

Options for Sabbath Time

Contemplative Prayer

Find a quiet place free of distractions in which you can sit comfortably. A meditation center has been created for such a place. Relax your body with a few deep breaths, releasing any tension.

Begin with a brief prayer offering this time to God. Choose one of the following ways to pray:

Centering Prayer

Choose a short, sacred word such as *God, Spirit, One, Peace, Love*. Allow a word to come to you that doesn't have much emotional attachment, or simply use the name *Jesus*. Close your eyes, or half-close them and gaze upon a candle or flower. Start repeating the word you have chosen. Whenever you become distracted or aware of other thoughts, return gently to the sacred word letting the other float away. Continue for twenty minutes or so. Remain in silence for a few more minutes with eyes closed or half-closed to make the transition from God's time to our time.

Prayer of the Heart

Relax your mind. Visualize Jesus sitting near you or standing with you. He looks into your eyes, calls you by name, and asks, "What do you want me to do for you?" Let your response surface from deep within. If more than one thing comes to mind, identify the root desire beneath all the other desires. Express it in a short phrase such as "*Grant me peace*" or "*Give me strength*" or "*Love me.*" Then find your name for God—a word that is most meaningful when you speak to God. Combine your name for God with your desire and create a single sentence such as, "*Holy Mystery, teach me your ways.*" Repeat it to yourself in silence for a few minutes. Rest into silence. Let the phrase fade away, and let the Spirit guide you into God's enfolding love.ⁱ

Lectio on Life – Applying *Lectio Divina* to my personal salvation history

Listen: Gently review events, situations, sights, encounters that have happened recently.

Meditate: Focus on one such occurrence. Recollect the setting, sensory details, sequence of events, etc. Notice where the greatest energy seemed to be evoked. Was there a turning point or shift? In what ways did God seem to be present? To what extent was I aware then? Now?

Pray: Use a word or phrase from Scripture to offer up the incident and your reflections to God in prayer. Allow God to accept and bless your gift.

Contemplate: Remain in silence for some time.ⁱⁱ

Using Art Materials

In the meditation room are supplies for the following activities. Begin in this way:

Welcome our God who is ever with us.

Offer a prayer. Close your eyes, clear your mind, relax your body.

Open your eyes. Allow the materials and colors to choose you.ⁱⁱⁱ

Scribble Drawing

Take a piece of paper and light-colored crayon, marker or colored pencil. Try using your non-dominant hand. You may do this with your eyes closed. In one continuous motion, draw a large loose scribble on your paper. Allow the line to travel around and overlap in places. Then gaze at your scribble, perhaps placing it at a distance. Watch for images to emerge. With a darker pen go over the lines that have meaning or copy those lines on another sheet of paper. Add additional lines if you wish. Add color to the sections. On the back write down any meaning that the shapes inspire. Give it a title and date it.

Mandala

Draw a large circle on paper. Start either at the center or edge inside the circle and draw shapes that suggest themselves. Use colors that attract you. Follow your intuitive impulses. Allow the work to grow

itself. When you have finished, turn the piece and determine the top. Attempt to express the central theme and if so moved, write a few sentences. Give it a title and date it. ^{iv}

Dialogue with Images

Pick up a magazine. Slowly leaf through it, stopping to tear or cut out a few images or words, but especially images that catch your attention. You don't need to know the reason it captures your eye, simply follow anything that acts like a "speed bump," causing you to pause. After gathering one or several images, cut and glue the image(s) onto a piece of construction paper. Simply gaze on it and see what it says to you, or write a dialogue with it. To do the latter, choose one of the images and give it a name. Begin a written conversation on paper, starting with your own initials, and say something like, "Hi. I'm interested in what you can tell me." Then write the name of the image: and then write its response. Continue writing the conversation back and forth between yourself and the image, giving at least as much air time to the image as to yourself. Converse with God about any discovery.

Engaging the Body in Prayer

No Cracks Walk

A noted psychologist who wrote a book on creativity was asked by a philosophy professor, "What's the best advice you could give me to be creative?" He responded, "Don't step on the cracks." He was referring to cracks in the sidewalk, encouraging disengagement of the mind. Letting our minds focus on something entirely unrelated to a particular question or issue frees the creative, intuitive parts of ourselves to surface. Enjoy walking to, around, and from Pioneer Park without stepping on the cracks. Pioneer Park is a small city park which is half a block south and two blocks west of the hotel.

Walking Meditation

The Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh teaches that the purpose of a meditative walk is not to get somewhere, but just to walk, to be in the present moment. Go for a walk, taking a few steps with each inhale and then again with each exhale. They do not have to be the same number of steps for each. You can also encourage your body to express itself in gentle motions, perhaps in rhythm with a repeated word phrase such as "*Lord, have mercy*" or "*Seek first God's kingdom.*" Or "*Rest in me.*"

Noticing Walk

Start your walk without an agenda, committing your time to God. Ask to be shown something that God wants you to notice. It may be small or insignificant to others: the shape of a tree, the sound of a bird, someone's face, the movement of clouds... anything that for you holds meaning.

Gestures

Explore different postures or gestures as you pray. Some suggestions include:

*raise arms waist high or above the head *open arms wide as if to receive *cross arms over chest *bow head slightly *uplift your face *kneel or stand *tuck legs underneath thighs, bow head to the floor *hold yourself and rock rhythmically *lie flat on your back^v

ⁱ "Lord, Teach Us to Pray – A Guide to Prayer," Office of Spiritual Formation of the PC(USA), "Prayer of the Heart," pp. 21, 23.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, "The Word in Prayer," p. 7.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, "Behold the Beauty of the Lord," contributed by Mary Mohlke. Adapted from *Drawing to God* by Jeri Gerding. Notre Dame, Indiana: Sorin Books, 2001, p. 7.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 11.

^v *Ibid.*, "Praying With Our Bodies," pp. 17, 19.