

Activity: A Way to Pray with Five Fingers

This activity is excerpted from Session V: “The Prayer Question: “Practices of Showing up and Paying Attention” of K.H. Staudt’s discernment curriculum resource “Shaping a Faithful Life”. The full curriculum is available in pdf on this website or by following the link <http://poetproph-discerningyourway.blogspot.com/>

In this session participants will learn a simple practice to foster attentiveness to prayer when developing spiritual resources that can provide guidance about vocation. This activity is designed for young adults.

Gathering: (10 minutes): What is prayer?

If the group is in a location with connectivity, start by asking participant to google the word “prayer” and see what definitions come up that they can/can’t relate to (5 minutes)

The Leader says: Pair off and discuss with your partner the question “how do you pray?” Gather answers – See what kinds of definitions of “prayer” emerge.

Once the participants have talked over the question about “how do you pray?” **the Leader** will walk the group through the “5-minute prayer” practice, using the following instructions.

“Showing Up” Prayer:

First take 5 deep breaths – to settle and focus.

1. Hold out one finger, to begin the count, and say, “**Oh God, you...**”
form a sense or an image of the God who loves you, and *quietly place yourself in that presence.*
2. On the next finger, say “**Thank you for...**”
and bring to mind anything you remember for which you are grateful today.
Rest with this thought for 5 breaths.
3. On your third finger, say “**I’m sorry for...**”
and bring to mind whatever you are regretting or feeling sorry for today.
As you inhale, breathe in God’s merciful love, and as you exhale, breathe out what you regret.
Breathe this way four or five times.
4. On your fourth finger, say “**Please help...**”
and bring to mind anyone you are praying for or anyone who has asked for prayers or seems to be in need. Hold their names in your mind as you breathe in God’s love, breathe out all hurt, pain and need.
Breath this way four or five times.

5. With all five fingers spread out now, say **“Please help me…”** and ask God for whatever you need today.

Rest with this request for 4 or 5 deep breaths.

With both hands spread out, and turned up to God end your prayer time by offering, very slowly, the Lord’s prayer.

When the prayer is completed, have members of the group share their impressions of the exercise.

Note that this prayer practice can happen at any time during the day – but it’s good to choose a regular time and place: a prayers space in your home, OR perhaps the moment when you turn on your computer in the morning, or some other routine moment that could “open up” into 5 minutes of intentional prayer.

Talk about ways that this practice can be expanded – invite people to share their current practice and variations on this.