a sheet of paper, and pen or pencil.

1. Select one of the Psalm passages that you feel most comfortable with. (Allow time for the participants to reflect on and respond to the passage.)
2. Read the Psalm passage you selected in quiet. Read every word, pausing when necessary in order to let every word present itself to you. Read the words as if you had never read or heard them before. Be open to new insights that may come. Read the words as if they were the words of your own prayer. Whenever you read “I,” “my,” “me,” etc., read it as if that meant *you*.
3. From the passage you have read, select a phrase, a verse or two verses to be the words you will use to begin your own prayer. Write those words down and then continue writing an additional sentence or two of your own continuing the thoughts and feelings begun by the words of the Psalmist.
4. Let us now spend a few minutes in prayer sharing the words of the Psalmist we selected and the words of prayer we have written. (Individuals read their prayers aloud as they feel motivated to share.) Potential Psalms to use:
 - Psalm 8:1-7 “What is man, that you think of him?”
 - Psalm 11:1-7 “I trust in the Lord for safety.”
 - Psalm 16:1-11 “I am always aware of the Lord’s presence.”
 - Psalm 23:1-6 “The Lord is my shepherd.”
 - Psalm 25:1-14 “Keep your promise, Lord, and forgive my sins.”
 - Psalm 30:1-12 “Lord...I will give you thanks forever.”
 - Psalm 32:1-11 “Happy are those whose sins are forgiven.”
 - Psalm 62:1-12 “God alone protects and saves me.”
 - Psalm 63:1-8 “O God...My whole being desires you.”
 - Psalm 86:1-13a “Teach me, Lord what you want me to do.”

Psalm 103:1-14 “Praise the Lord, my soul!”

Psalm 121:1-8 Teach me, Lord, what you want me to do.”

Psalm 139:1-12 “Lord, you have examined me and you know me.”

Lectio Divina: Prayerful Bible Reflection

Use “Lectio Divina” in the handout to guide participants through an experience of Lectio Divina. Select an appropriate passage from the Bible for the experience.

Step 1. Lectio (Reading)

Read the Bible passage to the group. Read it a second time. Invite people to let the words really sink in deeply. Ask them to open their minds and hearts to the meaning of the words; and let the passage speak to them.

Step 2. Meditatio (Meditation)

Invite people to reflect on the Bible passage. Ask questions such as the following:

- What does this passage say to me?
- Who am I in this Scripture?
- What do I see and hear?
- What do I think?
- Which character do I most relate to?
- What do I need to learn from this passage?

Step 3. Oratio (Prayer)

Move into the heart of the matter. Consider the following questions to help people respond to God.

- What do you want to communicate to God?
- What do you most want in your relationship with God?
- What emotions do you want to express to God? joy? fear? gratitude? grief?

Step 4. Contemplatio (Contemplation)

Provide quiet time for people to rest in the presence of God. Play some quiet instrumental music.

Step 5. Action (Action)

Conclude by inviting people to decide on a course of action and make a commitment to follow through with their plan.

- How is God challenging me?
- Is there a good thing that God is calling me to do?:
- Is there a harmful thing that God wants me to stop doing?
- What is the next step I need to take?

Paying Attention to God in Daily Life

(Adapted from *The Art of Discernment: Spiritual Practices for Decision-Making* by Elizabeth Liebert)

The Prayer of Examen helps us look for traces of God's actions in our daily life, individually or as a household. It is usually done in the evening, looking back over the day, or it can be done as a household at the evening meal. Allow between five and fifteen minutes for this spiritual exercise. Eliminate distractions during this time: no TV, radio, phones, social media, etc. This is a time of quiet to spend alone or with each other in the presence of God.

Note the gifts God has given you today. Give thanks for all God's gifts and benefits.

Pause for reflection.

Ask God that this reflection be a time of special grace and revelation. You can use these words:

Be near us now Lord. Let us look together at the day.

Pause for reflection.

Review the day with God. Look at the stirrings of your heart, your thoughts, your choices as the day progressed. Which have been of God? Which not? What does God want to say to you about both?

Pause for reflection.

Give God thanks and ask for forgiveness for any failure or omission, and for healing from their effects. Use these or similar words:

Gracious God, everything is a gift from you.

I give you thanks and praise for the gifts of today, such as

I ask your forgiveness and mercy for

I ask your healing in

Pause for reflection.

Look forward to the next day, and plan concretely with God how to live it according to God's desire for your life. Ask for the graces you desire for tomorrow.

Lord God, continue to be present with me in my life each day.

Pause for reflection.

10 Praying

Living

For prayer to bring strength when we need it, we must pray regularly, even when we think we don't need it at all. Prayer is a habit of life that leads us to reflection, to the consciousness of God, to the hope that is the lighthouse of the soul guiding us always through all the dark places of life.

(Joan Chittister)

How do we move from recognizing the importance of prayer in our life and in the life of our family or household, to the actual practice of prayer in our daily lives? How do we become more skilled at seeing God in all we do?

It is important to remember that prayer takes practice and gradually, we find the rhythm and pattern of prayer that works for us and/or our family. There are many ways to pray. Henri Nouwen reminds us “there are as many ways to pray as there are moments in life. Sometimes we seek out a quiet spot and want to be alone, sometimes we look for a friend and want to be together. Sometimes we like a book, sometimes we prefer music. Sometimes we want to sing out with hundreds, sometimes only whisper with a few. Sometimes we want to say it with words, sometimes with a deep silence.” (Henri Nouwen, *With Open Hands*)

Use the following guide to prepare for prayer and to experience a variety of prayer activities—alone or with your family or household. Try all of these activities so that gradually you will find the rhythm and pattern that works for you. Remember, this is only a start. There are dozens of additional ways to pray that you can learn as you grow in the practice of prayer. (For additional prayer activities, see the other chapters in *Living Well: Christian Practices for Everyday Life*.)

Preparing to Pray

Very early the next morning, long before daylight, Jesus got up and left the house. He went out of town to a lonely place, where he prayed. But Simon and his companions went out searching for him, and when they found him, they said, “Everyone is looking for you.”

—Mark 1:35–37

The news about Jesus spread all the more widely, and crowds of people came to hear him and be healed from their diseases. But he would go away to lonely places, where he prayed.

—Luke 5:15–16

At that time Jesus went up a hill to pray and spent the whole night there praying to God. When day came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them.

—Luke 6:12–13

1. A Prayer Time

Set aside a time for daily prayer. This is the single most important thing you can do. When we establish a regular routine for prayer, we will make sure that our prayer life is not done “on the run.” Ten minutes a day is a good start; twenty minutes is better. Set aside a regular time: morning, noontime, before dinner, or before going to sleep at night.

■ When I will pray:

■ When our household will pray:



2. A Prayer Place

We can pray anywhere. We all find places that are special to us, that help us to pray. Jesus did give us wise advice, though, when he taught us to withdraw to our rooms to pray. A sacred space need not always be confined to inside the house or church.

Take advantage of outdoor settings, such as a labyrinth or prayer path at a local church. Walk in a park or on a hiking trail; even a corner of your own yard can be a regular place for prayer. Go for a walk at your lunch break. If you drive to work, leave early and spend time with God, quietly sitting in the parking lot before going in. If you spend a lot of time in your car, make every drive a unique time to meet with God by playing instrumental music as you pray. Personalize your prayer space—keep a Bible, a cross, an icon, a special picture, or a candle nearby.

■ Where I will pray:

■ When our household will pray:

Create a home altar for prayer and ritual. Find a place in your home (e.g., in the kitchen or family room) that you can set aside and decorate as your home altar or prayer space. Include items such as a Bible, candles, art, photographs, prayer books, and prayer petitions on your altar.

3. A Prayer Posture

If we can pray anywhere, we can also pray in any position. Sometimes we have to experiment to discover the prayer posture that works best for us: lying down, kneeling, sitting, or walking.

■ How I will position myself for prayer:

■ How we will position ourselves as a household for prayer:

10 Praying

4. A Prayer Mood

The Lord instructs us to “be still and know that I am God.” We cannot pray well unless we slow down and create the proper mental climate. We must first relax. Creating a relaxed mood for prayer is the last preparation for praying—after we have made time, found a place, and assumed a comfortable position for our prayer. Here are three popular methods for relaxing before prayer:

- *Awareness of our senses.* Sit on a straight chair. Assume a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath, hold it momentarily, and then let it go. Relax your body. Begin with your neck muscles, then your shoulders, your chest and back, your arms and legs. Feel the clothes on your shoulders and back, the press of your legs on the chair. Note your posture. Be aware of your legs, your feet, your hands. Feel the heat or coolness of the room. Repeat this pattern of awareness a second and third time. Feel the tension drain out of your body. Dwell on the part of your body that is most tense. Relax the forehead, the jaw, the neck. Let your arms and legs rest. Come to total stillness. Now you are ready to pray.
- *Breathing.* Take a relaxing position, seated or lying down. Let the tension drain from your body. Now focus on your breathing. Observe your breathing. Note how fast or slow it is. Notice the air as it comes in and goes out. Don't try to control your breathing. Just observe it for a few quiet, peaceful moments. Be aware of how it comes in to fill your lungs, and how it goes out of your nostrils. After a short time spent observing your breathing, begin to count your breaths silently. Count “one” as you inhale; “and” as you exhale. Count “two” as you breathe in again; “and” on the exhalation. Continue your count to 15 or 20.
- *Listening.* Take a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Relax the tension in your body. Feel the tightness drain from your face, your neck, your shoulders, your arms and legs. Feel the air on your skin. Be aware of each breath that you take in and let out. Block

your ears with your thumbs. Listen to each breath as you take it in and let it out. After ten breaths, let your hands rest on your lap. Now be attentive to all the sounds around you. Hear them all, the ones close to you and the ones in the background, the big sounds and the little noises. After a bit, listen to the sounds blend together. Let them penetrate you. Continue with this until you are at rest and ready to turn to prayer.

■ How I will relax myself for prayer:

■ How will we relax as a household for prayer:

A One-Minute Experiment in Prayer

There is a beautiful simplicity in learning to seize moments here and there to connect with God's presence. Even pausing to say the word “Jesus” on occasion, mulling over what he means to you for a few seconds, can have a great impact. This may not come completely naturally for you, though, so here are a few suggestions that can help you pursue the practice until it is woven into the fabric of your daily life.

- *Be intentional.* Start by considering times when you might pause to pray during your day; for example, at meals or at certain times, like 9 AM, noon, and 6 PM. You can also decide simply to think about God in small ways throughout the day whenever an opportunity presents itself.
- *Be God-centered.* One of the most important things we can do to is get to know God. It might be helpful to choose one of God's attributes—such as kindness, mercy, forgiveness, or love—on which to focus for a day or even a week. You could write out Scripture passages that speak of this attribute on cards and carry them with you.



- **Establish “triggers.”** Think of ways your everyday life can be a reminder to meet God in the moment. For example, you might tape a card with a Scripture verse on the steering wheel of your car and glance at it when you stop for a red light, or tape it to your bathroom mirror and pause to reflect on it each time you brush your teeth or comb your hair or wash your hands. You can also practice thinking of God while noticing the beauty of creation—a sunset, a fragrant flower, or a smiling child—when helping a person in need, or when faced with a difficult task or situation.
- **Welcome God’s presence.** God speaks to us often during the day. Take a few moments whenever you can to listen, be attentive to the divine presence, and open your heart to God. Present any issue or situation in which you seek God’s wisdom. Ask if God has something to reveal to you. Be grateful for God’s presence. You can do all of this in a minute’s time, and before long it will become a habit you won’t want to do without.

(Adapted from Tricia McGary Rhodes, *Sacred Chaos: Spiritual Disciplines for the Life You Have*)

Five-Minute Experiments in Prayer

One habit that takes minimal effort but can produce great results is to develop a discipline of taking time when we awaken and when we lay down to sleep, to connect and commune with God. While you may plan other five-minute spaces throughout the day, beginning and ending it in God’s presence lays a foundation and establishes a perspective that affects your entire day.

Upon Waking

- Plan to spend your first conscious moments in the presence of God. If you wake up before your alarm or if you don’t normally set one, quietly affirm that God is present with you as soon as you begin to stir, being grateful that God has been with you through night. (If you wake up to an alarm, quiet your mind first by taking a few deep breaths.)
- Spend a few moments acknowledging the beauty of Jesus, perhaps by focusing on one of his many names in Scripture. You may want to plan for this in advance by choosing one name to focus on for a week or more.
- Offer your day to God as you go about your waking-up routine. Listen for God’s voice, and be open to what God might be saying to you.
- Thank God for all that will happen during this day. Ask God to make his presence known in and through you as you interact with others.

Before Going to Sleep

- Praise God for the ways he has blessed you today. These can be anything from a good meal, a phone call from a friend, the solution to a difficult problem, or an answer to a specific prayer. Try to name at least five things.
- Reflect on your day. Ask God to show you how he has worked in and through you, and thank him for these gifts. Look inside yourself to see if there was an occasion of sin during this day. If so, ask God for forgiveness and healing.
- Speak to God about the people on your mind—your children, spouse, friends, parents, and others—and pray for them accordingly.
- Offer your sleep to God. Ask God to speak to you even as you rest, and enable you to awaken mindful of his presence.

(Adapted from Tricia McGary Rhodes, *Sacred Chaos: Spiritual Disciplines for the Life You Have*)

Ways to Pray

Contemplative Centering Prayer

*O God, you are my God,
and I long for you.
My whole being desires you;
like a dry, worn-out, and waterless land,
my soul is thirsty for you.
Let me see you in the sanctuary
let me see how mighty and glorious you are.
Your constant love is better than life itself,
and so I will praise you.
I will give you thanks as long as I live;
I will raise my hands to you in prayer.
My soul will feast and be satisfied,
and I will sing glad songs of praise to you.
—Psalm 63:1–5*

*In the same way the Spirit also comes to help us, weak as we are. For we do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us in groans that words cannot express. And God, who sees into our hearts, knows what the thought of the Spirit is; because the Spirit pleads with God on behalf of his people and in accordance with his will.
—Romans 8:26–27*

Centering prayer is a form of contemplative prayer where we seek to quiet scattered thoughts and desires in the still center of Christ's presence. In this prayer we open our minds and hearts to the presence of God within us. God calls us to friendship. In this kind of prayer we let go of the things that get in the way of our friendship with God. We wait for God as we would wait for a friend. It takes time to become intimate friends. Our relationship with God takes time, too.

In centering prayer we take time to just be with God, realizing that God is beyond all human thoughts, feelings and concepts. In this kind of prayer we do not use thoughts or words. Rather, we let go of any thoughts or feelings when they come to mind so we can make a space for God. The following steps will help you to pray in this way.

- Choose a quiet space where you can be comfortable and where you can be uninterrupted and uninhibited.
- Once you are comfortable, light a candle, take a few deep breaths, and relax. Then set the timer or stop watch for twenty minutes.
- Close your eyes and recall your desire to just be in God's presence.
- Choose a simple word, phrase or verse from Scripture that expresses your desire for God (e.g., love, peace, grace, Jesus, Good Shepherd).
- When thoughts or feelings come into your mind, let them go. Do not give into them or allow them to take you away from God's presence. Distractions will come; this is normal. Think of this kind of prayer as the prayer of "letting go." Don't be surprised if you spend the whole prayer period letting go of thoughts and feelings. Over time you will experience something happening in your life: a new sense of peace, a new awareness of God's great love for you. Be patient! Prayer takes practice.
- Rest in the center of God's love. Trust that the Holy Spirit, who abides in the depths of your spirit, will connect you with God.
- When your prayer has ended, slowly come back to the here and now.

Scriptural Prayer

*Your word is a lamp to guide me
and a light for my path.
I will keep my solemn promise
to obey your just instructions.
—Psalm 119:105–106*

*Speak to one another with the words of psalms,
hymns, and sacred songs; sing hymns and
psalms to the Lord with praise in your hearts. In
the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, always give
thanks for everything to God the Father.
—Ephesians 5:19–20*

As Christians, we believe that one of the ways God is manifested to us is through Scripture. When we prayerfully read the Scriptures, we open our minds and hearts to the Spirit of God. We can be both challenged and affirmed by the Word of God.

Praying with Scripture can be done alone or with others. When done with others, it can be a means of sharing more deeply the faith you attempt to live out day by day. The following steps will help you to use Scripture in prayer.

- Choose a passage from Scripture, about five to ten verses in length. You might choose one of your favorite passages, a Scripture reading from the previous or coming Sunday, or use an index to help you locate a passage that seems to be appropriate for the time or occasion.
- Choose a comfortable place where you can be uninterrupted and uninhibited.
- Light a candle. Take a few moments to get your body in harmony with your spirit. Sometimes it helps to take a few deep breaths or stretch your body, then relax.
- Acknowledge God's presence with you. Ask God to send the Spirit to be with you and guide you in this time of reflection.
- Read the passage you have chosen slowly, out loud, listening carefully to it. You might want to pause after a sentence or phrase.
- Say the words or phrases that struck you. Do not discuss them, just say them.
- Read the passage a second time, slowly and prayerfully.
- Consider the message the passage might have for you: a challenge, an affirmation, or an insight. If you are doing this with others, you could invite them to share what comes to mind.
- Read the passage a third time, slowly and prayerfully.
- Pause for about ten minutes of silence and allow the Spirit to speak to you. If no words or thoughts come, just sit in the silence. Sometimes God touches us in ways we cannot know.
- Following your quiet time, consider how the passage calls you to action. Is there something you need to do to make the Scripture alive for you here and now?
- Close with a brief prayer of thanksgiving or praise to God for the gift of the Spirit.



Intercessory Prayer

Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's people.

—Ephesians 6:18

May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord, I say it again: rejoice! Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.

—Philippians 4:4, 6–7

One of the time-honored types of prayer is that of intercession, or asking God for what we and others need. Intercessory prayer invites us into God's care and concern for us, our families and friends, and the entire world. No concern is too trivial for God to receive with loving attention. Intercessory prayer, however, is not a means of manipulating God into doing our will. Rather, it is a way we become aware of God's prayer for a person and join in that intercession.

Pray for

- the needs and concerns of your family/ household and friends,
- the needs and concerns of people in your local church and community,
- the needs and concerns of people around the world.

Respond "Lord, hear us" to each petition

Consider keeping a household prayer list on a wipe-off board and placing it where everyone will see it. Encourage everyone to write brief notes about problems or situations for which they would like the household to pray, as well as the names of people for whom they would like everyone to pray.

10 Praying

Praise Prayer

*Come, let us praise the Lord!
Let us sing for joy to God, who protects us!
Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and sing joyful songs of praise.*

*Come, let us bow down and worship him;
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
He is our God;
we are the people he cares for,
the flock for which he provides.
—Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7*

We give praise to God for divine goodness, for the mystery and majesty of God. Prayers of praise can be a challenge for us to think about God in terms of someone who deserves our praise. It forces us to not take God for granted. Prayers of praise reflect our own attitude and ability to recognize others for their goodness, especially our ability to simply praise God for being God.

Offer prayers of praise:

“God, you are good and wonderful.
We praise you.”

“God, we praise you for the mystery
that is you.”

“God, we believe that you are holy
and awesome.”

“We praise you for your majesty, O God.”

Thanksgiving Prayer

*How good it is to give thanks to you O Lord,
to sing in your honor, O Most High God;
to proclaim your constant love every morning
and your faithfulness every night,
with the music of stringed instruments
and with melody on the harp.
Your mighty deeds, O Lord, make me glad;
because of what you have done, I sing for joy
—Psalm 92:1–4*

We are grateful to God for the many gifts God shares with us. It is good for us to reflect on the many good things that are ours, which we enjoy and sometimes take for granted, and give thanks to God for all we have and are. It can be

a challenge to thank God for what we need even before we have it, trusting that God will provide for our needs in ways that are best.

Offer thanks to God:

“We thank you, God.”

“We are grateful for your goodness.”

■ Prayer styles I will use:

■ Prayer styles our household will use:

Praying in Families with Children

Prayer needs to be modeled and taught in very simple ways at home. All of the prayer activities in this chapter can be used in a family over the course of a year with increasing intensity and depth. For example, one family joins hands every night before the evening meal. Their prayers are simple, acknowledging God’s presence during that day, giving gratitude for good grades, good weather, good food, good playtime; offering intercessions for those who are in need; and asking to recognize God’s will for each family member. Sometimes this prayer is preceded by a short reading from the Bible or other book of prayers, and is usually followed by a simple song.

Although prayer time takes only a few minutes, its daily repetition acknowledging God’s presence within the family is important and nurtures everyone. At bedtime one family member can lead a short prayer with each child and give a nighttime blessing. Sometimes children like to talk about their problems and concerns; the family can also ask for God’s assistance and for the strength to live as God wants us to.



Online Resources for Daily Prayer

Upper Room

Daily Reflections:
www.upperroom.org/DAILY

Daily Devotional:
www.upperroom.org/devotional

Prayer Resources:
www.upperroom.org/methodx/thelife

Taize

Daily Bible readings and meditation:
www.taize.fr/en_article1000.html

Prayer for Each Day:
www.taize.fr/en_article5806.html

Sacred Space

Daily Prayer Online: [/www.sacredspace.ie/](http://www.sacredspace.ie/)

Daily Lectionary Readings

Online: www.usccb.org/nab/today.shtml

Podcast: www.usccb.org/nab/nabpodcast.shtml

iTunes: “Daily readings from
 the New American Bible”

Pray-As-You-Go: Daily Prayer for Your MP3 Player

www.pray-as-you-go.org

Creighton University

Daily Bible Reading and Reflections:
www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/daily

Prayer is a way of connecting our lives with God’s life and God’s will for us. Here are several help suggestions for guiding your children in their prayer life:

- Pray as you can in the midst of your busy day.
- Call the child’s name in prayer so they know they are important to you and to God.
- Establish patterns of prayer in family life that nurture the practices of prayer in your child from the earliest ages.
- Help children learn to pray by imitation—by watching you pray and imitating you.
- Remember that the repetition of prayers nurtures familiarity and security in children.
- Teach children to use their own words in prayer.
- Encourage children to pray anytime, anywhere, under any circumstance, and to say anything to God they want to say.
- Guide children in experiencing a variety of prayer forms—praise, thanksgiving, spontaneous, petition, and contribution.

Resources for Living the Christian Practice of Praying

Go to our project web site
www.lifelongfaith.com
 for exciting ideas, practical resources,
 and recommended books
 and web sites to help you live the
 Christian practice of Praying.

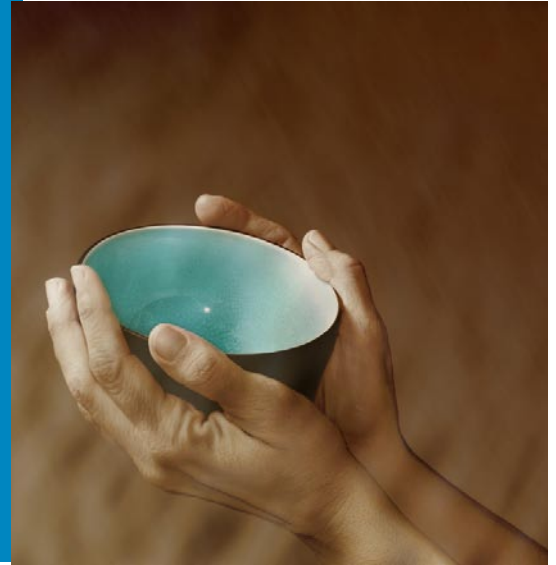
10 Praying

Praying

Prayer for the Journey

Dear God,
I do not know where you are leading me.
I do not even know what my next day,
my next week or my next year will look like.
As I try to keep my hands open,
I trust that you will put your hand in mine
and bring me home.
Thank you God for your love.
Thank you.
Amen.

(Henri J.M. Nouwen, *With Open Hands*)



A Contemporary Lord's Prayer

Abba in heaven,
your name is holy!
Your justice come,
your will be done,
on earth as in the heavens.
Fill us this day
with all that we need.
Teach us to heal
as you have healed us.
Bring us not to the test,
but deliver us always
from the power of evil.
You alone are God,
and all belongs to you!

(Edward F. Gabriele, *Gathered at the Table in Prayer and Song*)