



# Go and Do Likewise: Following Jesus into our Common Humanity

## Discussion Questions, Action Steps, & Resources

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## Section One Discussion Questions, Action Steps, & Resources

### Discussion Questions

- What do you love about your tradition?
- How does your tradition help you recognize you are beloved?
- What were you taught about the meaning of one Creator?
- How does your tradition uplift the unity of humanity?
- How does your tradition fall short of honoring the unity of humanity?
- What positive experiences have you had with people of other traditions and cultures?
- What are the trends that concern you about our community, nation, and world?
- How does your tradition teach you to see yourself and others as God's Beloved?
- What were you taught about other wisdom traditions?
- What do you think the Bible is saying when it comes to other wisdom traditions?

### Action Steps

- Research your community or county's demographic information on Wikipedia or the US Census Bureau.
- What racial and cultural groups are present?
- How has this changed in the last 20 years?
- Do an inventory of your friends and acquaintances
- How many are of diverse traditions, cultures, identities, and socio-economic situations?
- Reflect on why you think this is.
- Choose a multicultural event that you can attend.
- Just be there in a way that you are comfortable with.
- Have a follow up coffee with someone you meet, if it is safe to do so.
- Share any positive experience of this event with friends, family, and wisdom community.

### Books

- Eboo Patel, Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation
- Father William Treacy and Rabbi Raphael Levine, Wild Branch on the Olive Tree
- Edited by Carol Schersten LaHurd with Darrell Jodock and Kathryn Mary Lohre, Engaging Others, Knowing Ourselves: A Lutheran Calling in a Multi-Religious World
- Dennis Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn, Matthew Linn SJ, Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life
- Brian McLaren, Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road?: Christian Identity in a Multi-Faith World

### Articles

- Overview of in-group bias: <https://thedecisionlab.com/biases/in-group-bias>
- Group/political polarization causes and strategies: <https://community.macmillanlearning.com/t5/talk-psych-blog/how-we-polarize-and-what-we-can-do-about-it/ba-p/13493>

### Videos

- Ancient Wisdom related to our baptismal identity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrmZUqcVdow>
- Short video on bias: <https://www.pbs.org/video/pov-implicit-bias-peanut-butter-jelly-and-racism/>

### PTU Videos

- Does the Word Truth Still Have Meaning: 10:50 - 12:40 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmCGjBhQQa-M&list=PLIDvFcgPCRSMTntCy8UhV4KuCktchpVTP1&index=80>
- The Blessing and Bane of Love of Our In-Group: 15:07 to 18:27 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPKMyUI-wR9w>
- Discovering the Divinity Within, Swami Sridharananda: 0:00 through 1:53 (Not PTU) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiC-fnLgfls>
- Islamophobia: Not Just a Muslim Problem: 11:05 -12:50 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrBiuHwAM4&list=PLIDvFcgPCRSMTntCy8UhV4KuCktchpVTP1&index=108>

## Section Two Discussion Questions, Action Steps, & Resources

### Discussion Questions

- What was surprising to you about the meaning of “blessing” and “mishpachah?” How have you been taught to live with the knowledge of this blessing? How can we live out this blessing as a community now, knowing what it means?
- Does your tradition require people to be Christian in order for them to be respected?
- How is humility often practiced in Christianity? Do you believe that it is true humility?
- How have you seen the power of status play out in our society? What are ways that you can give up your external status, the way Jesus did?
- Read your tradition’s baptismal covenant.
  - What does it say about the importance of our tradition and community of wisdom?
  - What does it say about the relationship of our community and other communities of wisdom?
- What was your reaction to reading about the Doctrines of Discovery and their impact on people? Does it change how you see Christianity’s place in history?
- Read your tradition’s response to the Doctrines of Discovery, if any. <https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/faith-communities/>
- What are the ways our tradition falls short of honoring diversities of culture and tradition?
- Share a time when you have changed your mind or attitude about something important to you.
- “Hey, what about this verse?!” What were you taught about our call as Christians? What could this verse be saying about inclusion and making people part of our group? What might it not be saying?

### Activities

- Look up your address in this website to discover what tribal lands you are on? <https://native-land.ca>
- What tribes shared this land? What tribes are nearest to you?
- Explore the history of how the US Government moved them into reservations.
- Do they have a cultural center? Do they have any public events? If so, take time to go there and invite others to join you.

### Books

- Eboo Patel, *Out of Many Faiths: Religious Diversity and the American Promise*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/out-of-many-faiths-eboo-patel/1128639756>
- Aspen Institute, *Pluralism in Peril: Challenges to an American Ideal*, Report of the Inclusive America Project, <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/pluralism-peril-challenges-american-ideal/>
- Steven T. Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/pagans-in-the-promised-land-steven-t-newcomb/1101155580>
- Mark Charles and Soong-Chang Rah, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/unsettling-truths-mark-charles/1131804196?ean=9780830845255>

### Articles

- Website about the Doctrine of Discovery: <https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/>
- Diana Eck’s Pluralism Project: <https://pluralism.org/from-diversity-to-pluralism>

### Videos

- Cultural Pluralism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tv7NaV47no>
- Indigenous artist powerful words: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3FL9uhTH\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3FL9uhTH_s)
- Residential school survivors: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OuTuTG5liQ>

### PTU Videos

- Father Treacy, *From Me to We*: 24:18 - 26:08 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QRD9cIADZA&list=PLIDvF-cgPCRSMTntCy8UhV4KuCktchpVTP1&index=96>
- Rabbi Levine, 22:44 – 23:04 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNvi4N2zJ0M>
- Katherine Lohre, *How and Why of Interfaith*: 21:09 – 23:05 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Lqi-W2K81hM&list=PLIDvFcgPCRSNqaJR8Roo\\_JDGQXZUXNvmB&index=16](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Lqi-W2K81hM&list=PLIDvFcgPCRSNqaJR8Roo_JDGQXZUXNvmB&index=16)

## Section Three Discussion Questions, Action Steps, & Resources

### Discussion Questions

- When you imagine the world that Jesus was born into, how would you describe it?
- What were the temptations that Jesus faced as he began leadership within that situation? Can you tell a story about when you faced similar temptations?
- What do you think it was like to live in the domination culture of the Roman Empire? Are there parallels that you think of to the way we live today in our culture?
- How would you describe Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God? How does it relate to your dream for the world and your community?
- What are signs of the Kingdom of God you see in your community? How can you be a part of Kingdom of God coming into the world?
- The author proposes that being the church includes "to honor and recognize God's call to other wisdom communities to participate in the Kingdom of God?"
- How do you respond to that? Does the Creator have the freedom to reach out to people of other wisdom traditions? What reactions and emotions do you have contemplating that? How would that change or challenge the mission of the church?
- "Hey, what about this verse?:" How have you grown up hearing this verse? What does it mean to understand Jesus as "the way."

### Activities

- What are the wisdom communities in your area?
- Do you or your wisdom community have a relationship with them?
- Is there interfaith or multicultural organizations in your area? Take time to check out their website, join their social media groups, and consider participating.
- Talk with other leaders your wisdom community about participating in these interfaith groups.

### Books

- Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/social-science-commentary-on-the-synoptic-gospels-bruce-j-malina/1100441404>
- Marcus J. Borg and N. T. Wright, *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions*, <https://marcusborg.org/books/the-meaning-of-jesus/>
- Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-powers-that-be-walter-wink/1115210823?ean=9780385487528>
- Walter Nolan, OP, *Jesus Before Christianity*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/jesus-before-christianity-albert-nolan-op/1142054705?ean=9781570754043>
- Mary J. Streufert, *Transformative Lutheran Theologies: Feminist, Womanist, and Mujerista Perspectives*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/transformative-lutheran-theologies-mary-j-streufert/1130330447?ean=9780800663773>

### Articles

- Bell Hooks on Love and Domination culture: [https://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/hooks\\_Love\\_As\\_The\\_Practice\\_Of\\_Freedom.pdf](https://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/hooks_Love_As_The_Practice_Of_Freedom.pdf)
- MLK and Beloved Community: <https://www.religion-online.org/article/martin-luther-kings-vision-of-the-beloved-community/>
- Countering Group-think: <https://www.spring.org.uk/2021/06/groupthink.php>

### Videos

- Scarcity versus cooperation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoTx7Rt4dig>
- In-group/out-group relationships: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkYJOYrNiSw&t=88s>
- MLK on Beloved Community: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IeCzzRY\\_RI8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IeCzzRY_RI8)

### PTU Videos

- Untangling White Nationalism and Christianity, 22:14 -25:02: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pc-J9OUaLVGg&list=PLIDvFcgPCRSMtCy8UhV4KuCktchpVTP1&index=102>

## Section Four Discussion Questions, Action Steps, & Resources

### Discussion Questions

- What does “love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind” mean to you? Does the phrase, “more than your in-group and tradition” clarify this for you? Why did the author include this phrase?
- Make a list of what it takes to love self and in-group. What needs must be met for the well-being of your in-group? What do other people and in-groups need?
- What is the second Great Teaching’s wisdom about how we manage our needs and the needs of others? How do we put this into practice when there is scarcity?
- The third Great Teaching has often not been stated explicitly next to the other two. Do you think this is a legitimate addition? How does this teaching change our lives?
- Were you taught any ideas about Christianity replacing or being superior to Judaism in your childhood? Do you see them in your church’s practices or theology? Which aspects of your tradition that can be interpreted in an Antisemitic way are harder to modify?
- Do you have any groups in your community that identify as White Nationalist? Do they use Christianity to justify their positions? If so, how?
- What do you think Jesus means by the word “love?” How do we practice this radical love in our own lives?
- How did you understand the meaning of sacrifice, and specifically the sacrifice of Jesus? How do you understand it now? What are you wondering about?
- What stories about sin have you heard in your life? How does the idea of sin as in this chapter relate to how you think about sin and how do you respond to it?
- What wisdom does our notion of sin give us to live our lives more thoughtfully?
- “Hey, what about this verse?:” How do theological interpretations of the Bible that say that Jesus had to be sacrificed for God to forgive people impact how we see people who are not Christian? Do these ways of seeing people of other /no traditions seem aligned with how you think God sees them?

### Activities

- What Christian traditions are in your area? Consider attending a few of them.
- After you go, consider how they welcomed you. How would visitors be welcomed in your community of wisdom?
- Do these Christian churches have any expressions of care and service to their neighbors? How could you and your community join them in some of this work?
- Look at the worship services, liturgies, and or hymns in your congregation. Are there any words, phrases, or images that could be interpreted in an Antisemitic way? Are there any that seem to speak poorly of other traditions?
- Engage with your leadership, respectfully, about how some of these might be modified.
- What resources does your tradition have for more inclusive language, including honoring other traditions?

### Books

- Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, Jacqueline E. Lapsley, Bruce C. Birch, Larry L. Rasmussen, *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life: A New Conversation*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/bible-and-ethics-in-the-christian-life-bruce-c-birch/1140776476>
- Sally McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/life-abundant-sallie-mcfague/1131590799?ean=9780800632694>
- Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *Reconstructing the Gospel: Finding Freedom from Slaveholder Religion*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/reconstructing-the-gospel-jonathan-wilson-hartgrove/1127923505?ean=9780830847976>
- Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/post-colonial-imagination-and-feminist-theology-pui-lan/1124547963?ean=9780664228835>
- Rabbi Raphael H. Levine, *To Love Is to Live: Building Bridges of Understanding*, <https://www.amazon.com/Love-Live-Building-Bridges-Understanding/dp/0897165047>
- J. Denny Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-nonviolent-atonement-second-edition-j-denny-weaver/1027985235>

### Articles



- Antisemitism: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/anti-semitism-101/>
- Risking Love like Jesus: <https://faithlead.luthersem.edu/risking-love-for-our-neighbors-strangers-and-enemies/>
- Theories of the Cross: <https://www.sdmorrison.org/7-theories-of-the-atonement-summarized/>

#### Videos

- Our Understanding of God Shapes Us: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEJkg3ndti0>
- Being Courageous for our Neighbor: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QijH4UAqGD8>

#### PTU Videos

- Jay Julius, Spirit of the Waters 2: 17:57 -21:00 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FO2ghH2tzec>
- Mel Damski and Rabbi Daniel Weiner, The Perennial Prejudice Part One: 2:32-3:28, 6:30-7:17 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dY1OfhuuORw&list=PLIDvFcgPCRSNIveMBqpr712K7nzDqHctR>
- Fr. William Treacy, Challenge Program 103: 26:41-29:03 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9scf-WL7Yrg&list=PLIDvFcgPCRSmk7aMK2vsvvy1HsvdNXDW&index=2>

## Section Five Discussion Questions, Action Steps, & Resources

#### Discussion Questions

- What are some ways to give people a chance to increase in trust or respect for other groups? How have you seen wise people in your life or leaders in your community encourage this?
- What does the author propose for a strategy to build greater trust and cooperation between in-groups? Is there anything like that happening in your community? What would it take to become a part of it or help get something started?
- How does it feel to think of God as a Holy Mystery? Have you noticed when you or others claim to have the correct view of God? Have you ever had a time when you realized that your understanding of God was too small in some way?
- Is it faithful to Jesus to learn from or honor the wisdom of teachings from other wisdom traditions?
- Do you think that God has the freedom to speak to other mishpachah in their own culture? Why or why not?
- How do you feel about your wisdom community publicly associating with in-groups that are different from you? Would you consider leading an effort to create a partnership between your wisdom community and other in-groups?
- What is your “Why” for working to increase the trust in our society?
- “Hey, what about this verse?:” What does salvation mean to you? What do you think salvation means in this verse? Are there other places in the Bible that you think we may be taking out of context? What happens when we take passages out of context?

#### Activities

- Explore your personal “Why?”
- What personal experience, set of values, or vision for the world lead you to work with people of diverse traditions?
- Explore our shared “Why?”
- What are the experiences or values of your community of wisdom that lead you all to engage in relationship with people across lines of tradition, culture, socio-economic lines?
- What are the aspirational values of our nation that support us working for the common good together?
- Why are you willing to relate to, work with, and publicly associate with people of diverse wisdom traditions?
- How would you express your “Why” if someone were to ask you
  - In 5 minutes
  - In 1 minute
  - In 30 seconds
  - In one sentence
- Rewrite them after reviewing the “messages that work” section in the book.
- Remember that stating your “Why” is very powerful on its own. You don’t need to convince anyone.

## Books

- Lenny Duncan, *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/dear-church-lenny-duncan/1130579706>
- Wes Howard-Brook, *The Church Before Christianity*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-church-before-christianity-wes-howard-brook/1015032292?ean=9781570754036>
- Douglas John Hall, *The Cross in Our Context: Jesus and a Suffering World*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-cross-in-our-context-douglas-hall-editor/1131590807?ean=9781451407167>

## Articles

- Comic about backfire effect on strongly held beliefs, contains expletives: <https://theoatmeal.com/comics/believe>
- Social Media and Polarization: <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-internet-social-media-fuel-polarization-america-facebook-twitter-youtube-2020-12>
- Christian Nationalism and Inter-Wisdom Tradition Engagement: <https://wp.stolaf.edu/lutherancenter/2022/04/intra-and-interreligious-responses-to-christian-nationalism/>

## Videos

- Islam and Women's Rights: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ro3KmMc95js&list=PLIDvFcgPCRSNn-1HuRRzUCdn7u9arVvh9E&index=3>
- Impact is more than Intentions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdWA4dS7U8Y>
- Learning about other Groups Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbUwkCft3vU>

## PTU Videos

- Sheik Jamal, Blessed are the Peacemakers: 14:32-15:12 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_nbjnn-4H00o&t=891s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_nbjnn-4H00o&t=891s)
- Rabbi Yohanna, Intro to Judaism: 53:20-55:02 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOhkLOXKL-M&list=PLIDvFcgPCRSO5r55r-hg0HdPYIMjOa0Sv&index=3>

## Section Six Discussion Questions, Action Steps, & Resources

### Discussion Questions

- What attitudes toward the book of Revelation did you learn growing up? What story did you hear about the "end of the world?" Did the word "end" mean the destruction of the earth or the goal to which God is working?
- We can get so focused on times when the church has fallen short of Jesus' vision. What are some examples of people and churches that did well?
- When did you first learn of "hell?" How did it make you feel? Have you ever felt bullied by people who talk about hell? How did you feel when you read the chapter on hell?
- How do you feel about the idea of the intrinsic worth of the earth and its' people? Are there practices that you can come up with or that exist in your tradition to help you live from a belief in this inherent value of yourself and others?
- What does it take to go through a process of true reconciliation?
- Is there hope for the church to be more faithful to Jesus' vision?
- How is the church already living into Jesus' vision? What signs of hope do you see in you, your church, or in the world?
- What next step of risking love is your wisdom community going to take?
- Practice sharing your "Why" with each other.
- "Hey, what about this verse?:" How do you determine the kinds of people to work with? Who makes the most sense to spend time with if our goal is to work together to bring the Kingdom of God on Earth?

### Books

- Asma T. Uddin, *The Politics of Vulnerability: How to Heal Muslim-Christian Relations in a Post-Christian America: Today's Threat to Religion and Religious Freedom*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-politics-of-vulnerability-asma-t-uddin/1131590807?ean=9781451407167>

tics-of-vulnerability-asma-t-uddin/1137300376?ean=9781643136622

- Walter Brueggemann, *Truth Speaks to Power: The Countercultural Nature of Scripture*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/truth-speaks-to-power-walter-brueggemann/1112536175?ean=9780664239145>
- Barbara R. Rossing, *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation*, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-rapture-exposed-barbara-r-rossing/1122984922?ean=9780813343143>
- Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/pa-pa-francesco\\_20201003\\_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/pa-pa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html)

#### Articles

- ELCA Guidelines for Ministry in a Multi-Religious World: [https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Guidelines\\_for\\_Ministry\\_in\\_Multi\\_Religious\\_World.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Guidelines_for_Ministry_in_Multi_Religious_World.pdf)
- The Bible Teaches of a Renewed Earth: <https://www.christianweek.org/new-earth-renewed-earth/>

#### Videos

- Christianity and Unknowing, Richard Rohr: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnTC4NNIACk>
- New Creation in Christianity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7HlvT59uvo>
- Prison Warden God in Wisdom From Our Neighborhood: Underground Ministries: 36:05-45:17 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0N4nSSXOh\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0N4nSSXOh_Y)



# Spiritual Practices

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with the Examen

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me.”
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- Ask yourself:
  - When did I feel fully alive today?
  - When did I feel the life draining away?
  - Notice over time what gives you life and do more of that.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about the Examen

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

“The difficulty is that from our first days in school, we are taught to listen to everything and everyone but ourselves.” Parker Palmer

The Examen is a powerful way to allow God to speak through your experience. It is based upon the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius. Its intent is to help us recognize what gives us joy and deep meaning. Of course, this calling cannot be life-destroying for ourselves, others, or the planet. When it comes from God, our deep gladness interacts with God’s Way of Mutuality in partnership with others.

Offered by The Rev. Terry Kylo. Suggested Resource: Linn, Dennis, *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life*, (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1995)

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with Centering Prayer

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- Invite the presence of God.
- Use a mantra such as “God enfolds me”.
- When your mind is quiet, practice prayer with no words or images.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about Centering Prayer

One practice of contemplation is the Centering Prayer. It is a practice of prayer with no words, no images, and is a journey into the center of our beings. Some use a Mantra or a set of words that are repeated for a period of time and can help quiet the body and mind, inviting God to be with them during this practice. Thomas Keating, a modern-day Trappist monk, has written a good deal about Centering Prayer.

In meditation and contemplation, we create spaces in ourselves to allow the Holy Spirit to grow, and the fruit of that is the knowledge that we are God’s beloved, and that God seeks us in a relationship, yearning for each of us. That knowledge affects us as we respond to God’s creation each day.

Offered by The Rev. Rilla Barrett. Suggested Resources: Bourgeault, Cynthia, *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*, (Boston: Cowley Publications, 2004)

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with Contemplative Prayer

- Remember your baptismal identity, your
- authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- Allow yourself to be silent for a time, letting distracting thoughts and feelings pass.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about Contemplative Prayer

In Contemplative Prayer, there is no image of any kind, and we begin with breathing, relaxing, and then settle into a practice of silence. This is not easy for many of us, and it takes time to learn.

Phone apps can be used to set a timer, so you can let go of your need to monitor yourself before going on to your next task of the day. Often when we know the time is being watched, we can more easily let go.

The art of practicing silence is just that – an art, and it must be practiced. Start with only a few minutes and see if you can lengthen your time – and be gentle as you begin. If you have trouble with extraneous thoughts, don’t fight them, let them pass through your mind and return to emptying – even if you must return hundreds of times.

Offered by The Rev. Rilla Barrett. Suggested Resource: Main, John, *Word Into Silence: A Manual for Christian Meditation*, (London: Canterbury Press, 2006)

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with Daily Offices

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- Begin the selected office.
- Recite the words with attention to the rhythm of the words.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about the Daily Offices

“Seven times a day I will praise you.”  
Psalm 119:164

Reciting the Daily Offices is a great way to stop and remember our relationship with the Holy during the regular activities of the day. You can do just that!

Another model is to pray four times a day. This is known as the Cathedral Offices. It includes: Morning Prayer, Noon Prayer, Vespers or Evening Prayer, and Compline which is at bedtime.

Why should you recite the offices? The design of reciting offices starts to make the whole course of the day, and night, holy. You will be joining millions of people around the world which creates a powerful form of community.

Offered by Bee Jay Mar. Suggested Resources: Benson, Robert. *In Constant Prayer*. New York: Thomas Nelson. 2010. Claiborne, Shane and Jonathan Wilson-Hargrove. *Common Prayer for Ordinary Radicals*. Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan. 2012.net: Universalis <http://www.universalis.com/>: may also be available as a smart phone app.

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with Exercise

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- Dedicate this workout to God as a way to honor the gift of your body.
- With each footfall or breath repeat a mantra such as left foot: “peace in” and right foot: “all things.”
- As you stretch and cool down thank God for your life.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about Exercise

Exercise is a way to honor and celebrate our bodies, which are a part of God’s good creation. In Genesis God says that the creation is “good, very good” and that the purpose of humankind is to care for the earth, ourselves, and one another. Your body is a part of that “good, very good” creation.

Exercise is one way to care for our bodies, gives ourselves a break from work, and reduces the stress that can damage our health. But working out does not have to be understood as “work.” It can be embraced as a part of our spiritual lives. We can dedicate our exercise to God in a way that increases our joy in exercise and increases our mindfulness as we do it.

Offered by The Rev. Terry Kyлло

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with Hand Gestures

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- Place your palms face down on your lap, as a symbolic indication of your desire to turn over any concerns to God. Pause, releasing your cares to God.
- Turn your palms face up, as a symbol of your desire to receive from the Lord. Ask the Lord for what you need. Pause, awaiting the Holy Spirit.
- Next bring your hands together in the prayer position. Spend time in silence, sitting in God’s presence. Alternately, place your hands over your heart, holding all you have received.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about Hand Gestures

Palms Up; Palms Down provides a simple way to engage your body in prayer.

Offered by Bee Jay Mar. Suggested Resources: Brown, Patricia D. *Paths to Prayer: Finding Your Own Way to the Presence of God*. New York: Jossey-Bass. 2003.

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with Icons

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- In a quiet place ask God to reveal God’s nature in the object or icon as you encounter it.
- Ponder what is being revealed to you, and respond in adoration, confession, or intercession.
- Notice over time what gives you life and do more of that.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about Icons

Icons provide a way of using a visual image for prayer. Icons make use of light and invite prayer into communion with God.

Our culture uses icons in various ways such as in advertising or the icons on your computer screen. We can also find icons in nature – tall evergreens, colorful wildflowers, or waves on the beach. Each can be a visual reminder of the Creator and invite us to a relationship with God.

Holy icons can be seen the same way. The person who makes the icon is an “icon writer,” and creates the icon while in prayer. You can gaze at them while you pray or sit with them in nature. Invite God to be present and to reveal answers in the icon. What is being revealed to you? Then respond in adoration, thanksgiving, confession, or intercession.

Offered by The Rev. Rilla Barrett. Suggested Resources: Forest, Jim, *Praying with Icons*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008).

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with Intercessory Prayer

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- Gently lift the people, issues, and concerns to the Lord. Jesus knows the details – better than we so simply naming is enough.
- Thank God for caring for each person and concern.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about Intercessory Prayer

An Intercessory prayer allows you to pray for others. It helps you be responsive when a friend asks for prayers or when a tragedy occurs. You can also focus on worldly issues and concerns.

One suggestion is to focus on a particular set of needs for each day of the week. For example, praying for church and mission on Sunday, for work and school on Monday, for your family on Tuesday, (is there a practice for Wednesday?) for your community on Thursday, for friends on Friday, and health or environment on Saturday.

Offered by Bee Jay Mar. Suggested Resources: *Saint Augustine’s Prayer Book*, West Park NY: Holy Cross. Publications. 1993. The morning litany is found on pages 14-15.

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with Journaling

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Light a candle in a quiet space.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- Write or draw impressions from the day, your thoughts and feelings, your reflections and prayers.
- Offer your impressions of the day to God in prayer.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about Journaling

Journaling is a form of discipline to record our thoughts on paper and allow us to reflect on our own path with honesty and openness making it easier to be able to understand what God is calling us to do.

Journals can be freeing for your soul. They can be filled with words, doodles, or drawings. A journal can hold artifacts such as a dried flower or a theatre ticket. A journal is a record of our feelings, thoughts, reflections, and prayers. Above all, it is honest. Once you have written in a journal, it is a good practice to offer it to God in prayer.

It’s important to note that a journal is not a record book or a diary. As those focus on recording facts or specific events like what the weather was, whom we saw, or when we paid the water bill.

Offered by The Rev. Rilla Barrett. Suggested Resources: Cepero, Helen, *Journaling as a Spiritual Practice: Encountering God through Attentive Writing*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Books, 2008)

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with by Walking the Labyrinth

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- Walk the labyrinth and take notice of the journey and your experience of it.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about the Labyrinth

A labyrinth is a sacred pattern in the shape of a circle. It has a path that leads to the center and backs out again. It represents the wholeness of creation and invites us into the center of our being as we walk.

A famous labyrinth is the one on the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France. Many churches have installed labyrinths like this one. Walking a labyrinth can be transformational. Each step takes you closer to the center of your walk with God.

A Labyrinth is not a maze. A maze is designed to give us a sense of being lost or confused. A labyrinth has no wrong turns nor dead ends, so you can free your brain from figuring out which way to go, and simply take the next step as you pray and walk and listen to God. It is a metaphor for life – all the twists and turns of daily living.

Offered by The Rev. Rilla Barrett. Suggested Resources: Artress, Lauren, *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice*, (New York: Penguin Publishing, 2006)



## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with Lectio Divina

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- Practice Lectio Divina: Read. Meditate. Pray. Contemplate.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is a meditative way of reading scripture or other sacred writing and listening for God to be revealed in the reading. It literally means “divine reading”.

Lectio Divina is often a community practice of a four-step process commonly performed by monks. St. Benedict, a fifth-century monk encouraged the practice. It can also be done individually. Instead of studying scripture, Lectio Divina invites scripture to reveal meaning through the Holy Spirit. It doesn’t treat Scripture as text to be studied but as the “Living Word”. The four steps of Lectio Divina are to read, meditate, pray and contemplate.

The chosen reading is usually shorter rather than longer. The READ portion of the practice is often to read the selection at least three times, each time more slowly. The MEDITATE portion often invites focus on one word or short phrase from the reading that seems to invite attention. The PRAY portion may feel like letting your needs be made known to God while the CONTEMPLATE portion is more about listening for God, and resting in the presence of the Holy. *Offered by The Rev. Rilla Barrett. Suggested Resources: Hall, Thelma, Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina, (Mahway, New Jersey: Paulist Press,1988)*

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with a Mandala

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- Spend some time creating a mandala.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about Mandalas

Mandalas are a way of unleashing your ability to be cocreators with God. As we use our hands we can often focus our minds and spirits on exploring and deepening our relationship with the Creator.

A Mandala is a circular mathematical and predictable pattern of lines and colors. These patterns can often be found in nature – like a nautilus or a sunflower.

Circles are symbolic of wholeness with no beginning or end. A circle is a safe protected place to pray. Buddhist monks began the practice of mandalas centuries ago by creating elaborate and beautiful circular patterns in the sand.

To create a mandala, begin with a circle and invite God into it and into your prayer. Using color, pens, or pencils, draw lines and patterns as you pray. There is no right or wrong way to make a mandala. Empty yourself as you draw and offer your prayers to God.

Offered by The Rev. Rilla Barrett. Suggested Resource: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sisterjoan-chittisterosb/mandala-why-destroy-it\\_b\\_970479.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sisterjoan-chittisterosb/mandala-why-destroy-it_b_970479.html) <http://www.mandalaproject.org/Index.html>

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with Prayer Beads

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- Practice a prayer form using prayer beads.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about Prayer Beads

Prayer Beads, sometimes called the rosary, are a method of prayer for some. It’s a tactile form of praying. The feeling of the beads, the cross, and their arrangement is meant to help the individual pray and feel a physical connection to God.

Different faith traditions have used beads in varying ways. Prayer beads were first used in the second century BCE by followers of Hinduism as a way of counting prayers. It spread to Buddhism and Islam, and then became part of the Christian prayer tradition.

During the Reformation, leaders of the new Protestantism discouraged their followers from using something they saw as commonly associated with Roman Catholicism. Depending on the prayer beads one uses, there can be prescribed patterns of prayer or they can be used in a simpler way. The structure of prayer beads is usually symbolic and is intended to remind you of both the prayer and the tradition.

Offered by The Rev. Rilla Barrett. Suggested Resource: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican\\_prayer\\_beads](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican_prayer_beads)  
<http://abeadnaprayer.wordpress.com/prayer-bead-basics/>

## Remembering your Baptismal Identity with the Jesus Prayer

- Remember your baptismal identity, your authentic self, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God accepts all of me”.
- Take some long, slow breaths.
- As you inhale, recite: Jesus Christ, Son of God; on the exhale, recite: have mercy on me.
- Recite these words, in sync with your breath, for 50 times.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.
- Remember your baptismal identity, making the sign of the cross and saying, “God is creating me”.

### More about the Jesus Prayer

Reciting the Jesus Prayer is a discipline from Eastern Orthodox churches. The goal is to make the petition part of our breathing so that we begin to do it continually. An Orthodox prayer rope of 50 to 100 knots helps with the counting.

Offered by Bee Jay Mar. Suggested Resources: Talbot, John Michael. *The Jesus Prayer: A Cry for Mercy. A Path of Renewal.* 2013. Downer’s Grove IL. IVP. Mathewes-Green, Frederica. *The Jesus Prayer: The Ancient Desert Prayer that Tunes the Heart to God.* Brewster MA: Paraclete Press. 2009. Billy, Dennis J. *The Way of the Pilgrim: Complete Text and Reader’s Guide.* Liguori MO: Loguori Press. 2000.