



Blessing and Letting Go

About this Faith Practice

Experiencing beauty as a faith practice enables us to encounter God through our senses and through the mysterious workings of God’s Spirit. When we awaken to the diverse expressions of beauty, we deepen our connection to God. The faith practice of blessing and letting go invites Jesus’ followers of all ages to welcome the implications of living in a world of constant transition. This practice supports the ongoing, natural cycle of blessing and letting go, of embracing and releasing. It is a lifelong, hope-infused journey whose rhythm is grounded in God’s eternal love, grace, and mercy. Mere words belie the complexity of this rhythm. At times it leads to excruciating pain, at times to joyous expectation. Sometimes segments of this journey are long and arduous, sometimes brief and joyful. In all circumstances, the freedom to bless and to let go are gifts from God—gifts that we can extend to one another. The activities in this resource for Blessing and Letting Go seek to shape this discipline of Christian life by engaging various aspects of this moving dance of grief, release, prayer, thanksgiving, and living anew. Connection to God, others, and ourselves. Through the beauty around us—in the universe and relationships, amid moments of both delight and brokenness—God communicates grace, healing, and comfort to us. We see anew, and we are moved to worship.

Let’s Begin...

Now that you’ve downloaded the files for your faith practice and age group or setting, you can get started planning one or multiple sessions:

1 Open the .pdf file for your age group or setting. Choose an Exploration, the approach you think will help your group to best experience the faith practice. Choose any one of the following Explorations to use for one session:



Discovery



Scripture



Discipleship



Christian Tradition



Context and Mission



Future and Vision

Note: If you’re planning multiple sessions, you can follow the order suggested above or feel free to use any order that fits the needs of your group. Some groups may choose to start with Scripture and then see where that leads them. Others may be more ready to act in their community and might want to start with Context and Mission.

2 Locate the Exploration you’ve chosen

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3 Look through all 9 activities and select the ones you would like to do with your group.

- If you're planning a 30–45 minute session, choose 3 activities.
- It is best to select at least one activity from Exploring and Engaging, at least one from Discerning and Deciding, and at least one from Sending and Serving.
- For 45 minutes to 1 hour, choose 4 or 5 activities.
- For a 1½ to 2-hour session, you can use all 9 activities.

Tip: Look for this symbol  to find activities designed for Easy Preparation (able to be done with minimal preparation using supplies normally found at the church).

4 Make copies of any handouts () related to your activities. Order posters () if using art (see "Ordering Posters," below).

Use of Art, Music, and Scripture in Faith Practices

Faith Practices activities include many opportunities to grow in faith through the use of scripture, music, and art.

Ordering Posters

If you choose activities that use an art image, you or your church will need to purchase posters of the art by clicking on the link provided in the activity. If you wish to use art, you will need to plan ahead, since it takes 1 to 2 weeks for the posters to arrive after you place your order.

Art

Six posters are used with the faith practice Blessing and Letting Go and may be ordered by clicking on the links provided.

From Imaging the Word Poster Sets

"Sisters in the Wind" by Ethan Hubbard

https://secure3.convio.net/ucc/site/Ecommerce/1102072326?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=15626&store_id=1401

"The Baptism of Jesus," by Pheoris West

https://secure3.convio.net/ucc/site/Ecommerce/1725021198?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=37961&store_id=1401

"Christ Among the Children," by Emil Nolde

https://secure3.convio.net/ucc/site/Ecommerce/1725021198?VIEW_PRODUCT=true&product_id=37961&store_id=1401

From Art.com

"St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds," by Giotto di Bondone

<http://www.art.com/products/p11724653-sa-i1350212/giotto-di-bondone-st-francis-of-assisi-preaching-to-the-birds.htm?sorig=cat&sorigid=0&dimvals=0&ui=b2c89647ba56409d894161743bb14f5d&searchstring=st.+francis+feeding+the+birds>

"Christina's World, 1948," by Andrew Wyeth

<http://www.art.com/products/p10041656-sa-i783641/andrew-wyeth-christinas-world-1948.htm?sorig=cat&sorigid=0&dimvals=0&ui=0f6ded272c5f442f8f4b43201f2adbfc&searchstring=christina%27s+world>

“Forgiveness,” by Thierry Ona

<http://www.art.com/products/p12191417-sa-i2792541/thierry-ona-forgiveness.htm?sorig=cat&sorigid=0&dimvals=0&ui=6c47c0957fdb4b65a64ba2cbe037088f&searchstring=forgiveness>

Music

Three music selections are used with Blessing and Letting Go. A web link is provided to give more information about each music selection.

“Go, My Children, with My Blessing” Jaroslav J. Vajda (tune: Ar Hyd Y Nos)

<http://rockhay.tripod.com/worship/music/gomychild.htm>

“In the Bulb There Is a Flower,” by Natalie Sleeth (tune: Promise)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkWYubdnc7o>

http://www.hymnary.org/text/in_a_bulb_there_is_a_flower

“Shalom Chaverim,” Traditional Hebrew blessing (tune: Shalom)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2pm6XGvnnC>

<http://www.musickit.com/resources/shalomchaver.html>

Scripture

Twelve Bible passages are used with Blessing and Letting Go, two with each Exploration.

Discovery	1 Samuel 16:1-23	Ephesians 3:14-20
Scripture	Deuteronomy 34:1-12	Matthew 5:43-48
Discipleship	Proverbs 3:5-9	Colossians 3:12-17
Christian Tradition	Psalms 148	Acts 10:1-48
Context and Mission	Genesis 12:1-5	Romans 15:22-29
Future and Vision	Jeremiah 29:1-14	Luke 2:22-38

Writing Team for Blessing and Letting Go

Ted Huffman	<i>Worship, Music, Arts, and Story</i>
Sam Collins	<i>Adults</i>
Martha Brunell	<i>Seekers and New Church Participants</i>
Lori Schroeder	<i>Young Adults</i>
Brett Carter	<i>Older Youth</i>
Carol Duerkson	<i>Youth</i>
Sharon Harding	<i>Older Children</i>
Donna Hanby	<i>Young Children</i>
Mary Nelson Keithahn	<i>Multiage and Intergenerational</i>
Sandi Marr	<i>Living Practices in Daily Life</i>
Susan Chesley	<i>Workshop Rotation</i>
David Ackerman	<i>United Church of Christ Identity and History</i>
Rebeca Grothe	<i>Editor</i>
Patrice L. Rosner	<i>Managing Editor</i>