



Praying and Making Ritual



Intergenerational

About this Setting

Intergenerational groups provide an opportunity to welcome everyone in the congregation. Imagine a community of all ages playing, learning, and working together. The multiage group provides wonderful opportunities for interchange between age levels and modeling back and forth. Young learners bring the gifts of awe, wonder, and play; youth come with passion and deep questions that stretch our faith and can push us outside our comfort zone; and older learners have a lifetime of wisdom and experience to offer. This mutual experience of offering and receiving will deepen community and provide a safe place for all to practice prayer and making ritual.

About this Faith Practice

Prayer is an essential practice of faith and tradition. Many of us long for a deeper life of prayer. Prayer may be a conversation with God; prayer may also be activity that permeates all of one's life. When we live prayerfully we may begin to develop a worldview that understands our daily lives as an extension of our communal worship. By reclaiming familiar rituals and through exploring new rituals, we may begin to recognize the holy in the ordinary, mark time and space as sacred, and give meaning to the whole of our experience.

Intergenerational Options

These activities may be used to build an intergenerational event for the commencement or conclusion of your series “Praying and Making Ritual” (up to three hours). Or the activities may be used independently (15–20 minutes each), interwoven with age-specific activities throughout the series. An intergenerational event might be used during a time of year that is already set aside as special, such as Advent, Kwanzaa, Lent, Vacation Bible School, or forty days of prayer for children.

Familiarize yourself with all twelve activities, two from each of the six Explorations (Discovery, Scripture, Discipleship, Christian Tradition, Context and Mission, and Future and Vision). Consider the age of participants and the time available for this event, and choose a group of activities that will meet your needs.

For an event lasting one to two hours, choose three or four activities from the list of twelve. There are enough activities for three or four events! Or choose a single activity (15–30 minutes) to use at a community meal or other gathering. Wearing nametags is a good idea, because older and younger members of a church often do not know each other’s names.

Each activity ends with a prayer appropriate for the end of the session.

As you prepare for an intergenerational event, remember that you do not need to do all the work alone. Invite church members of different ages to join you on a planning team, and together determine the best time to hold the event. Depending on your context, look ahead three to six months. You will need ample time to deepen your own understanding of the practice of prayer and making ritual, and to discern what sequence of activities best suits your setting. You will also need time to publicize the event and gather the necessary materials. Consider the particular children and adults who may attend. What activities would they find most engaging and uplifting? Trust your intuition—and the Spirit’s guidance—as you develop a program. Think about the space and time you have available. You may want to begin in the sanctuary with a short opening worship, and then move to another space for the activities. Use simple but festive decorations such as colorful tablecloths and fresh flowers to convey a sense of warmth and welcome. Whatever space(s) you use, invite volunteers to help set up and clean up. Intergenerational gatherings can build community at many different levels, including working together before and after the event.

Explorations

Discovery: In this Exploration we encounter the practice and look at how it intersects with human needs in community and personal life.

Scripture: Christian faith practices grow out of the biblical story of the people of faith. For each Faith Practice, twelve Bible stories (two for each Exploration) inform and give direction to practicing our faith.

Discipleship: Discipleship is about following. In this Exploration we consider what prompts people of faith to become disciples and probe how the Spirit leads us in the communal life of the Christian community and in our personal lives in the world.

Christian Tradition: Practices of faith have been shaped by those who have preceded us in the history of the Christian church. The future will be shaped by the way we practice our faith today. Just as a map provides the landmarks we need to follow when we navigate in the world, this rich history of the Christian tradition guides us as we practice our faith today.

Context and Mission: In order to claim a role in the mission God gives to the church, you have to know where you are, your local context. In the Context and Mission Exploration we consider ways to practice faith in our community and world.

Future and Vision: Practicing our faith leads us into the future. We seek to move into the future with a vision of where we are headed. In the Future and Vision Exploration we consider what impels us into the future. We know that we are still practicing our faith; we won’t do it perfectly. We are empowered to keep practicing.

Exploring and Engaging Activities

Whether we are new to a particular faith practice or an old hand with much experience, all of us benefit from new opportunities to explore the shape of the faith practice and to engage the issues of faith that the practice offers. Sometimes this is a matter of learning new ideas about the practice. Sometimes this is more about reflecting on what we have done in our practice. The “Exploring and Engaging Activities” help us figure out how a faith practice intersects with our life and the life of the community of faith.

Discerning & Deciding Activities

Practicing our faith always involves discernment: naming the realities of our community and world and seeking the will of God for our lives and for the world. We then decide how we will act, what we will do, what values move us forward, what faith has called us to do. The activities in this category give us opportunity to practice by discerning and deciding.

Sending & Serving Activities

Practicing our faith involves serving others and being sent out as empowered disciples of Jesus Christ. We need time in our exploration to plan how we will serve. We need moments that send us forth blessed by the community. Practicing our faith involves serving others and being sent out as empowered disciples of Jesus Christ. We need time in our exploration to plan how we will serve. We need moments that send us forth blessed by the community from which we venture out. The activities in this category offer opportunities to practice our faith through sending and serving, from which we venture out. The activities in this category offer opportunities to practice our faith through sending and serving.

Intergenerational Leader Preparation

Take time to savor the texts suggested for this event. Read them as if you were seeing them for the first time. What fresh insights about this faith practice were revealed to you? Reflect on your experiences of prayer and making ritual throughout your life. In what ways have they helped you recognize the holy in the ordinary? How have they drawn you closer to God?

BIBLE FOCUS PASSAGES:

Luke 11:1-13

1 Chronicles 29:10-18

Philippians 1:3-4

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Prayer: God of love, thank you for your gifts of prayer and ritual. Thank you for the way they have deepened my understanding of your love and drawn me close to you. Bless all those who will come to this event. May they have fun, gain new understandings of prayer and ritual, and experience your deep love for them. Amen.



Exploration: Discovery



1 Everyday Rituals (Easy Preparation) (Exploring and Engaging)

Leader preparation: Think about your daily rituals and where God fits into your daily life.

Supplies:

- sheets of newsprint
- markers

Divide into small groups of mixed ages. Ask each small group to create a list of the things they do each day starting from the time they first wake up until they go to bed at the end of the day. To get them started, you might suggest routine activities such as: brush teeth, make the coffee, pack a briefcase or backpack, feed a pet, check e-mail or a social network, read the paper, eat a family meal, exercise, read the Bible, say grace, watch a TV show, and so forth. Place the lists where everyone can read and reach them. Invite groups to take a marker with them, move around the room together, and read each list. Tell them to mark a dot by the things that are also on their list. This is something younger learners may enjoy doing, although they may need some assistance with reading. When the group has finished have them go back to their original list. Encourage the groups to engage in conversation using the following questions.

- Which things on your list seem to be most important to the whole group (have the most marks)?
- What other things do people do each day?
- Where does prayer fit into your day, or when might you find time for it in your day?
- How might our days be different when we include time for prayer?

Prayer: God of love, we thank you for the gift of daily routine and ritual. Help us to remember to find time for talking to you in our days. Amen.

2 Prayer Poses (Easy Preparation) (Exploring and Engaging)

Leader preparation: The Bible describes many different ways to pray. This week try out a number of prayer postures. How does the way you hold your body impact your prayer?

Supplies:

- markers and newsprint or whiteboard

Invite the group to brainstorm times when people pray or things that people commonly pray about. List their responses on newsprint or a whiteboard. Invite participants to form small groups, with one person being a sculptor and the others statues. Call out one item from the list, and invite sculptors to move the statues into physical positions appropriate or likely for the situation or prayer. For example, if “the death of a loved one” is chosen, the sculptor might position one statue’s head and shoulders bowed in sorrow and the others making gestures of comfort. Explain that the statues may make facial expressions to match their poses. Have each person in the group take turns being the sculptor. You might want to have participants switch groups at regular intervals.

Prayer: God of love, we give you thanks that communicating with you does not have to be static and boring. Help us to find ways of praying that will engage every facet of our being. Amen.



Exploration: Scripture

③ Daily Bread (Discerning and Deciding)

Leader preparation: Being sensitive to those with food allergies, choose breads from around the world and set them on the table. Eat some fresh bread, savoring the taste. What role has bread played in your life? Give thanks for the gift of bread. If possible, prepare bread dough for an automatic bread maker and set the bread maker to bake so it is ready just before this activity begins. The room will be filled with the smell of freshly baked bread.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- music from the global community
- music player
- napkins
- cups
- water or juice
- breads from around the world, such as bannock or whole wheat (North America), pita (Middle East), chapati (India), tortilla (Central America), croissant (France), rye bread (Europe), naan (Asia), English muffins (Britain)
- large world map
- Bible concordances, several copies

Invite the group to use Bible concordances and Bibles to find scripture references to bread. Remind them that the manna God provided in the wilderness was daily bread. Note that in the feeding of the five thousand Jesus used two loaves of bread. At Passover, Jesus broke bread.

Invite the group to share some bread from around the world. Mark on the world map where each kind of bread is common. Listen to music from the global community. Talk about the similarities and differences between the different kinds of bread. Share stories of making and baking bread. Engage the participants in conversation about bread using the following questions.

- What are some good memories you associate with bread?
- What feelings do you associate with bread?
- What role does or has bread play(ed) in your life?

Observe that bread is a staple food for thousands of people all around the world; perhaps that is why Jesus included the words “Give us this day our daily bread” (Luke 11:3, in the Lord’s Prayer). Invite the groups to take a few moments to think quietly about those people around the world who have not received daily bread and are hungry right now. Invite participants to pray aloud as they feel comfortable, thanking God for the gift of bread and praying for those who have none.

Option: Invite the group to make breads using recipes from around the world. Divide into small groups. Provide the ingredients, and have each small group make a different kind of bread. They may only have time for mixing and kneading. You may have to finish the baking after the event. See the recipes at <http://www.whats4eats.com/breads>.

Prayer: *God of love, we thank you for the gift of bread. We pray for those who are hungry today. Help us to find creative ways of sharing what we have with them. Amen.*



4 Poetry and Art (Discerning and Deciding)

Leader preparation: Around the room display the pictures of God’s creation. Arrange the natural objects and magnifying glasses in a pleasing display on several small tables. Remember that some participants will be children, so place the pictures where they will be able to see them. If it is not practical to display natural items and pictures, arrange to play the YouTube video “Creation Calls.”

Supplies:

- pictures of God’s creation
- natural objects such as flowers, rocks, shells, a piece of driftwood
- magnifying glasses
- reflective music that incorporates nature sounds
- music player
- “Cinquain Poetry,” Attachment: Activity 4
- writing paper
- pens and pencils
- art paper
- art supplies, such as watercolor paints, crayons, markers, pastels, and so forth
- (optional) computer with Internet access
- (optional) digital projector
- (optional) video: “Creation Calls”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwGvfdtI2c0>

While the music plays, invite learners to study the pictures of God’s creation and examine the natural objects on the tables. Encourage people to touch the objects and use magnifying glasses to look closely, admiring details and appreciating quality and texture. Alternatively, watch the YouTube video Creation Calls. Gather the participants together and invite them to talk about what they have seen and tell stories of times they saw something amazing in nature. Comment that throughout the Bible are prayers of praise written by people who have been moved by the wonders of God’s creation. Ask for a volunteer to read 1 Chronicles 29:10–12 to the group. Invite participants to choose whether they wish to create art or poetry in response to the pictures and objects. The art group can use the materials supplied to draw something from natural world. This could be a study of one of the objects displayed in the room or a scene from nature. Distribute writing materials and copies of the attachment to those who wish to write a cinquain poem praising God for the wonders of creation. To include young children in this activity, pair them with older participants. Display artwork with the poetry.

Prayer: *Creator God, you created the universe and hold it all together. You are so big and we are so small in comparison, yet you pursue a relationship with us. Now that is amazing love! Amen.*



Exploration: Discipleship

5 Popcorn Prayers (Discerning and Deciding)

Leader preparation: Enjoy some popcorn and make a list of God's blessings in your life. How might you practice giving thanks in all circumstances?

Supplies:

- Bible
- popcorn maker
- unpopped popping corn
- baskets

Show the participants the raw popcorn and talk about harvesting foods and grains. Explain that many, many years ago God told the people to celebrate the harvest with a special celebration of thanksgiving. Read aloud Deuteronomy 26:1–11. Thousands of years later, when the church was just starting, one of the leaders wrote a letter encouraging the followers of Jesus to give thanks no matter what was happening in the world around them. Read aloud 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24. Place some popcorn in the popcorn maker, turn it on, and watch as the popcorn pops and overflows. Observe that giving thanks is often like popping popcorn. Explain that at first one might think of one or two things to say thank you for, but once a person gets started, more and more ideas may be thought of until the thanksgiving overflows. Invite participants to jump up like popcorn, name something for which they want to give thanks, and sit back down. Explain that it is fine to jump up more than once, more than one person can jump up at the same time, and it is fine to repeat what someone else has said. When everyone has finished saying thank you, have the whole group jump up at once to say "Amen." Share the popcorn and invite learners to share some of the thanksgiving rituals they practice in their homes.

Prayer: Loving God, thank you that prayer can be fun! Help us to remember to have fun with you often! Amen.



6 Loving Parent (Sending and Serving)

Leader preparation: Obtain a recording of the song "Better Than a Hallelujah" by Amy Grant (available at iTunes.com or amazon.com) or view the YouTube video "Better than a Hallelujah." Study the artwork "Margot Embracing Her Mother" by Mary Cassat. Imagine how it would feel to be the child or to be the mother. Jesus encourages us to come to God as a child comes to a loving parent. How does this picture deepen your understanding of Jesus' teaching?

Supplies:

- artwork: "Caresse Maternelle (Mother and Child)" by Mary Stevenson Cassatt, https://secure3.convio.net/ucc/site/Ecommerce/1004323110?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=37961&store_id=1401
- musical recording of the song "Better than a Hallelujah" by Amy Grant or YouTube video "Better than a Hallelujah," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOHJghBU0XA>
- music player or computer with Internet access and digital projector
- soft toys or dolls.
- paper for note cards

Display the artwork “Caresse Maternelle” by Mary Cassat and invite participants to talk about what they see. Ask the following questions.

- What feelings do you have when you look at this picture?
- What memories does it stir?

Comment that Jesus encouraged the disciples to approach God in prayer as a child comes to a loving parent. Invite participants to recreate the picture by embracing dolls or soft toys and imagining what it would be like to be held like this. If you have parents with young children present, they might want to mimic the pose and hold their child. If participants are comfortable with physical contact, they may wish to embrace one another and hold the pose. Provide small soft toys or dolls for people to hug. Direct the participant’s attention to the artwork again and ask them to imagine that the woman is like God and they are like the child. Ask the following questions.

- What might it be like to be hugged by God?
- If you were being hugged like this, what would you like to say to God?
- In what ways does this picture encourage you to pray?
- In what ways does it stretch your understanding of God and prayer?
- Why might someone be afraid to come to God like this?
- In your life, who has hugged you to offer comfort and security? Think of that person as a messenger from God. Whom have you hugged like that?

Think about people who rarely get a hug from anyone, such as elders in a nursing home, incarcerated youth and adults, or neglected children. Offer prayers for these people. Perhaps the group would like to make cards that say something like, “Sending you a hug in God’s name.” These could be distributed to institutions of your choice.

Play the song “Better than a Hallelujah” or show the YouTube video “Better Than a Hallelujah” and invite participants to imagine they are the child in the picture, wrapped in the loving arms of God. Encourage them to pray quietly, as they feel led.

Prayer: God of love, sometimes it is hard to understand how very much you love us. Help us to come to you confidently, knowing that you delight in our conversation. Amen.



Exploration: Christian Tradition

7 Liturgical Movement (Easy Preparation) (Exploring and Engaging)

Leader preparation: On a sheet of paper, write the Prayer of Jesus, or the Lord's Prayer, as it is said in your congregation. Make a copy for each participant. Create your own movements for some or all of the prayer. How does praying through movement make the prayer more meaningful? How might you incorporate movement or dance into your prayer life?

Supplies:

- copy of the Lord's Prayer for each person

Distribute copies of the Prayer of Jesus and invite participants to pray it together. Ask learners what they know about liturgical dance, explaining if necessary that liturgical dance is an expression of prayer or worship through body movement. Divide participants into groups, one for each phrase of the Lord's Prayer. Remind the groups to be sensitive to and inclusive of those with restricted mobility. Give each group several minutes to choreograph some simple liturgical movements to go with its phrase. Gather in a circle, and go through the Lord's Prayer one phrase at a time, having each corresponding group lead the rest of the group in the movements it designed. Say the prayer one more time, inviting everyone to pray the whole prayer through movement. Ask the following questions.

- How did it feel to pray this prayer through movement?
- How did the movements you made help you understand the words of the Lord's Prayer?

Prayer: O God, it is wonderful to think that we are part of the thousands of people around the world who join together to pray the Lord's Prayer. Thank you for prayers that join us in community and make us one. Amen.

8 Exploring Church Symbols (Exploring and Engaging)

Leader preparation: Walk around your church and see what symbols you find. If you don't know what a symbol means, find out what it represents. A helpful website is "Fish Eaters," <http://www.fisheaters.com/symbols.html>. Make notes of the symbols and their meanings so you can share these with the participants.

Supplies:

- markers and newsprint or whiteboard
- paper and pencils (colored pencils would be best)
- information about symbols

Explain that there are symbols and codes hidden all over the church; some are obvious and others more hidden. Explain that a symbol tells something about God without using words. Divide participants into groups. Tell the groups that they are going to go around the church and find messages or symbols. Explain that the task is not to simply find symbols with different meanings, but to find things that tell us about God. Give the group(s) paper and colored pencils or crayons to record these messages. Set an appropriate amount of time for their exploration, and send the groups out to find these messages or symbols. When they return, invite them to share what they have found. On newsprint or a whiteboard

make a list of everyone's discoveries. When everyone has shared, debrief with the following questions:

- What do the symbols tell us about our church and what was/is important?
- Was any symbol a surprise?
- What symbols remind us of certain rituals in the church?
- What symbols and rituals are important to you?
- What other symbols or rituals hold an important place in your life? (School, team, or home rituals?)

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for the symbols and rituals that remind us of you. Help us be mindful of those who are not familiar with those things. Give us wisdom as we seek to welcome them. Amen.



Exploration: Context and Mission

9 Prayer Tree (Sending and Serving)

Leader preparation: Place a small potted tree, real or artificial, or anchor tree branches in a bucket with stones and sand. Drape some fabric around the bucket. Place the tree a central location. Cut 8½" x 11" paper into quarters. Make enough for each participant, with some extra papers left over.

Supplies:

- Bible
- small potted tree, real or artificial, or several large twiggy branches
- bucket
- piece of fabric
- stones and sand
- markers and newsprint or whiteboard
- 8½" x 11" paper cut into quarters
- pens
- crayons
- thin ribbon

Read Philippians 1:3–4 to the group and invite them to name some people for whom the congregation prays for regularly. Then have them name people for whom they pray regularly. Then expand the list to include people they think need prayer. Write their responses on a sheet of newsprint or a whiteboard. When they have exhausted that list, invite them to add countries and situations around the world they want to pray for. Distribute paper and invite participants to write prayers for three of the people or situations on the list. Younger children may prefer to draw pictures of the things they wish to pray about. Have the participants roll their papers into small scrolls and tie with a piece of ribbon. Invite them to hang their scrolls on the tree. Leave extra slips of paper and pencils near the tree, so that extra prayers can be placed on it over the next few weeks.

Option: Create a Wailing Wall. In Jerusalem there is a place called the Wailing Wall where people go to pray and to leave their prayers. It's the last remaining portion of the ancient Jewish temple. You can actually see the wall and even leave a prayer at the wall by going to the website <http://www.aish.com/w/e/>.

Designate a “wailing wall” in a public space in the church. As prayer concerns arise in the life of the congregation, write them on Post-it Notes® or Sticky Notes® and stick them on the wailing wall. Your prayers are now set before the rest of faith community, and they can join you in prayer. When prayers have been answered, you can either throw away the notes, or place them on another wall designated as the “answered prayer wall.”

Prayer: Thank you, God, that we can pray for others and that you hear our prayers. Guide us as we pray. Amen.



10 Finger Labyrinths (Easy Preparation) (Discerning and Deciding)

Leader preparation: Make a copy of the finger labyrinth for each participant. Read the information about labyrinths available at “Finger Labyrinth,” http://www.lessons4living.com/finger_labyrinth.htm.

Supplies:

- “Finger Labyrinth,” Attachment: Activity 10
- (optional) reflective music
- (optional) music player

In the middle of our busy lives, taking time apart to be with God can help create a place of peace in our hearts. Hand out copies of the finger labyrinths from the attachment, and share some information you have learned about labyrinths as a way to be quiet and to talk and listen to God. Make the following suggestions to the participants about using their finger labyrinths.

- As you trace the path to the center, think about the different people and situations you have concerns about.
- When you arrive in the center of the labyrinth, place all those concerns into God’s love and care. Ask God to work in those situations to bring good.
- Follow the path out, listening to your inner thoughts and feelings.

Play some reflective music, and invite participants to find a quiet place to trace their finger labyrinths. Afterward, gather back as a group and provide an opportunity for those who wish to talk about their experience.

Option: Create a floor labyrinth in the space where you are meeting, or in the largest space in your church. Or, if possible, create a labyrinth outside. See the instructions at <http://www.lessons4living.com/build.htm>. This would allow people to experience walking a labyrinth. Then, when they use the finger labyrinth at home, they will remember that whole body experience.

Prayer: Loving God, thank you that we can spend some quiet time with you. It is good to know that you want to spend time with us, too. Amen.



Exploration: Future and Vision

Ⓜ Sabbath Candles (Sending and Serving)

Leader preparation: Light a candle at your main meal. Say a prayer asking God to bless the food and those who eat it. Memorize the Jewish Sabbath prayer so you can say it with your eyes covered.

Supplies:

- two candles
- two candle holders
- matches
- small pillar candle for each participant
- small beads
- beading wire
- wire cutters
- needle-nosed pliers
- paper and pencils

Jews light the Sabbath candles just before sunset on Friday nights to signal the beginning of the day of rest and to distinguish it from the work week coming to an end. It is part of a short service traditionally performed by families, at home, before the Friday evening meal. The customs associated with the lighting of the Sabbath candles are practiced by Jewish families around the world.

Place two candles on a table in front of you. The most common Jewish custom is to light two candles for the two important biblical references to Shabbat: “Remember the Sabbath” (Exodus 20:8) and “Observe the Sabbath” (Deuteronomy 5:12). However, many people light an additional candle for each child in the family, and others light seven candles for each day of the week or for the Temple’s seven-branched menorah. As you continue your explanation, light the candles, cover your eyes, and say the Sabbath prayer. Continue explaining that usually the mother of the house stands before the candles on the table and lights them. Covering her eyes she recites this blessing: “Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has made us holy through His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath light.” She then uncovers her eyes and looks at the light. Once the blessing is recited or chanted and the candles are lit, the Sabbath has begun.

Distribute pillar candles to all participants, and invite them to decorate a candle to take home to light at their family meal. Cut lengths of wire long enough to wind around the candles. Use pliers to twist a tiny circle into one end. Thread small beads along the length of the wire. Twist another circle at the other end of the wire. Wind the beaded wire around the candle. Encourage participants to write a short prayer of blessing for their family to say when they light their candle before the meal.

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for family rituals. Bless these candles that they may help to draw family members closer together. Amen.

 **12 Worries and Thanksgivings (Easy Preparation) (Sending and Serving)**

Leader preparation: What are some things you worry about? How hard is it to let go of your worries and turn them over to God? How have you been blessed by God? Take a few minutes to lift those worries and blessings to God. Now that you have named them, do you feel differently about them? Blessing bowls are small shallow bowls that may be purchased online, but any bowl will do.

Supplies:

- blessing bowl
- cup or other container filled with water
- eye dropper or spoon
- access to a sink or outdoors
- computer with Internet access
- digital projector
- video: “Muppet Christmas Carol—Thankful Heart,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bpb9Ebmvm5M>

Introduce the video by explaining that Scrooge was a character in a story who became so preoccupied by worries and concerns that he slowly became a bitter person. In the story he learns to trade in his worries for a thankful heart, and it completely changes his life. Show the YouTube video “Muppet Christmas Carol—Thankful Heart.” Comment that in the time of the first church the Apostle Paul encouraged the followers of Jesus not to worry, but instead to pray to God with thankful hearts.

Place the blessing bowl and cup of water in the center of the group. Invite the group to think of one or two things that they are worried about. As you go around the group invite them to take a few drops of water from the container using the eyedropper or spoon and put them in the blessing bowl as they say, “I am worried about . . .” If some do not want to share aloud, suggest that they say it silently. When everyone has had a chance to share, carry the bowl filled with “worries” to a sink or outdoors. As you pour the “worries” down the drain or on the ground, say, “Loving God, here are the things that [name each person and don’t forget yourself] are worried about. We are giving our worries to you.”

Return to your space and ask participants to think of ways to say thank you. Invite them to take a few drops of water from the container and place them in the blessing bowl as before and say, “I want to say thank you because . . .” When everyone has had a chance to add their thanksgivings to the bowl, lift it up and say “Wonderful God we thank you for the blessings in our lives.”

Invite the person on your left to hold out the back of his or her hand. Dip your finger in the water of the blessing bowl; make a cross on the back of the person’s hand, and say, “God be with you this week.” Ask that person to do the same for the next person and so on around the circle.

Prayer: Thank you, God, that you care about all our worries and concerns. Help us to trade them in for a grateful prayer and a thankful heart. Amen.

Attachment: Activity 4

Cinquain Poetry

Cinquain is a very simple form of poetry. It is written using five nonrhyming lines. The lines are arranged like this:

The first line has one word, a noun that is the title.

The second line has two words that describe the title.

The third line has three words that tell of an action related to the title.

The fourth line has four words that describe a feeling about the title.

The fifth line has one word, another noun that means the same as the title.

Here is an example to help you get started:

God
amazing, awesome,
created the universe,
you are so wonderful
Creator

Attachment: Activity 10

Finger Labyrinth

