

SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

Spiritual practice is at least part of what sets apart a mission experience and pilgrimage from other types of travel. Preparing our hearts and minds is important to ensuring we approach each experience with sensitivity, empathy, and understanding.

Listed below are some examples of spiritual practices you may incorporate into your experience. These are just ideas. If appropriate, invite the host community to share their practices with you with reciprocation from your Team. You can also engage these practices together or in a parallel way so that each group is gaining insight and transformation through the process.

Online Daily Devotions

One way to work with your Team to prepare them for the mission experience is to commit to a daily devotional like d365.org. Setting aside just 5–10 minutes a day can help each Team member get into the practice of intentionally reflecting upon their experiences.

Journaling

You might want to encourage every member of your Team to keep a journal. It is a common practice for trip leaders to provide each participant with a journal just for that experience. You decide whether you provide the journal in the months before the

experience so they can get in the habit of journaling or at one of the final meetings, so the journal is set aside just for that experience. As you prepare — and even as you travel — you can provide reflection questions for them to consider in their writing.

Ideas include:

- A list of prayer requests and thanksgivings
- References to Scriptures that inspired them on that day
- Unanswered questions
- Thoughts, insights, and reflections
- An experience that day that touched their heart
- Evidence of God’s activity around them
- What they are learning about God and how they are responding to God

Some journaling tips:

- Journals are private.
- Journals don’t care about grammar and sentence structure.
- Journaling does not always mean using words. Journalers may prefer to draw, color, or visually express thoughts and feelings .

- Journaling takes time.
- Journaling requires practice and consistency.

Gospel–Based Discipleship

This is a pastoral adaptation of the Book of Common Prayer meant to help disciples “hear the Gospel and see Jesus.” It’s created from many sources. Special honor goes to the American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian elders who place the Gospel at the center of the sacred circle.

Free download at: http://www.episcopalchurch.org/6057_4133_ENG_HTM.htm

Prayer

Regular prayer can be a simple spontaneous prayer circle or you can use established prayers to draw attention to a particular subject or issue. There are countless books and websites devoted to prayers for mission experience, justice, and spiritual growth.

Here are just a few:

Make Poverty History Prayer

by The Jesuits of the British Province

Loving God, look with mercy
upon the human race you have created.
Instill in our hearts a vision of your kingdom
in which the destructive poverty of our world
is destroyed and consigned to history.

May we all live together in peace, truth, justice
and love,

sharing the resources of the earth.

And grant, gentle Father, that the Holy Spirit
may give us

the will and the courage to act to make a
difference,

in order to make real your kingdom among us.

This we ask through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Freedom Prayer

There are very few people

who realize what God would make of them

if they abandoned themselves into his hands,

and let themselves be formed by his grace. (St
Ignatius of Loyola)

I ask for the grace to trust myself totally to
God’s love.

Prayer of an African Christian of the Congo

From Gifts of Many Cultures: Worship
Resources for the Global Community, United
Church Press, 1995.

“O God, Enlarge my heart that it may be big
enough to receive the greatness of your love.
Stretch my heart that it may take into it all
those who with me around the world believe
in Jesus Christ. Stretch it that it may take into
it all those who do not know him, but who are
my responsibility because I know him. And

stretch it that it may take in all those who are not lovely in my eyes and whose hands I do not want to touch.”

Unfold Me – Guided Prayer

A folded washcloth has no purpose. It sits on the shelf, square and tidy, each corner put together by diligent hands. It washes no faces, cleans no dishes, and wipes down no counters. It inhabits space on the shelf, unwilling to spread out and make its contribution to the world, avoiding the duties mapped out for its life as a washcloth.

I want to unfold . . . (have youth call out loud or write down)

I must go beyond the comforts of my everyday life to unfold. The unfolding process demands that I open my folded eyes to the homeless, the lonely, and the rejected I encounter daily. I must stop and talk with the homeless woman on the street, the lonely student in his dorm room, and the rejected man who is the “wrong color.” As I unfold I’m able to see the pain of sleeping on the streets, the isolation of having no one to talk to, and the humiliation of racism. I continue to unfold and begin to desire God’s love to overwhelm my heart and tear down my middle-class thoughts and opinions . . .

Want to unfold . . . (have youth call out loud or write down)

The world tells me to conform, to be like everyone else, to have the latest new gadgets, to wear the hottest new labels. It is so easy to fall into this mold, to blend in with everyone

else, to be numb to the needs and hurts of the world around me. But when I truly look into myself, when I search my individual soul and desires, I cannot conform and ignore my role in this world. I want to be a friend to the ghetto child, the hurting, the lonely . . .

Hard to unfold . . . (have youth call out loud or write down)

Unfolding requires risk. It means I must take myself out of my comfortable world and challenge myself to reach out to those I am unfamiliar and uncomfortable with. It means I will go to a new place, a new city, a new environment, and even a new culture.

Want to unfold . . . (have youth call out loud or write down)

Folded I have no purpose. I sit on the shelf of life, neat and tidy, keeping each corner of my life in “perfect” order. I can serve many purposes unfolded – washing the dirty faces of neglected children, cleaning after those who cannot take care of themselves, and uplifting a lonely stranger who needs encouragement. Once I unfold from my comfortable shelf in life, I am then able to function as a washcloth should, to provide comfort, to clean, and revive. I want to unfold!

This is a great guided prayer to use with your youth. Read it aloud and ask them to either write down or call aloud what they are hearing within themselves at the appropriate time.

A Prayer of Reconciliation

adapted from the Community of the Cross of Nails

Almighty God,

You have committed to us the ministry of reconciliation of your son Jesus Christ;

give us confidence in your power to forgive as your son forgave humankind from the Cross.

Bless the members of the Anglican Communion gathered here, and enable us to be witnesses of your forgiveness at work, wherever we are.

Unite us in your love to heal the hostilities we see,

and give us the grace to love one another and to rejoice in community with you.

In the name of Jesus Christ,

Amen

Centering Prayer

Centering prayer is a type of contemplative prayer. Contemplative prayer is the full opening of mind and heart, soul and body — our whole being — to the Spirit of God, the ultimate mystery, utterly beyond thoughts, words, images, and emotions. We open our awareness to God whom we know by faith, hope, and love is dwelling within and around us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than choosing, closer than consciousness itself. We train our eyes, ears, minds, and hearts to

attend to God’s “inner voice of love” calling out to us and reminding us of our original name as Beloved, in whom the Creator takes delight.

Method of Centering Prayer

Centering prayer is one of many methods designed to facilitate the experience of contemplative prayer. It is an attempt to present the ancient teaching of mystical prayer (found in both Eastern and Western Christianity) in an updated form to be used as a vital part of the common Christian prayer tradition. It is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer; it simply puts other kinds of prayer into a new and fuller perspective. During the time of prayer, we open ourselves fully to the power of God’s presence and unconditional love working within us. As we engage in this prayer, one of the “fruits” we may notice is a growing attentiveness to God’s presence in our daily life.

Centering Prayer Guidelines

1. Choose a sacred word or phrase as the symbol of your intention to be open to God’s presence and action within you (examples might be “Jesus,” “Love,” “Holy Spirit,” “Beloved”). Once you choose a word or phrase do not change it, but consistently use the same word throughout the prayer.
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly into the presence

of God by taking a few deep breaths and letting go of all thoughts and distractions. Begin silently to repeat your sacred word or phrase as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within your heart. Continue this prayer for twenty minutes. (Do not worry if you pray for less than twenty minutes. You can add more time as you get more comfortable with this type of praying.) Do this once a day, preferably in the morning.

3. When you become aware of thoughts or distractions during the prayer, return ever—so—gently to repeating the sacred word or phrase.
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes, and close your time with God by reciting the Lord's Prayer.

One of the few guarantees on a mission experience is that something unpredictable