



Spiritual Practice Week 7 Theme: Blessing Practice Gratitude - Blessing

3 Wondering Questions:

- 1) *What would it mean to be a person who gives Blessings?*
- 2) *What would it mean to be a person who receives Blessings?*
- 3) *How could you practice acts of Blessing with the people you see today?*

Reverend Emily Meyer, Director of [The Ministry Lab](#), invites you to wonder through contemplation and movement. Please note, this content is also available as an audio recording on the website: www.uccmn.org.

Tips for this week's Spiritual Practice:

*You may listen or read.

*There is no “wrong” way to participate: whatever is appropriate for you in your context is “right”. *Non-judgmentalism is key: be kind and forgiving to yourself and others. This is called a “practice” because it is never “perfect”.

*If safety and health protocols allow, let this be an excuse to get out of the house, away from screens, and into the out-of-doors.

*In this practice, each “directive” is followed by silence, during which you are invited to “take as long as you like...” Recorded silences last 15-30 seconds. To stretch the silences, push pause on your player; push play when you are ready to proceed. There is no “proper” length to this: what is right for you and/or any Littles who may be practicing with you, is right.

*That being said, don't be afraid to stretch the silences a bit further over time: extended time can help deepen our connection with the Divine and has the delightful side-effects of developing patience, non-judgmentalism, creativity, compassion, and attention spans!

*This practice concludes with an invitation to journal and reflect. Both are highly beneficial and are highly recommended. You may want to bring paper and writing/drawing materials with you so reflection can follow as part of the practice. If this is not possible, you might return home in mindfulness and journal and reflect there.

*If circumstances prevent all forms of reflection, please be kind to yourself and others by moving slowly from the practice back into “normal” life: the jump from silence to normal-volume life can be jarring.

**This week's practice includes very minimal instruction. This is a great week to stretch*





the silent times (the actual practice) by several minutes! Push “pause” on your speakers for “as long as you like”; take your time - maybe 10, 15 or even 30 minutes of silent, prayerful walking: let the blessing sink into you and the earth.

Work out the Wiggles: If you’re going outside, go ahead and step out the door, but before you leave your front porch or sidewalk, let’s work out the wiggles to help our bodies, minds, hearts and souls get ready.

Since today’s practice is a walking prayer, let’s wake up our walking muscles with a strong march:

As you march in place, lift your legs high, bringing your thighs parallel with the ground. Lace your fingers together, like you would to pray, but leave your palms apart, elbows up and out.

Breathe in as you lift your hands over your head, let your palms face out.

Breathe out as you bring your palms down, onto your knee or thigh while lifting each knee in a strong marching step.

Breathe in, arms over head.

Breathe out, hands down on your knee or thigh with each marching step.

Continue to breathe in, raise your hands over your head.

Breathe out, bring them down onto your thigh or knee.

Let this be a strong, big, rapid movement!

And keep going until all the wiggles are out!

When you have worked out all the wiggles, take a few moments to walk to the safe space where you will practice today. Don’t forget to bring your reflection and journaling materials, if you like.

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Stretch: Now let’s invite our body, mind, heart and soul to settle into the practice by stretching.

Take a moment to reach to the sky and stretch out all your fingers. If you can, stretch all the way up onto your tippy-toes. Think of energy shooting out your fingertips and toenails, into the sky and down through the ground.

Then curl all of those stretched-out parts back in and drop your body forward. Say, “Hello!” to your toes, and give them a little tickle.

Slowly roll your torso back up and take a deep breath.





Take a couple of deep breaths and let yourself be present, right here and now.

Name Your Intent: Today, we are going to use two short phrases to remind ourselves what this time is about. Naming what we are doing - and why - can help our body, heart, mind and soul know that this is different from just “going for a walk” and remind us to stay focused.

Naming our intent also helps us remember what it is! Our intent today is to PRACTICE BLESSING: blessing is sharing goodness with others. We can bless others spiritually, emotionally, or physically with words or more tangible gifts. Today we practice both giving and receiving blessing.

Breathe in: I am blessed...

Breathe out:to be a blessing.

Breathe in: I am blessed...

Breathe out:to be a blessing.

Breathe in: I am blessed...

Breathe out:to be a blessing.

Breathe in: I am blessed...

Breathe out:to be a blessing.

Practice: Let’s settle into the rhythm of our breath.

If you are walking, I invite you to place your palms facing forward at the side of your body. Let them be relaxed and open. Let your arms swing freely, as they normally do when walking, but let the palms of your hands remain open and facing forward as a sign of your openness to receiving blessing.

If you are seated, let your palms rest face-down on the top of your thighs, right hand on your right thigh, left hand on your left thigh.

Take a moment to breathe into this posture.





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I invite you to notice how the earth supports you as you stand or sit. Notice the intersection where your body meets the earth or your chair. Notice the connection between your feet or your backside where they meet the earth or whatever you are sitting on.

Take a few moments to notice this connection and the support you receive simply by standing or sitting.

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If you are walking, begin to take small steps: let each foot step just in front of the other. Pay attention to how it feels as each part of your foot touches the ground: notice the roll of the foot, from heel to toe, with each step. Notice which muscles engage to lift the foot. Notice how you must balance between steps. Notice how the ankle works to settle the foot back onto the ground.

If you are sitting, press the heel of your right hand into your right thigh and gently, and just slightly, push forward; then release; press the heel of your left hand into your left thigh and gently push forward; then release. Keep the palms of your hands on your thighs, throughout. Notice the differing sensations in each part of your hand. Notice how the pressure is received in your thigh. Notice the absence of pressure as you release to change sides.

Take a few moments to settle into this simple rhythm.

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As you become comfortable with this gentle rhythm, begin to notice your breath.

I invite you to coordinate your breathing and your movement so that as you breathe out, you are stepping with your right foot or pressing with your right hand; as you breathe in, step with your left foot or press with your left hand.





Breathe out: step right.

Breathe in: step left.

Breathe out: press right.

Breathe in: press left.

Settle into this simple breathing rhythm for a few moments.

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I invite you now to place a simple prayer onto each breath.

As you breathe out, and step or press on the right, repeat to yourself: May my feet bless the earth.

As you breathe in, and step or press on the left, repeat to yourself: May the earth bless me.

Breathe out; step or press on the right: May my feet bless the earth.

Breathe in; step or press on the left: May the earth bless me.

Breathe out; step or press on the right: May my feet bless the earth.

Breathe in; step or press on the left: May the earth bless me.

Breathe out; right: May my feet bless the earth.

Breathe in; left: May the earth bless me.

Breathe out; right: May my feet bless the earth.

Breathe in; left: May the earth bless me.





Continue to breathe and pray.

Take as long as you like... [from 5-30 or more minutes].

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Rest: I invite you to wiggle your toes and fingers; gently roll your head around on your shoulders; roll your shoulders up and back and down...

Take a few deep breaths: in and out...

When you are ready, find a seated position, if you are not already seated.

Again, take a few deep breaths...

And rest for a moment.

Take as long as you like... [from 10-30 seconds or more].

Reflect: It can be really helpful and fun to reflect a little bit on your practice. You can do this by writing in a journal, drawing a picture, doodling, or talking with someone who practiced with you.

Today, you may find drawing especially enjoyable: you might draw yourself walking; you might draw what it felt like physically or spiritually to move in this way while praying; you might draw the blessing that flowed between you and the earth.

You might also journal by writing a poem about the blessing you offered and received; a poem about the connection of blessing that exists between you and all of creation.

When you have finished drawing and/or writing, you might enjoy sharing what you experienced with someone who shared the practice with you. If you need help getting the conversation going, you might share where you felt or experienced God as you walked and blessed the earth - and received a blessing from the earth. You might also reflect on this week's Wondering Questions:





What would it mean to know yourself to be a person to give Blessings?

What would it mean to know yourself to be a person who receives Blessings?

How could you practice acts of Blessing with the people you see today?

Take as long as you like to journal and reflect... [from 1-5 minutes or more].

Some people like to keep all of their writing or drawing in one book or place. After many days, weeks or even years, looking back over these writings and drawings helps people see where God has been in their lives and in the world, and helps them notice God in new ways. It's a way to write or draw your own personal story of God.

Bless: *You might end your writing/drawing/chatting time by taking a final deep breath in, letting it out slowly, and saying a single word or phrase of closure or blessing, like "Amen"; "Blessed Be"; "Thank you"; or "We walk in peace"; etc.*

Then, walk yourself home or into the rest of your day!

