

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through
the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house
of the LORD forever.



My Faith Journey

All Saints Lutheran Church
Fitchburg, WI

Our Faith Journey

*(Especially if you are a group or a family,
please read out loud, even take turns.)*

God invites us to share life with him. He created our world so that we'd have a place to have encounters of God. Even more, to personalize those meetings, God sent Jesus.

Through Jesus, God enters fully into our world and shows us the pathway to successful and meaning-filled lives; lives that make a difference. Jesus said, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life."*

Today, we are again invited to walk the way of Jesus; the way of faith. Along the pathway, you'll discover and celebrate truths about the way of Jesus. These will include the quintessential themes of living:

Hope
Obedience
Truth
Exaltation
Love

We'll encounter each theme at each of five faith destinations. Follow the directions in this booklet and you will have an enriching experience of God. And, what's more, you will rediscover how to journey each day of our life.

Let's Begin with Prayer

You've come to the first destination. Either as a family, group, or individually, talk with God about the journey you are about to take. You might pray spontaneously. Or, you might pray the following prayer:

*Lord God,
While I/we don't really know what to expect
today, I/we invite you to be my/our guide.
As you are my/our guide, I/we know
that I/we cannot get lost along the way.*

*There are things that you would like to
share with me/us today. I/We have come to
listen to you and your thoughts. I/We know
of your wisdom and look to make it my/our
own.*

*Make me/us wise, Lord, in the ways of life.
Make me/us wise in the ways of friendships.
Make me/us wise in the ways of the world.
Make me/us wise so that in your wisdom,
I/we might be all that you have created
me/us to be. I/We love you, Lord. Amen!*

Now, let's move on in our journey today and begin at the beginning. What is it that we expect today? Is it possible that God will be a part of it? Turn to page 3.

Hope!

Think about the word, “hope”. What does it mean to you? Write or say some thoughts:

Is there a difference between “wishing” and “hoping”?

Wishing: _____

Hoping: _____

A very simple definition of hope might be: “*where I anticipate God will be*” or “*the ache I feel inside to be who God created me to be.*”

With these definitions, what are some things that you hope for? How is God there for you?

Read aloud: The very first step on our spiritual journey with God is to anticipate that God is with us each step of the way. Hope implies expectation and optimism. It allows us to see what is not yet and believe that it is.

Hope is the coaxing of God for us to step forward into the unknown, fully confident in our steps together, in

the power inherent in the journey, and in the reality of what is to be. Hope engages the goodness of God and brings it to life.



***“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul,
firm and secure.”***

Hebrews 6:19

As a symbol of our hope, an empty pot is given to your group. Take it and take turns carrying it on this journey. It is a symbol of our souls asking God that we might be filled with joy, goodness, and wonder. It means that we are open to all that God has in mind for us.

Action: Pray! Each of you pray out loud for what you hope for. Ask God to fill you. Remember that prayer is the power tool God’s given us to help our hopes become happenings.

***“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for
and certain of what we do not see.”***

Hebrews 11:1

Now, walk toward the next destination and talk about what it takes to have hopes become realities. Take your time. We’re not in a race. We’re on a journey.

Obedience!

You've arrived.

Read again out loud: Having hope is a terrific thing. But, how can our hopes become realities? First, pray for them. Then, we must begin to take necessary steps into the new reality of our hopes. In other words, we begin to live the reality before it has really come. With God, we can even become the answers to our own hope-filled prayers.

If you want to see yourself as smart, be smart. If you want to see yourself as healthy and fit, be healthy and fit. Capable and confident, be capable and confident. A follower of Jesus, be a follower of Jesus.

What does a follower of Jesus look like? _____

Followers of Jesus are journeyers. And a true spiritual journey, involves self-discipline and obedience to your calling from God. That means practicing being a follower.

How disciplined are you as a person? List some ways:

To be disciplined in following, we look to not just obey Jesus, we look to become like Jesus.

Read out loud and talk about what the Bible says about obedience:

***“Because of the service
by which you have proved yourselves,
people will praise God for the obedience
that accompanies your confession
of the gospel of Christ, and for our generosity
in sharing with them and with everyone else.”
2 Corinthians 9:13***

Action: If you don't have one, choose your Spiritual Practice. (See page 14 for a list of Spiritual Practices or create your own.) Obedience is to seek God with all our hearts. Our Spiritual Practices help us.

My Spiritual Practice is: _____

By choosing a Spiritual Practice you are beginning to fill your soul with LIFE from God. Spiritual Practices are not always pretty or easy. But, by them we are becoming filled. Fill your pot with the rich soil. It represents the substance of faith in God.

Move on to the next faith destination, talking about what you've learned.

Trust!

Read aloud:

*“Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him and he will do this:
He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn,
the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.”
Psalm 37:5-6*

Repeat these phrases until they are memorized:

**Hope happens through Obedience.
Obedience brings Trust.**

Mystically, when we obey God by using our Spiritual Practices, we experience something new of God and ourselves. And, we become more and more like Jesus. At first, it doesn't seem so, but it does happen.

What does it look like and feel like to be like Jesus?
Talk about it to those with you or to God.

Repeat three times: **Trust yourself and trust God.**

“Commit your way to the Lord . . . ” and you'll know yourself as God has always known you to be. You'll actually become like Jesus.

God promises that as we wholeheartedly trust in him, life will be what it's supposed to be, we will accomplish and we will know blessing as a way of life.

Talk about these things:

- When have you trusted God?
- Was it easy to do?
- What was the good that happened?
- Is it always easy to trust God/

Actions:

1. Leave your offering in the empty pot to honor God for the works he has done and the works he will do in and through you. This will be a sign to God that you trust him.
2. Plant some seeds in your soil. Jesus that when farmers plant seed, it takes trust to believe that they will become more than they are. You, too, are intended to be even more than you think you are. God trusts you. Trust God.

Talk about what this means on your way to the next destination:

*“LORD, those who know your name
will trust in you . . . ”
Psalm 9:10*

Exaltation!

Now, upon your arrival at the next destination. At the top of your lungs, shout three times:

“Yay, God!”

Seriously!

Do it again! Three times. Really! Can you feel God’s excitement in you as you shout?

We were created to celebrate life and smile and laugh and sing. We were created to exalt God.

***“O LORD, you are my God;
I will exalt you.
I will give thanks to your name.
For you have worked wonders . . .
Isaiah 25:1***

List the many reasons that we have to exalt God:

***“O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together.”
Psalm 34:3***

Sing with the song leader about the wonder and glory of God.

Read the following Bible verses:

***“God,
they will celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.”
Psalm 145:7***



***“Take some of the first fruits
of all that you produce . . .
Then go to the place
the LORD your God will choose
as a dwelling for his name . . .
Place the basket before the LORD your God
and bow down before him . . .
and you shall rejoice in all the good things
the LORD your God has given to you . . .”
Deuteronomy 16:1-11***

Before you walk on, water your soil. Give nourishment to your soul so that your faith will grow and produce fruit in abundance.

Now, if you can, walk on your tiptoes to the next destination on your journey, saying wonderful things about God.

Love

This is the final destination of our faith journey. Hope, obedience, trust, and exaltation lead here.

Read aloud:

***“You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart, and with all your soul,
and with all your strength, and with all your mind;
and your neighbor as yourself.”
Luke 10:27***

The culmination of the faith journey is that we are made bold to be able to love. Read the above verse three times or memorize it.

Love is God expressing himself through us. We can love another person, a husband, wife, parent, or child. We can love our neighbors. We can even love our enemies.

The power to be able to love comes from Jesus himself. Through our spiritual practices of obedience we are made capable of truly loving as we are intended to. Even more, we can love as God loves.

***“And I have made your name known to them,
and will take it known, so that the love with
which you loved me may be in them, and I in them..”
John 17:26***

Jesus believes that we can love as he loves.

Who do you love? Why do you love? _____

Where does love come from? _____

***“Dear friends, let us love one another,
for love comes from God.
Everyone who loves has been born
of God and knows God.
We love because God first loved us.”
1 John 4:7***

Receive Holy Communion as a sign of God’s love for you.

What does it feel like to receive Holy Communion?
Do you feel loved? _____

How are you expressing your love to others? Why do you do it? What does it feel like? _____

Action: As a child of God, go in peace serving the Lord by loving and serving others. Walk to the Prayer Circle. Hold hands with those you’re with as a sign of love.

Prayer Circle

To conclude your spiritual journey today, you might come to the prayer circle, talk with God about something that's been on your mind.

As you become centered, exalt, and praise God.

You might want to repeat, again, The Lord's Prayer or Psalm 23 out loud as you rest. They are good prayer rhythms (on back cover). Or just talk with God or sing a song.

God will stir in your soul today. Listen for him. Desire to hear God's Word. Become aware of what it means. And, make it your own.

Celebrate and enjoy!



Spiritual Practices

- Reading a chapter in the Bible from the book of 1 Corinthians
- Studying something that interests you, which might include something about God, the Church, or your spiritual life
- Fasting from a favorite and when the urge for it comes, talk with God in those moments about anything
- Keeping a journal about your day and what you think about the happenings
- Talking with someone about what's important to them
- Doing something terrific for someone for no apparent reason
- Sending your favorite person a gift (flowers, jewelry, etc.)
- Playing with a child and entering into his/her world for some moments
- Meditating on God's creation for us
- Taking a walk
- Reciting, even memorizing, The Lord's Prayer or Psalm 23 (see back cover)
- Listening to a new style of music to learn what God might be teaching you
- Inviting someone new to your home for conversation and a meal
- Or, discovering of a spiritual practice that is important to you!