



THE WAY OF LOVE
Practices for Jesus-Centered Life

**Life Transformed:
The Way of Love in Lent**

A Quiet Day for Lent

By Hillary Raining and Jenifer Gamber

episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove

LIFE TRANSFORMED: THE WAY OF LOVE IN LENT

A QUIET DAY FOR LENT

About “Life Transformed: The Way of Love in Lent”

The journey through Lent into Easter is a journey with Jesus. We are baptized into his life, self-giving, and death; then, we rise in hope to life transformed. This Lent, communities are invited to walk with Jesus in his Way of Love and into the experience of transformed life. Together, we will reflect anew on the loving actions of God as recounted in the Easter Vigil readings. Together, we will walk through the depths of salvation history into the fullness of redemption. This Quiet Day for Lent ties the Easter Vigil readings to the seven practices of the Way of Love. Drawing on the ancient practice of setting aside Lent as a period of study and preparation for living as a Christian disciple (known as the catechumenate), this curriculum encourages participants to reflect on salvation history; walk toward the empty tomb; and embrace the transforming reality of love, life, and liberation. As we stand with the three women at the empty tomb, we hear his call to go and live that transformed reality.

Congregations and communities are invited to use this curriculum as an entry point into the Way of Love any time of the year. As people of God, ours is an ongoing journey.

After the 40 days of Lent, participants are invited into a 50-day Eastertide “Test Kitchen.” During this time, people everywhere will actively “GO” with Jesus from the tomb to bless the world – and then share and inspire each other with accounts of how they are living the Way of Love. Learn more about the Test Kitchen here: bit.ly/50daysWOL.

For a complete set of offerings associated with this curriculum, please visit episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove.

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By Hillary Raining and Jenifer Gamber in consultation with Bill Campbell, Courtney Cowart, Jerusalem Greer, Shannon Kelly, Lisa Kimball, Patricia Lyons, Miriam McKenney, Sharon Pearson, Jesús Reyes, Christopher Sikkema, and Stephanie Spellers.

Learn more about the Way of Love and The Episcopal Church at www.episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove. Share reflections and queries by writing to wayoflove@episcopalchurch.org or on social media using #wayoflove.

Scriptural citations from the New Revised Standard Version.

Note to Leaders

This quiet day offers a framework of teaching followed by quiet reflection. You are invited to make this curriculum your own by adding your own prayers and resources. A quiet day is a particularly appropriate time to offer participants the opportunity to try new prayer practices. We encourage you to draw on your own resources to offer finger or floor labyrinths, Anglican prayer beads, body prayer, doodling, knitting, centering prayer, and so on.

Session Outline

Session I: Introduction / Turn (75 min)

Session II: Pray / Learn (75 min)

Worship (15 min)

Lunch (60 min)

Session III: Bless / Rest (75 min)

Session IV: Worship / Go (75 min)

Concluding Worship (45 min)

Sample Schedule

9:00–10:15 a.m.	Session I
10:30–11:45 a.m.	Session II
11:45 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Midday Worship
12:00–1:00 p.m.	Lunch and Free Time
1:00–1:45 p.m.	Session III
2:00–2:45 p.m.	Session IV
2:45–3:15 p.m.	Concluding Worship and Commitment Service

Materials

- Pillar candle and matches
- A bell or singing bowl
- One copy of the following for each participant:
 - Brochure to the Way of Love (available to download at www.episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love-materials or to order at Forward Movement at www.forwardmovement.org)
 - Participant Guide found in the resource section of the curriculum
 - Opening and closing worship found in the resource section of the curriculum

SESSION I

(75 MINUTES)

INTRODUCTION / TURN

Introduction

Welcome participants to the day, orienting them to the space and the schedule. Depending on the size of the group, you might invite participants to state their name and share what they have set aside in their lives to spend the day in retreat. What have they turned from to be here?

Light a candle. As you light it, invite someone to read this prayer:

It is not ourselves that we proclaim; we proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants, for Jesus' sake. For the same God who said, "Out of darkness let light shine," has caused his light to shine within us, to give the light of revelation – the revelation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:5-6)

Let us pray. Grant us, Lord, the lamp of charity which never fails, that it may burn in us and shed its light on those around us, and that by its brightness we may have a vision of that holy City, where dwells the true and never-failing Light, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer, p. 110)

Part A: THE WAY OF LOVE AND A RULE OF LIFE

The Way of Love

Review and discuss each of the practices of the Way of Love, found in the Way of Love brochure, and invite participants to consider which practice they feel God drawing them toward. Which practice do they find most challenging? You might consider showing the video of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry introducing the Way of Love (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/explore-way-love>).

Designing a Rule of Life

Throughout the day, participants will start to build a Way of Love rule of life. The concluding worship service includes a commitment to the Way of Love and a blessing of the rules constructed during the day. Introduce the concept of a rule of life to the group, based on the following from the Society of St. John the Evangelist and the Virginia Theological Seminary Center for the Ministry of Teaching:

- The idea of a "rule of life" comes from the Latin word *regula* and suggests a way to regulate or regularize our lives to stay on an intentional path. A rule of life is not just a set of rules to live by; rather, it is a gentle framework to guide and support us on our way.
- A rule of life allows us to live with intention and purpose in the present moment. It helps us clarify our most important values, relationships, dreams, and work.
- A rule of life is meant to be simple, realistic, flexible, and achievable. It is a purposeful tool to help us grow into a more meaningful life with God.

Do not let the idea of a rule of life intimidate you. In “Living Intentionally: A Workbook for Creating a Personal Rule of Life,” David Vryhof suggests the following five guidelines for developing a rule of life:

1. Invite God into the process.
2. Take time.
3. Be gentle.
4. Be realistic.
5. Write your goals down.

Discuss each of these with the participants. Let them know that, throughout the day, they will be writing their rule of life, which will be blessed at the closing worship. Continue by passing out the Participant Guides. Each session begins with a teaching, which is followed by guided reading of Scripture inspired by *Love: A Guide for Prayer* by Jacqueline Bergan, and concludes with writing one action item for each of the practices of the Way of Love. Participants are asked to post their rules at home or in the workplace to remind them of their commitments. Consider inviting all participants to identify a companion who will encourage them in keeping their rule and act as a conversation partner in adjusting the rule, if needed.

Part B: TURN

Commentary (Present and discuss the following teaching with the group)

For the ancient Church, the Easter Vigil was the night when catechumens (those who had been studying for months in preparation of their baptisms) would enter into the waters of new birth and emerge members of Christ’s body, the Church.

Our current baptismal practices rarely do justice to the drama that those nights would contain. We have evidence that catechumens would be asked to stand on a hair-shirt (a mark of penitence), confess their sins, and renounce Satan and all the forces of wickedness that drew them from the love of God. As they did so, they would turn toward the West – the direction associated with death, since the sun always sets over the western horizon. Then, they would TURN and face the East – the direction of new life and resurrection.

As they watched the sun begin to rise, they would make their profession of faith and walk into the large font. Indeed, the fonts would likely have been shaped as crosses or sarcophagi (a larger, more elaborate casket) to call to mind Paul’s words about being buried with Christ in baptism. A jar of oil would be poured over their heads, and they would be dressed in a gleaming white garment. Finally, they would be ushered into another room where all their Christian brothers and sisters would greet them. The room was lit with the new fire of Easter, and they were invited to taste their first Eucharist.

The drama and mystery of the moment are palpable even now, and it is no wonder that this ancient rite has been adopted into our modern Easter practices and every baptism. In our baptism, we have turned from a life of sin and begun to walk the Way of Love back to God. In our baptism, we have turned from death itself and been joined with Christ in his everlasting

life. And in our baptism, we have turned from living a life alone and have become one with the whole Church as members of the Body of Christ.

Reflection

Invite participants to sit with both feet on the ground and listen to Romans 6:3-11. Then, invite them to journal their reflections using the Participant Guide. If possible, give participants the opportunity to find a comfortable place in the room or building for this time of quiet personal reflection. When the allotted time is over, ring the bell or singing bowl to gather participants for “Pray.”

SESSION II

(75 MINUTES)

PRAY / LEARN

Introduction

Welcome participants back to the group and provide them with an opportunity to share their reflections about the readings and the practices they have identified that would help them TURN toward Jesus.

Part A: PRAY

Commentary (Present and discuss the following teaching with the group)

The story of the Exodus is one of the most important baptismal stories in the whole Bible. In the blessing over the water, which we PRAY at every baptism, we remember that the Hebrews were liberated from bondage in Egypt through water. Exodus is also the only reading that is specifically required in the Easter Vigil because of the way God delivered Israel through the Red Sea and the pillar of fire lit the way for God's people. That pillar is echoed in the Easter fire, which shines in our darkness at the vigil. The Exodus event holds a seminal place in the recitation of God's liberating action – the common thread woven throughout the vigil and the Bible itself.

One of the most intriguing aspects of this powerful story is the way prayer has been woven through every step the Israelites took in their path to liberation. When they were afraid and even doubted, their prayer was heard by God who told them that he would not abandon them. When they were about to be overtaken by the Egyptians, their prayer for deliverance was answered. Moses was given the power to part the sea, and they crossed on dry land. Finally, when they were safe, the prophet Miriam led a prayer of rejoicing and thanksgiving with song and dancing. Each of these prayers is important to the story and to the relationship built between God and God's people.

As you will remember in our first session, in the early Church, Lent was a time for catechumens (those who were preparing to be baptized) to learn about the Christian life. The outline of the faith that they would follow was called a catechism, and we still have a similar form in our Book of Common Prayer today (pp. 845-862).

In particular, our catechism describes the role of prayer in Christian life, including the seven types of prayer.

1. Adoration: We lift up our hearts and minds to God, asking nothing but to enjoy God's presence.
2. Praise: We praise God, not to obtain anything, but because God's Being draws praise from us.
3. Thanksgiving: We offer gratitude to God for all the blessings of this life, for our redemption, and for whatever draws us closer to God.
4. Penitence: In penitence, we say we are sorry, confess our sins, and make amends and life change wherever possible.

5. Oblation: We offer ourselves, our lives and labors, in union with Christ, for God's purposes.
6. Intercession: We bring before God the needs of others.
7. Petition: We present our own needs, that God's will may be done.

Each of these forms of prayer will help you grow and bring you into a closer relationship with God. In fact, Scripture tells us that even when we don't know how to pray, "the Holy Spirit will intercede for us" and teach our heart how to pray in "sighs too deep for words" (Romans 8:26).

Reflection

Invite participants to sit with both feet on the ground, listen to Exodus 14:10-15:1, and then journal their reflections using the Participant Guide. At the end of the allotted time, ring the bell or singing bowl to gather participants for the next segment, "Learn."

Part B: LEARN

Commentary (Present and discuss the following teaching with the group)

As mentioned in the previous sessions, Lent has always been the traditional time of study and growth for those who seek to follow Jesus' way and LEARN his life and teachings. As Christians, we are invited to continue to grow in our knowledge and love of God. Remember, Episcopal tradition holds that we never really "arrive" in our journey with God.

This passage from the Book of Proverbs echoes the blessing we pray over every newly baptized Christian that the person might have an "inquiring and discerning heart" (Book of Common Prayer, p. 308). In this passage, wisdom is personified as a woman crying out for people at the crossroads of the city to hear the gift of life she offers. In the Bible, wisdom is an active and powerful force present even at the beginning of the world. She does not want anyone to be left without knowledge of God and refuses to deny God's love to anyone who is willing to learn. However, gaining wisdom is not simply studying a book or memorizing a few facts. Wisdom goes beyond mere knowledge into action. We cannot be considered wise if we do not act in accordance with what we have learned. Wisdom demands integrity. Wisdom calls us to "lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight" (Proverbs 9:6).

The baptismal blessing over the water notes that "the Holy Spirit moved over the waters at creation" (Genesis 1:2). Wisdom is often equated with the Holy Spirit herself. In other words, every part of this earth is created with some element of the powerful gift of wisdom. One method for us to practice learning is to sit at the feet of Jesus, our great teacher in wisdom, and learn his way through regular meditation on the Scriptures. Through him, we can access the wisdom that fills all of creation and already lives in each one of us.

Reflection

Invite participants to sit with both feet on the ground, listen to Proverbs 8:1-8, 19-21; 9:4b-6, and then journal their reflections using the Participant Guide. At the end of the allotted time, ring the bell or singing bowl to gather participants for midday worship.

Midday Worship (15 minutes)

Before breaking for lunch and a time of rest, invite participants into a time of worship.

Worshipping midday models the Way of Love practices. You can find the midday worship service in the resource section of this curriculum.

Lunch and Free Time (60 minutes)

For those who have set up prayer centers, this is an excellent time to invite participants to explore prayer centers or, if possible, take a brief midday walk.

SESSION III

(75 MINUTES)

BLESS / REST

Introduction

Welcome participants back to the group and provide them with an opportunity to share their reflections about the readings and the practices to PRAY regularly and LEARN by reading Scripture, especially the words of Jesus.

Part A: BLESS

Commentary (Present and discuss the following teaching with the group)

In our first session, we explored the ancient baptismal ritual that is the foundation for the Great Vigil of Easter. In the passage from Ezekiel for this session, we see that God BLESSES the Israelites through the act of sprinkling them with clean water. This reading reminds us that we, too, are blessed by God through the waters of baptism. Some congregations practice asperging (the sprinkling of holy water on the people) in the Easter Vigil after the renewal of baptismal promises.

As noted, a major element in the ancient rite was turning from sin and renouncing the things that draw us from the love of God. We are called to renounce the idols we worship in place of God. Now, from our modern viewpoint, we might not think we worship idols; however, idols are not simply images of other gods. Rather, an idol is anything to which we assign ultimate value in our lives – those things we spend our time, talent, and treasure serving other than God. Our job, power, money, reputation, certain relationships, or anything that pulls on our heart more than God – these are idols.

While idols seem momentarily satisfying, they eventually harm our relationship with God and limit our capacity or willingness to live for others. Often, we cling to idols out of an attitude of scarcity; we desire what we think we do not have. When our hearts are focused on an idol, they are bound up and clenched shut like a heart of stone. Only when we turn to God will our hearts be opened so that we can, in turn, open our hearts in blessing to others. When we realize that there is enough of God's love for us, we no longer cling to the idols of old that can never give us that sense of abundance. Once we are secure in that abundance, we will leap to bless others with our stories, our money, our time, and our hearts.

Reflection

Invite participants to sit with both feet on the ground, listen to Ezekiel 36:24-28, and then journal their reflections using the Participant Guide. At the end of the allotted time, ring the bell or singing bowl to gather participants for "Rest."

Part B: REST

Commentary (Present and discuss the following teaching with the group)

We do not live in a culture that encourages REST. All too often, we are forced to work harder

and longer hours, and it shows in our health. Yet, from the beginning, God – who rested on the seventh day of creation – set rest into the pattern of all life. Truly practicing the Way of Love means spending time with God in sabbath rest. Not everyone has the luxury of long breaks and vacations, or even days off. Still, we can help each other find ways internally to pause and receive the gift of sabbath. The act of rest and restoration is a part of the cycle of rebirth that is God’s hope for us and gift to us.

In the exciting story of the Valley of the Dry Bones, we hear the way God sent God’s breath, the Holy Spirit, onto a field of bones. That very breath was enough to reanimate them and bring them back to fullness of life. Making sabbath rest has the same impact. Sabbath rest provides the opportunity for God to refresh us, to breathe new life into us. When we neglect sabbath time with God, we can begin to feel withered and tired, just like those dry bones. This is no coincidence. When we constantly run from activity to activity without breathing and returning to God, we become depleted and dry.

The gospels record numerous times when Jesus retreated to a place of sabbath to reconnect with God and to receive the strength he needed to continue his ministry. In Luke 5 when the news about Jesus spread and crowds gathered around him, Jesus withdrew and prayed. Studies have shown that people who take regular breaks from work have higher rates of creativity and productivity. It should come as no surprise that the ritual of baptism follows the pattern of death into life – that is the sabbath cycle in action.

Reflection

Invite participants to sit with both feet on the ground, listen to Ezekiel 37:1-14, and then journal their reflections using the Participant Guide. At the end of the allotted time, ring the bell or singing bowl to gather participants for “Worship.”

SESSION IV

(75 MINUTES)

WORSHIP / GO

Introduction

Welcome participants back to the group and provide them with an opportunity to share their reflections about the readings and their commitment to BLESS and REST.

Part A: WORSHIP

Commentary (Present and discuss the following teaching with the group)

One of the most dramatic elements of WORSHIP in the Easter Vigil is the element of surprise and delight baked into the liturgy. We start in darkness and subdued energy only to have a burst of worship-filled energy when we get to the ultimate song of worship: the Gloria! When we arrive at the Gloria, we throw on the lights, ring bells, sing at our loudest, and may even have a gleeful asperging (sprinkling of holy water as a reminder of our baptism). We are celebrating the greatest surprise of all: the resurrection of Jesus, which put an end to death. This drama is an invitation to let our hearts be moved from fear and despair into gratitude and joy.

In this final oracle from Zephaniah, we hear a distinct call to worship that follows the same dramatic arc that we find in the Easter Vigil. God has come. It is a time for celebrate. We are told to “Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you.... On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion ... he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love.” Here we see that God intends to turn all our fear into rejoicing, which means our worship should well up as an overwhelming act of gratitude.

In Jesus, the prophecy of Zephaniah is fulfilled. From the very moment he was born, the angels cried out to say “fear not” before breaking into their own Gloria song, mirroring ours during the Easter Vigil. In response to this wonderful gift from God, the shepherds ran to his stable to worship the newborn King of Peace. As their fears subsided, their gratitude naturally flowed. Yet, by the time Jesus’ life is ending, when faced with the possibility of following him to the cross, the disciples are once again filled with fear. When they are reunited with the resurrected Jesus, the doors of a new future are flung open and they return to a stance of gratitude and worship. Their fear of eternal death, as well as our own, has been buried in the empty tomb. We are invited to rejoice and let our gratitude for the gift of new life draw us to worship God.

Reflection

Invite participants to sit with both feet on the ground, listen to Zephaniah 3:12-20, and then journal their reflections using the Participant Guide. At the end of the allotted time, ring the bell or singing bowl to gather participants for “Go.”

Part B: GO

Commentary (Present and discuss the following teaching with the group)

Easter! What an amazing moment it must have been to be one of the women who went down to the tomb that first Easter morning. They came expecting death and sorrow. Their messiah and friend had been killed, and now the best they could hope for was to give him a proper burial. Instead, they find an empty tomb, two angelic figures proclaiming Jesus' resurrection, and an invitation to new life. Their expectations were blown away. This encounter with Jesus changed them so much that they were compelled to GO back to their fellow followers and proclaim the good news. Their testimony would eventually spread to every corner of the earth so that wherever we go, the love of God will meet us there.

In this journey, you have been called to engage with the mystery of death and resurrection as mirrored in the Easter Vigil. We have been called from darkness into light. From fear into joy. From sin into restoration. From death into life. Our job now is to follow the examples of those women and go into the world proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus. Let this be the season that you go and live the full gift of the resurrection.

Reflection

Invite participants to sit with both feet on the ground, listen to Luke 24:1-12, and then journal their reflections using the Participant Guide. At the end of the allotted time, ring the bell or singing bowl to gather participants before worship.

Conclusion

Welcome participants back to the group and provide them with an opportunity to share their reflections about the readings, their commitment to BLESS and REST, and the rules of life they have created.

Concluding Worship

End your time together worshipping God, reading Scripture, singing, praying, blessing, and committing to the Way of Love. You can find the concluding worship service in the resource section of this curriculum.

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Session I, Part B: Turn

Settle into the presence of God and imagine God’s loving grace upon you. Breathe, and remember that you depend on God for each breath. Ask for the gift of memory and the invitation to be open to the indwelling of God’s spirit.

STEP 1

Invite God into your heart and mind. Prayerfully read Romans 6:3-11.

6 ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

STEP 2

Ask God for the gift of imagination and grace. Imagine receiving a letter from the Apostle Paul and listening to his new and exciting words for the first time. Paul tells you that you have died with Christ and are alive to God in Christ Jesus. You review what in your life is keeping you from truly living and notice how those things make you feel. What do you need to die to so that you might live? Record your thoughts here:

STEP 3

Read Romans 6:3-11 a second time.

STEP 4

Give thanks to God for the gift of life. You remember your own baptism, or a baptism you have witnessed. You hear the water splashing into the font and feel the water dripping on your head or pressing against your body. As your forehead is wiped dry or you emerge from the water, you feel your old self being left behind. You are a new person, raised to new life in Christ, ready to reorient all of who you are to the Way of Love in Jesus. What are you thinking? Feeling? How does remembering this experience change the words that Paul has for you today? Record your thoughts here:

STEP 5

Rest in the presence of the community gathered for the quiet day today, enjoying the companionship of those who, through God's grace, are remembering their own baptisms in the hope of new life. Repeat the words, "I am alive to God in Christ Jesus."

STEP 6

End by praying Psalm 114:

Hallelujah!

When Israel came out of Egypt, *

the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech,

Judah became God's sanctuary *

and Israel his dominion.

The sea beheld it and fled; *
Jordan turned and went back.
The mountains skipped like rams, *
and the little hills like young sheep.
What ailed you, O sea, that you fled? *
O Jordan, that you turned back?
You mountains, that you skipped like rams? *
you little hills like young sheep?
Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, *
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
Who turned the hard rock into a pool of water *
and flint-stone into a flowing spring.

Building Your Practice of the Way of Love

What is God calling you to die to so that you might live more fully? What practice will help you turn from what keeps you from life?

You may write additional thoughts, feelings, and insights gained in this practice in your journal.

Session II, Part A: Pray

Settle into the presence of God and imagine God's loving grace upon you. Breathe, and remember that you depend on God for each breath. Ask for the gift of memory and the invitation to be open to the indwelling of God's spirit.

STEP I

Prayerfully read Exodus 14:10-15:1.

14 ¹⁰As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. ¹¹They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? ¹²Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, "Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians"? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.' ¹³But Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. ¹⁴The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.'

¹⁵Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. ¹⁶But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. ¹⁸And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.’

¹⁹The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. ²⁰It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. ²²The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. ²⁵He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, ‘Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.’

²⁶Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.’ ²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

³⁰Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

15 ¹Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:
‘I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.’

STEP 2

Imagine yourself with the Israelites fleeing Pharaoh. You see Pharaoh approach and cry out to God in fear. You hear a voice. It is God saying to you, “Do not be afraid, stand firm.” You turn your head to find a pillar of cloud moving before you, showing you to the way of freedom. What fear holds you captive? What does freedom look like? What is keeping you from the way of freedom? What might be showing you the way forward? Sit with how you feel at this moment, and write down your honest prayers, whether they are a prayer of anger against God, a petition for a way forward, or thanksgiving for life. Record your answers here:

STEP 3

Read Exodus 14:10-15:1 a second time.

STEP 4

You remember a time in your life of unexpected joy, when you felt light and full of possibility. This may be some years ago, or it might be where you are today. What thoughts and feelings arise for you? What insight might they give you of practices to reclaim as you continue to seek the Way of Love? Give thanks to God for the call to new life and freedom. Record your thoughts here:

STEP 5

Rest in the presence of the community gathered for the quiet day today, enjoying the

companionship of those who, through God's grace, are remembering times of fear, as well as times of joy and freedom. Repeat the words, "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea." Rest in God.

STEP 6

End by praying Canticle 8:

I will sing to the Lord, for he is lofty and uplifted; *
the horse and its rider has he hurled into the sea.
The Lord is my strength and my refuge; *
the Lord has become my Savior.
This is my God and I will praise him, *
the God of my people and I will exalt him.
The Lord is a mighty warrior; *
Yahweh is his Name.
The chariots of Pharaoh and his army has he hurled into the sea; *
the finest of those who bear armor have been drowned in the Red Sea.
The fathomless deep has overwhelmed them; *
they sank into the depths like a stone.
Your right hand, O Lord, is glorious in might; *
your right hand, O Lord, has overthrown the enemy.
Who can be compared with you, O Lord, among the gods? *
who is like you, glorious in holiness,
awesome in renown, and worker of wonders?
You stretched forth your right hand; *
the earth swallowed them up.
With your constant love you led the people you redeemed; *
with your might you brought them in safety to your holy dwelling.
You will bring them in and plant them *
on the mount of your possession,
The resting-place you have made for yourself, O Lord, *
the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hand has established.
The Lord shall reign *
for ever and for ever.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Building Your Practice of the Way of Love

Prayer is a response to God's initiative, with or without words. What intentional prayer practices center you in God's presence, so you can hear, speak, or simply dwell with God? What practice can you commit to daily or weekly?

You may write additional thoughts, feelings, and insights gained in this practice in your journal.

Session II, Part B: Learn

Settle into the presence of God and imagine God's loving grace upon you. Breathe, and remember that you depend on God for each breath. Ask for the gift of memory and the invitation to be open to the indwelling of God's spirit.

STEP 1

Prayerfully read Proverbs 8:1-8, 19-21; 9:4b-6.

8 ¹ Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?

² On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;

³ beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:

⁴ 'To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all that live.

⁵ O simple ones, learn prudence;
acquire intelligence, you who lack it.

⁶ Hear, for I will speak noble things,
and from my lips will come what is right;

⁷ for my mouth will utter truth;
wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

⁸ All the words of my mouth are righteous;
there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.

¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,
and my yield than choice silver.

²⁰ I walk in the way of righteousness,
along the paths of justice,

²¹ endowing with wealth those who love me,
and filling their treasuries.'

9 ⁴ 'You that are simple, turn in here!
To those without sense she says,

⁵ 'Come, eat of my bread
and drink of the wine I have mixed.

⁶ Lay aside immaturity, and live,
and walk in the way of insight.'

STEP 2

Imagine you are walking down a bustling street, in a town or city, and you hear someone call to you saying, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed." You turn your head to listen as words of wisdom spill from her mouth. The noise of the street fades away as you focus on her words. She is inviting you to listen to the life-giving words in Scripture. You bend your ears more closely to hear the words of Scripture she recites for you today. What are those words? What about them is life-giving? Record your thoughts here:

STEP 3

Read Proverbs 8:1-8, 19-21; 9:4b-6 a second time.

STEP 4

You remember the wise people whom you have met at the crossroads of life. They could be a partner, friend, child, or colleague. As you give thanks for each of them by name, you settle on one and recall this person's particular words of wisdom. What words of wisdom does this person have for you today? How does what he or she has to say reflect the love of Jesus for you? You sit with this person's words and give thanks. Record your thoughts here:

STEP 5

Rest in the presence of the community gathered for the quiet day today, enjoying the companionship of those who, through God's grace, are remembering Scripture and people who have spoken wisdom to them. Repeat the words, "Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice?" Rest in God.

STEP 6

End by praying the following:

Psalm 19

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;

yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,
which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and nothing is hidden from its heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the decrees of the Lord are sure,
making wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is clear,
enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring forever;
the ordinances of the Lord are true
and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey,
and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
But who can detect their errors?

Clear me from hidden faults.
Keep back your servant also from the insolent;
do not let them have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Building Your Practice of the Way of Love

What ways of reflecting on Scripture are most life-giving for you? When will (or do) you set aside time to read and reflect on Scripture in your day?

You may write additional thoughts, feelings, and insights gained in this practice in your journal.

Session III, Part A: Bless

Settle into the presence of God and imagine God's loving grace upon you. Breathe, and remember that you depend on God for each breath. Ask for the gift of memory and the invitation to be open to the indwelling of God's spirit.

STEP 1

Prayerfully read Ezekiel 36:24-28.

36 ²⁴I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. ²⁵I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. ²⁸Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

STEP 2

Imagine standing under a waterfall pouring upon your head. The rushing sound of water fills your ears, silencing the noise of the world. This water is refreshing. What images come to mind? You feel a warmth rise up in your heart. The heavy stone that you have been carrying begins to lighten. You feel your heart soften. As you breathe in, you feel a spirit of new life

enter your heart. You give thanks for the blessing of the Spirit. Record your thoughts here:

STEP 3

Read Ezekiel 36:24-28 a second time.

STEP 4

You remember a time when you have been a blessing to others – a stream of refreshing water that has brought others new life. What needed refreshing? How did you offer God’s refreshment and blessing? Record your thoughts here:

STEP 5

Rest in the presence of the community gathered for the quiet day today, enjoying the companionship of those who, through God’s grace, are remembering having received and given blessings. Repeat the words, “I will put my spirit within you.”

STEP 6

End by praying Canticle 9:

Surely, it is God who saves me; *

I will trust in him and not be afraid.

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, *

and he will be my Savior.

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing *

from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say, *

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

Make his deeds known among the peoples; *

see that they remember that his Name is exalted.

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, *

and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, *

for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Building Your Practice of the Way of Love

What are the ways that the Spirit is calling you to bless others?

You may write additional thoughts, feelings, and insights gained in this practice in your journal.

Session III, Part B: Rest

Settle into the presence of God and imagine God's loving grace upon you. Breathe, and remember that you depend on God for each breath. Ask for the gift of memory and the invitation to be open to the indwelling of God's spirit.

STEP 1

Prayerfully read Ezekiel 37:1-14.

37 ¹The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, ‘Mortal, can these bones live?’ I answered, ‘O Lord God, you know.’ ⁴Then he said to me, ‘Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.’

⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, ‘Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.’ ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, ‘Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, “Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.” ¹²Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.’

STEP 2

Imagine you are standing in the middle of the valley, filled with dry bones. You hear God’s voice asking if these bones can live. You can hear them rattling, softly at first. The noise gets louder and louder. Suddenly, a great wind rushes through the valley and the bones come to life. Shades of gray give way to the color of soft flesh. What else do you notice about this valley? What thoughts and images in your own experience come to mind? You give thanks, knowing that God is the source of all rest. Record your thoughts here:

STEP 3

Read Ezekiel 37:1-14 a second time.

STEP 4

You remember a time of exhaustion. It may be today, or many years ago. You feel this exhaustion deeply. You relax and soften your shoulders, chest, hips, and knees. You remember your body yearning for rest. You breathe in God’s spirit, and are filled. What does it feel like to be filled with God’s spirit that restores life? Record your thoughts here:

STEP 5

Rest in the presence of the community gathered for the quiet day today, enjoying the companionship of those who, through God’s grace, are taking these moments to rest in God’s spirit. Repeat the words, “O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.”

STEP 6

End by praying Psalm 30:1-4:

I will exalt you, O LORD,
because you have lifted me up *
and have not let my enemies triumph over me.
O LORD my God, I cried out to you, *

and you restored me to health.
You brought me up, O LORD, from the dead; *
you restored my life as I was going down to the grave.
Sing to the LORD, you servants of his; *
give thanks for the remembrance of his holiness.

Building Your Practice of the Way of Love

What practices restore your body, mind, and soul? How will you observe rest and renewal on a regular basis?

You may write additional thoughts, feelings, and insights gained in this practice in your journal.

Session IV, Part A: Worship

Settle into the presence of God and imagine God's loving grace upon you. Breathe, and remember that you depend on God for each breath. Ask for the gift of memory and the invitation to be open to the indwelling of God's spirit.

STEP I

Relax yourself in the presence of God and read Zephaniah 3:12-20.

3 ¹² For I will leave in the midst of you
a people humble and lowly.

They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord—
¹³ the remnant of Israel;

they shall do no wrong
and utter no lies,

nor shall a deceitful tongue
be found in their mouths.

Then they will pasture and lie down,
and no one shall make them afraid.

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing
¹⁸ as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹ I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.

²⁰ At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

STEP 2

Ask for the gift of experiencing God's faithfulness. Imagine that you are surrounded by voices of praise singing "Gloria!" You experience the joy that comes with knowing that God is in your midst who "will renew you in his love" and "bring you home." What images come to mind as you hear these voices of joy and victory? Record your thoughts here:

STEP 3

Read Zephaniah 3:12-20 a second time.

STEP 4

You remember a time in your life when you have been afraid. You may have fears and anxieties right now. Name them. You hear the prophets words, “Do not fear, O Zion. ... The Lord, your God, is in your midst.” In the presence of God’s love, you feel your fear transform, even if slightly, into confidence that God has promised to bring you home. You are moved to offer words and acts of worship and praise to God. Record your thoughts here:

STEP 5

Rest in the presence of the community gathered for the quiet day today, enjoying the companionship of those who, through God's grace, are offering God worship and praise. Repeat the words, "Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!"

STEP 6

End by praying Psalm 98:5-10:

Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands; *

lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.

Sing to the LORD with the harp, *

with the harp and the voice of song.

With trumpets and the sound of the horn *

shout with joy before the King, the LORD.

Let the sea make a noise and all that is in it, *

the lands and those who dwell therein.

Let the rivers clap their hands, *

and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD,

when he comes to judge the earth.

In righteousness shall he judge the world *

and the peoples with equity.

Building Your Practice of the Way of Love

What communal worship practices move you to encounter God and knit you into the body of Christ? How will (or do) you commit to worship regularly?

You may write additional thoughts, feelings, and insights gained in this practice in your journal.

Session IV, Part B: Go

Settle into the presence of God and imagine God's loving grace upon you. Breathe, and remember that you depend on God for each breath. Ask for the gift of memory and the invitation to be open to the indwelling of God's spirit.

STEP 1

Prayerfully read Luke 24:1-12.

24 ¹But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' ⁸Then they remembered his words, ⁹and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

STEP 2

Imagine you have come to the tomb that first Easter morning. Your arms are full of materials to anoint and bury a body. Your mind is full of confusion and doubt. Your heart is full of sorrow. Suddenly, you see two men who have unexplainable and incredible news. Do you dare to believe their words? How will you explain it to others if you do? Record your thoughts here:

STEP 3

Read Luke 24:1-12 a second time.

STEP 4

You remember a time when your heart felt transformed in an instant. What were the markers of transformation? How did you feel? That feeling may have moved you to joy and gratitude. You likely told everyone you could in your excitement. Let the good news of the resurrection motivate you in the same way. How would you tell the joyful message of the empty tomb? Record your thoughts here:

STEP 5

Rest in the presence of the community gathered for the quiet day today, enjoying the companionship of those who, through God’s grace are remembering ... Repeat the words, “I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.”

STEP 6

End by praying Psalm 118:1-2, 19-24.

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; *
his mercy endures for ever.

Let Israel now proclaim, *
“His mercy endures for ever.”

Open for me the gates of righteousness; *
I will enter them;
I will offer thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord; *
he who is righteous may enter.

I will give thanks to you, for you answered me *
and have become my salvation.

The same stone which the builders rejected *
has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord’s doing, *
and it is marvelous in our eyes.

On this day the Lord has acted; *
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Building Your Practice of the Way of Love

To what new places or communities is the Spirit sending you to witness to the love, justice, and truth of God? How will you build into your life a commitment to cross boundaries, listen carefully, and take part in healing and reconciling what is broken in this world?

You may write additional thoughts, feelings, and insights gained in this practice in your journal.

CURRICULUM RESOURCES: RULE OF LIFE

THE WAY OF LOVE: LIFE TRANSFORMED

My Way of Love Rule of Life

Write each of the practices that you decided to commit to during the day below, making revisions that would be life-giving. Post this list somewhere you can see it every day.

Turn: _____

Pray: _____

Learn: _____

Bless: _____

Rest: _____

Worship: _____

Go: _____

With whom will you share this rule of life to help you reflect on your practice? Write the person's name here and commit to talking with this person about your Way of Love rule of life.

CURRICULUM RESOURCES: MIDDAY WORSHIP

THE WAY OF LOVE: LIFE TRANSFORMED

As we pause to feed our bodies in the middle of the day, we pause also to feed our souls by vowing again to live faithfully.

Opening

Renew and strengthen us, eternal God, as we prepare for resurrection.

Prayer

Merciful God, your strength and courage pour forth to sustain the witness of your faithful people: Awaken in us the humility to serve wherever creation is broken and needy, that we may follow in the way of our brother, Jesus, die as he did to all that separates us from you, and be raised, as he was, to new life. **Amen.**

Praise

A Song of the Wilderness (Isaiah 35:1-4)

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, *

the desert shall rejoice and blossom;

It shall blossom abundantly, *

and rejoice with joy and singing.

They shall see the glory of the Lord, *

the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weary hands, *

and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to the anxious, 'Be strong, do not fear! *

Here is your God, coming with judgment

to save you.'

Scripture

'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:37-40)

Meditation

“Do you wish to honor the body of the Savior? Do not despise it when it is naked. Do not honor it in church with silk vestments, while outside you are leaving it numb with cold and naked. He who said, ‘This is my body,’ and made it so by his word, is the same that said, ‘You saw me hungry and you gave me no food. As you did it not to the least of these, you did it not to me.’ Honor him then by sharing your property with the poor, for what God needs is not golden chalices, but golden souls.”

– John Chrysostom

Who are the hungry and naked in our daily world, and how will we relieve their suffering?

Prayers

God of hope, help us who struggle in our daily work. When we lose our purpose,
renew our hope in you.

When we bow to hatred,
renew our trust in you.

When we despair of bliss,
renew our joy in you.

When we take offense at others,
renew our life in you.

When we compromise our values,
renew our faith in you.

When we cherish regrets,
renew our freedom in you.

When we surrender to despair,
renew our hope in you.

As we accept your renewing love, we offer our prayers to you:

Here, the people may add particular intercessions or thanksgivings.

Hold us, and all people, in your loving care,
and may we be hope for others.

Lord's Prayer

Prayer

God of hope, from you come every blessing and all peace: Show us that, in the midst of our struggles, you are with us. Give us the abundance of your grace that we may do the work you give us to do and that we may be for the world a sign of your presence; through Christ, the Way and the Truth. **Amen.**

Going Out

Renew and strengthen us, eternal God,
as we prepare for resurrection.

Source: The Office of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church, *Daily Prayer for All Seasons* (New York: Church Publishing, 2014), 69-71.

CURRICULUM RESOURCES: CONCLUDING WORSHIP

WAY OF LOVE: LIFE TRANSFORMED QUIET DAY

As shadows lengthen, we are filled by the day's encounters; now, more than ever, we accept the depth and breadth of God's grace.

Opening

You lavish love upon us.

Make us people of extravagant love.

Prayer

Holy God, lover of our souls, we come before you as people created by and for love: Gather us in this time to hear again your word of love, to renew our trust in its breadth and depth. In the sacrifice of your love for us, may we find renewal and be your love in the world. **Amen.**

Praise

My Song Is Love Unknown

(Music, if desired, may be found in *The Hymnal 1982*, #458.)

My song is love unknown, my Savior's love to me,
love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be.

O who am I that for my sake my Lord
should take frail flesh, and die?

He came from his blest throne salvation to bestow,
but men made strange, and none the longed for Christ would know.

But O my friend, my friend indeed,
who at my need his life did spend.

Sometimes they strew his way, and his strong praises sing,
resounding all the day hosannas to their King.

then "Crucify!" is all their breath,
and for his death they thirst and cry.

Why, what hath my Lord done? What makes this rage and spite?

He made the lame to run, he gave the blind their sight.

Sweet injuries! Yet they at these themselves displease,
and 'gainst him rise.

Here might I stay and sing, no story so divine;

never was love, dear Christ, never was grief like thine.

this is my friend, in whose sweet praise

I all my days could gladly spend.

Words (alt): Samuel Crossman (1624-1683)

Scripture

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made with pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. (John 12:1-3)

Blessing the Rules

Participants are invited to bring forth their rules of life and place them on the altar.

Leader:

Jesus you have called us to follow you on the Way of Love. Send your Holy Spirit upon these rules of life and bless those who are called to live them so they may follow them according to your will. **Amen.**

Way of Love Covenant

Leader: Jesus' way is the Way of Love. In him we find more love, freedom, and abundant life. After each bidding, all who desire to make this commitment should join in proclaiming: By the Spirit's power, we will.

Leader: Will you turn and center your life on Jesus, falling in love with our Lord again and again and again?

People: By the Spirit's power, we will.

Leader: Will you ground your life in the life and teachings of Jesus, as revealed in Scripture? And will you pray and simply listen for God's voice in your life and in the world?

People: By the Spirit's power, we will.

Leader: Will you gather together in worship, to break bread and to thank and praise God? And will you bless this world with your story, your resources, and your labor?

People: By the Spirit's power, we will.

Leader: Will you cross boundaries and fearlessly become God's Beloved Community? And will you turn toward Jesus and to commit to follow his Way of Love in the context of Christian community, trusting in his power to change each of our lives and to change this world? Will you take rest, receiving God's gift of grace and restoration, and letting God be God?

People: By the Spirit's power, we will.

Leader: May the God who formed all things in Love, draw you near to God's own heart, empower you by the power of the Spirit to live the Way of Love with fellow travelers, and send you to participate in the resurrection and healing of God's world. And may the blessing of our Lord – loving, liberating, and life-giving – be with us and remain with us forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Optional Song: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (#136, Lift Every Voice and Sing II Hymnal)

Lord's Prayer

Prayer

Holy Spirit, fill us with godly love. Free us from all that resists loving and being loved. Empower us to love as Jesus did. In his gracious name we pray. **Amen.**

Going Out

You lavish love upon us.

Make us people of extravagant love.

Closing worship is adapted from The Office of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church, *Daily Prayer for All Seasons* (New York: Church Publishing, 2014), 92-94.

CURRICULUM RESOURCES: PRAYER CENTERS

THE WAY OF LOVE: LIFE TRANSFORMED

The following are a few prayer options that could be incorporated into the quiet day.

Labyrinth: Floor labyrinths offer people who are kinetic learners and thinkers the opportunity to pray with their bodies. Consider borrowing a floor labyrinth from a local church or your diocese. If you cannot locate one, you might also download and print labyrinths, which can be walked with fingers. The website of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco has a description of how to walk a labyrinth (<https://www.gracecathedral.org/our-labyrinths>).

Praying by Drawing: Prayer is a conversation with God. But with so many distractions, how can we hear God's voice? Some people find coloring or drawing to be a way of tuning out distractions. Consider offering simple art supplies for participants to pray by drawing or coloring. Google keyword "mandalas" to find simple patterns to color. Praying in Color is another source for templates: <https://prayingincolor.com/examples>.

Anglican Prayer Beads: Anglican prayer beads are a tool to help us quiet the noise and distractions of our lives and to pay attention to the presence of God. Pressing our fingers on each successive bead creates a rhythm for prayer that leads more readily into stillness. For more information about making Anglican Prayer beads, look here: <http://www.kingofpeace.org/prayerbeads.htm>. Note that this activity requires significant investment in materials.

Praying with Icons: If your church or church members have icons, consider placing them where people can sit in front of them and gaze. To pray with an icon, begin by quieting your body, mind, and spirit. Focus on its beauty, its inner life. What is the icon saying about itself? Where is there movement in the icon? Consider where the subjects are looking. At you? At Jesus? At a saint? What is that gaze inviting in you? Where do the hands point? Think of the icon as a doorway that points to its creator. What is it saying? What feeling does the icon evoke? Focus on and rest on this feeling. Give thanks to God, ending with a familiar prayer such as the Lord's Prayer.

Visio Divina: Invite participants to use their smartphone cameras to explore the facility or its surroundings to find images that capture a verse in one of the Scriptures studied so far. When participants gather again, invite them to share images with one another.