

# Spiritual Practices for Families and Youth

# Community of Christ

We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities  
of joy, hope, love, and peace!



Pastor: Carla K Long

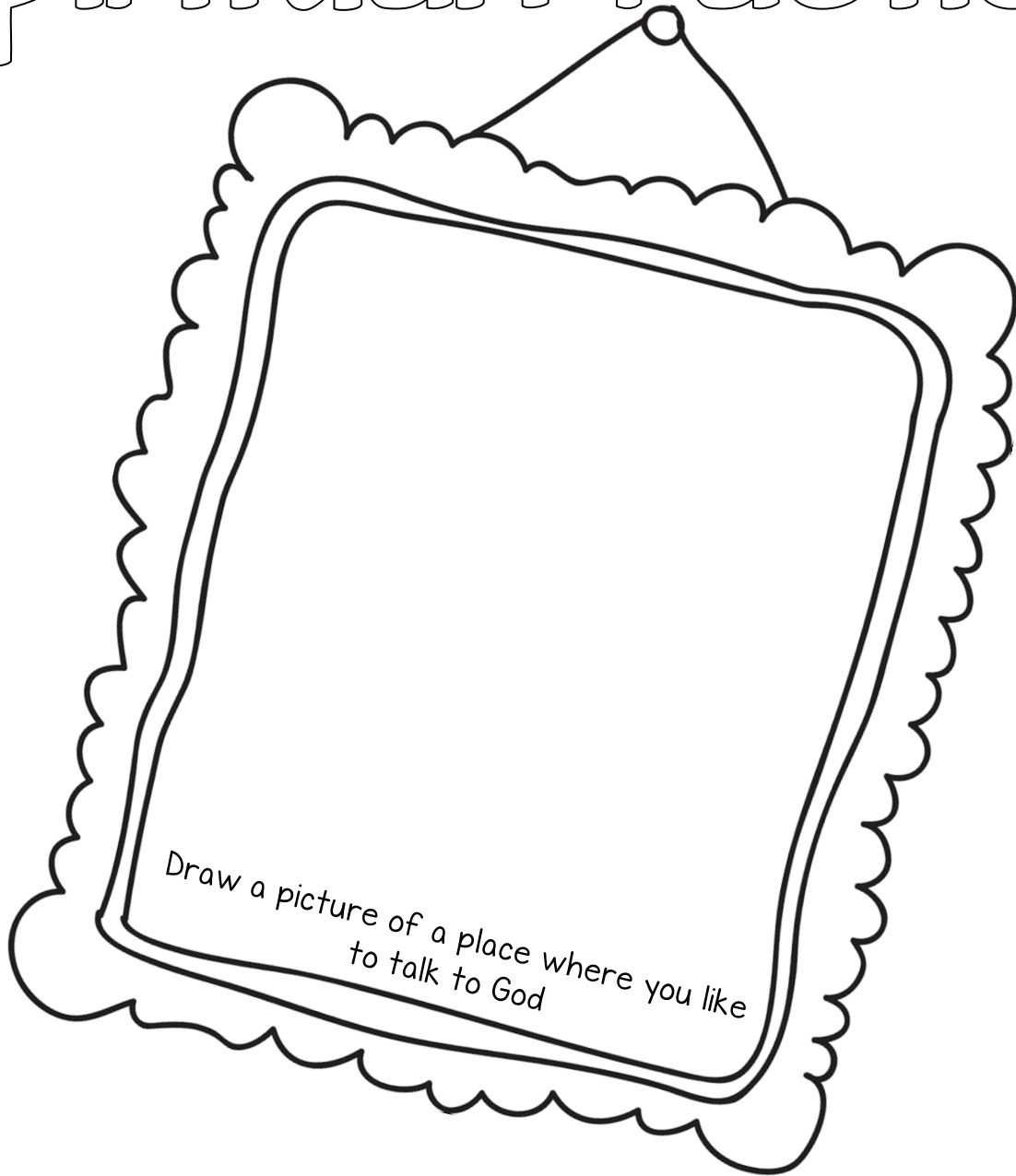
Sunday School for Kids: Sundays @ 10 am

Coffee and Conversation for Adults: Sundays @ 10am

Worship: Sundays @ 11am



# Spiritual Practices



One way we can better know God is to participate in spiritual practices. Just like sports and choir practices help us be better at playing or singing, when we practice spiritually, we get better at being with God and at recognizing where God is and what God is doing. There are many spiritual practices. Not everyone will work for every person. It is important to find a spiritual practice that works for you so that you can deepen your relationship with God. Pick a practice to try for a week or two and see what happens. Spiritual practices can offer comfort and insight in the face of uncertainty in your life and in the world.

# Spiritual Practices for Children

## As You See God

Using clay, play dough, or Model Magic™ create something that shows what you think God is like. Whatever that looks like or feels like to you. Can you represent God's love? Can you make God's peace? Use your clay. Create something that represents God as you see God.

## Good Morning Body Prayer

When you wake up in the morning start your day with God by praying with your whole body. Stand next to your bed and reach for the sky. Say "good morning" to God. Now stretch your arms out wide and thank God for your blessings. Then hug your arms into yourself and ask God to be present within you today. Repeat two or three times. What other actions and words could you add to your morning body prayer?

## Prayer Time

Make a prayer schedule using a printed calendar or one you created. Set a time for a peace prayer each day. Write the names of people you know or know of who do not get along well (you might include yourself) and pray for them. Pray for people who struggle and fight; for people who are not free; for people in charge of businesses, schools, villages, countries, and churches; and for people who are hurt and bullied. Imagine yourself sharing the peace of Jesus Christ with all these people. What difference would that make?

## Point, Learn, and Pray

Using a globe or world map, close your eyes, turn around, and point to a place to learn about and pray for the people, animals, and environment there. Learn more about the place you chose by researching it online or at a library. What have you learned about that place? Do this each week to learn about a new place, new people, new animals, and plants that you can keep in your heart and pray for each day.

## Prayer of Blessing for All People Everywhere

Hug a soft Earth ball or pillow in your arms, and say a prayer of blessing for all the people of the Earth.

## A Chalice Prayer

There are many stories in the news of people and places that are hurting. Form your hands into a bowl shape. Imagine holding those people or a difficult circumstance in your hands. As you say a prayer hold your hands up to God. This form of prayer is called a chalice prayer ("chalice" means cup).

## See the Light of God

Think back through your day. What made you happy, or where did you see the light of God? Share that moment with your family. What made you sad, or where did you feel distant from God (maybe something you wish you could do differently)? Share that moment. Allow each member of the family to share. Once you have shared, consider what God might be inviting you to do tomorrow. Now offer a prayer thanking God for this time of sharing and ask for guidance as you start the new day.

## Practice Time with God

Do you have a skill that you are learning that requires practice? Do you play the piano or other musical instrument? Paint? Dance? Play sports? Each time you get ready to practice think of that time as personal time with God. Celebrate your talent by sharing every facet with God. Talk to God about how you are feeling whether you are excited, frustrated, happy, sad, or even bored. Tell God all about it. Think of your practice time as a time with God. You are in this together!

## Learn to Pray

Talk about prayer with your family. What is prayer? When do you usually pray? What are special times for prayer? When can you first remember prayer being a part of your life or how can you make prayer part of your life? What is your most memorable experience with prayer? Create three kinds of prayers: one about Jesus; one that shows you think of others; and one about peace. Pray with your family using one of the new prayers, or combine all three into one prayer!

## Held in the Light of God

As you pray hold a battery-operated tea light candle and name the person or people you are praying for. Imagine holding the light of that person up to God. Now imagine God's light filling that person as you pray. Your prayer might sound something like this, "Loving God tonight I hold the light of [Grandma] up to you. [She] is special to me because [ ]. I know God that you are with [Grandma] every day. Let her feel your light filling every part of her life. Amen." Use any words that come from your heart.

## Thank You!

God's love flows not only when you give, but also when you receive. Encourage your child to say "thank you" regularly. Take time to help your child write a thank you note to someone. Have your child draw a picture and then ask them what they want to say to the person. Write their words as they say them. You may want to add your own message as well. Your thank you could be for a gift received, but also consider writing a thank you note to someone who is important to your child. Talk with your child about how and why this person is special and then thank them for the gift of themselves.

## Nature Walk

As a family go for a walk in nature. As you walk notice the beauty of all of God's creation. Name the beauty you see for your child. Get down on the ground together and look at the tiniest pieces of creation. Ask your child what is beautiful to them. Comment on the things you see, hear, smell, and the way things feel. Model the words for your child to describe God's bounty. As you walk, take deep breaths and ask your child to do the same. Each time you take a deep breath say aloud, "God's beauty is everywhere!" Every few minutes stop, take a deep breath and repeat, "God's beauty is everywhere!"

## Mindfulness Meal

Bring a piece of bread to your prayer place. Think about all the people and steps it took to make this bread. Tear the bread into several small pieces. As you slowly chew each piece, pay attention to its taste, smell, and feel. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing for those who created this bread. Ask God to help you find ways to help those who are hungry.

## Be Still and Know that I Am God

Repeating or writing a verse of scripture can focus your mind on God. Use the scripture Psalm 45:10: "Be still and know that I am God." In your journal, write each of the following phrases slowly and prayerfully:

Be still and know that I am God...

Be still and know that I am...

Be still and know...

Be still...

Be.

Now write the scripture in reverse order:

Be...

Be still...

Be still and know...

Be still and know that I am...

Be still and know that I am God.

Amen.

## Labrynth

The Labyrinth is an ancient symbol used to represent the Christian journey. The path in is the path out. The Labyrinth is not a maze and is not meant to confuse you. There is no "right" way to walk the Labyrinth, though typically you start at the entrance, follow the path to the center, and then follow the same path out.

There are large labyrinths that you can walk. However, when you are not around a large labyrinth, you can also use a finger labyrinth instead.

As you walk or trace, allow everything to be a metaphor for your journey with God. It helps if you walk or trace attentively and find your natural pace. When you finish walking or tracing the Labyrinth, take time to reflect on or journal about your experience.

#### A Rhythm for Walking or Tracing

- RELEASE: The journey in—what distractions or resistances are you called to shed as you journey deeper into God?
- RECEIVE: The center—feel free to linger here. Rest into God's presence. What is God's invitation for you?
- RETURN: The journey out—what is God calling you to do in the world? Whom are you being called to become?

\*Tip: If using a finger labyrinth, try tracing around the lines with puff paint and letting it dry. This way, as you trace the labyrinth, you will be better able to feel the path.

#### Words to Consider

"Understand that the road to transformation travels both inward and outward. The road to transformation is the path of the disciple" (Doctrine and Covenants 161:3d).

"Collectively and individually, you are loved with an everlasting love that delights in each faithful step taken" (Doctrine and Covenants 163:10a).

Try the two finger labyrinths on the following pages.



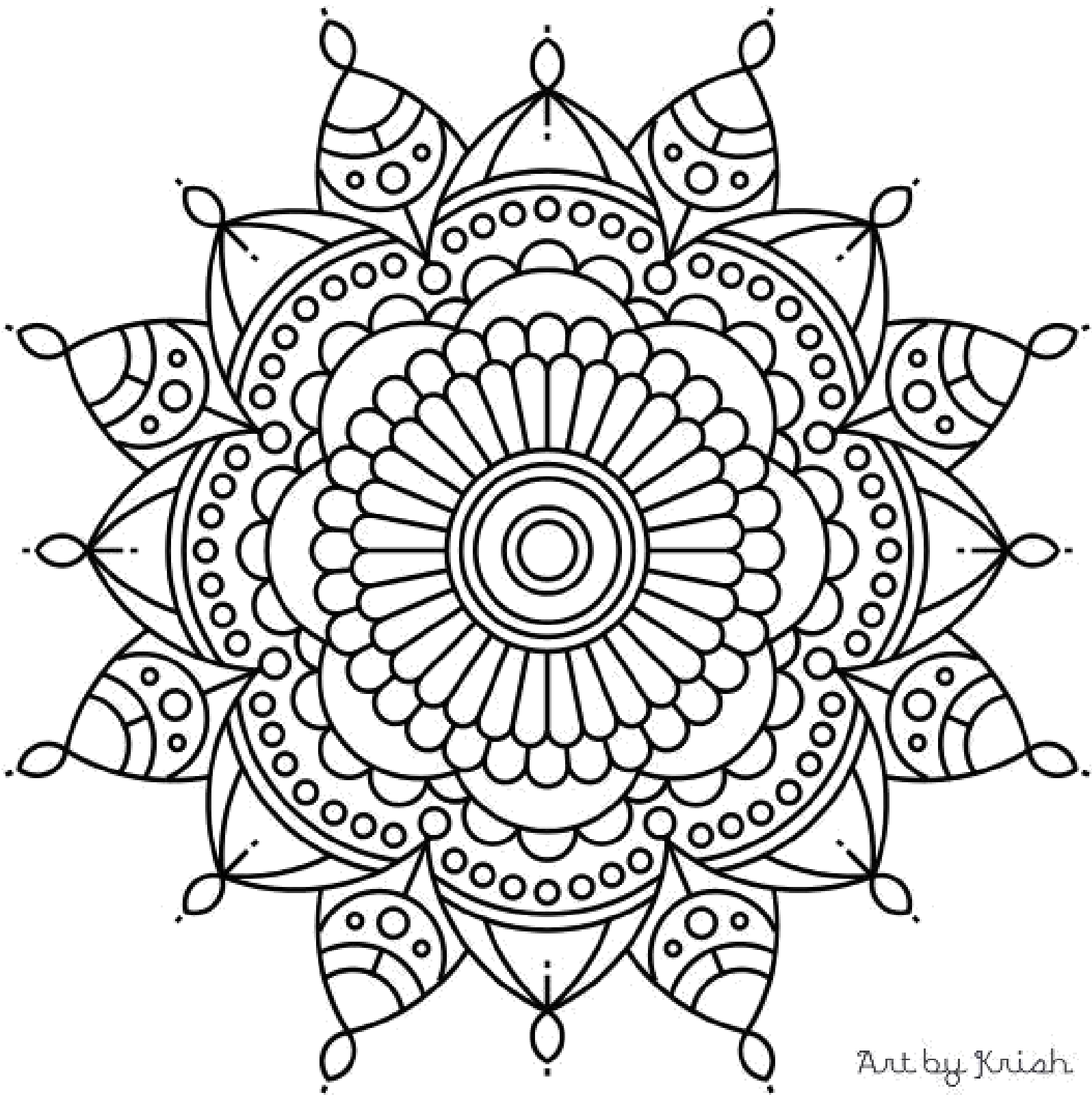




## Mandalas

Making mandalas has been used as a spiritual practice in many different faith traditions for centuries. Some people make their mandalas with sand and blow their creation away when they are finished! Creating mandalas helps us be calm and focused and quiets our minds so we can hear God. On the following pages you will find several mandalas you can chose to color.





Art by Krish





dory.fr

## Breath Prayers

Breath is a sign, symbol, and word for Spirit. In breath prayer we breathe God's Spirit in and out with a prayer phrase.

One pattern is to pray one of God's names as you breathe in. And as you breathe out, use a prayer phrase that tells God your need or longing. For example: Loving God (as you breathe in) and I want to serve you (as you breathe out). Or pray, Holy Friend (as you breathe in) and heal me (as you breathe out). Breathe in and out as you repeat the prayer you have discerned in silence. As you use this spiritual practice more, see if you can increase the amount of time you spend doing it.

### 5-4-3-2-1

Sometimes life is pretty hectic. It can make us feel sad or overwhelmed. In times when we are sad or overwhelmed it can be helpful to spend time with God. Sometimes, spending time with God requires us to practice mindfulness. This means that we are aware of our surroundings but also aware of how we are on the inside and we are able to calm our thoughts and feelings even when things are crazy.

One way we can practice mindfulness is by grounding ourselves using our five senses: sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing.

As you go through each step, you won't need to move around or say anything out loud. Instead, use your sense to find things around you and make a list in your head.

First, find 5 things you can see in the space around you. Name those things in your head.

Next, find 4 things in the space around you and imagine what they would feel like to touch.

Next, close your eyes. Without making any noises of your own, listen for 3 sounds in your surroundings.

Next, find 2 smells in your surroundings. If you can't smell anything right now, look around you for smells you can imagine (for example, what does it smell like when your Mom or Dad bakes cookies, or, what does your toothpaste smell like).

Finally, close your eyes and think of one thing you really like about yourself. Make sure to share that thing with God or a family member.