

Accessing Spiritual Power (Practice #1): Journaling and Guided Meditation on the Four Dimensions (approx. 15 minutes)

Place a bowl of water on the table within reach of the participants.

Before the exercise, find out the source of the water on the table (river, watershed, well, etc...)

This exercise is designed to deepen our experience of Practice #1: Accessing Spiritual Power. Accessing Spiritual Power is **Consciously connecting with the indwelling God to rediscover our belovedness, our God-given power, and our place within God's evolving universe.**

Now I'm going to read the first part of each of the four dimensions of this practice, and invite you to journal on each one.

Read the "We acknowledge" aspect of every dimension of Practice #1, then allow a minute to journal between each:

Personal Dimension: We acknowledge and name the destructive powers we experience in our lives...

Now I invite you to write down what are some of the destructive powers you experience in your lives or you witness in the lives of those you love or others. (journal)

Interpersonal Dimension: We acknowledge the ways we isolate ourselves and objectify others...

Now reflect for a moment on ways that you isolate yourselves and objectify others, consciously or unconsciously. (journal)

Community Dimension: We acknowledge the ways we have allowed our Scriptures and traditions to be misused as weapons against many...

Now think for a moment about ways in which our own scriptures, traditions, faith communities have harmed, excluded, divided or in other ways hurt others within the whole community of creation. (journal)

Public Dimension: We acknowledge our collective failures in acting for justice...

And finally I invite you to journal a moment on how our communities have often failed to act for justice and what has prevented us from doing so. (journal)

Now, placing your paper and pens down and closing your eyes, I am going to go back through the four dimensions of Accessing Spiritual Power and I invite you to indeed open yourselves up to the power of God that is available right here and right now.

In the Personal Dimension: we seek the God of love, whose life-giving power is accessible through our embodied experience in creation.

Breathe, smell, listen, feel yourself and all your senses. You are alive! See with the eyes of your heart that the power of God, the power of love is coursing through your veins right now!

In the interpersonal Dimension: we access the power of love by awakening to God's indwelling presence in the people and other members of God's creation we encounter.

Become aware of the people in this room and remember that God is present in each one of you. Now extend your awareness to your congregation and all those who meet in this building. God's indwelling presence resides in each and every one of them too. Now extend your awareness even further, to your friends, family, neighbors, colleagues...to those you don't know and will never know — those who do not look, act or think like you, and beyond humans to the whole community of creation! God's indwelling presence shines in every single living being if only we have eyes to see! Consider especially the human communities within creation, those close and beloved, and also those who are silenced, disappeared, victimized, made to be invisible by and to dominant cultures. God's indwelling presence shines in every single living human being if only we have eyes to see!

In the Community Dimension we access the power of the God of love to reclaim the rituals and resources of our faiths to honor human dignity and the integrity of creation.

Now as you are ready, reach forward to the baptismal waters to anoint yourself for your work ahead. These waters flow from...(name the rivers, wells or watersheds the water comes from). These waters are sacred before our words or blessings ever reach them because they are alive, truly living water. But when we come to them as baptismal waters, we open ourselves to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit who gives us eyes to see the sacred in all things.

In the Public Dimension we access the power of the indwelling God of love, who works through public efforts to advance human and environmental justice.

And so we close this prayer with a prayer. Indwelling God of love, awaken powerful and joyful leadership in these people of (name of church). Grant them vision to see what is possible and what is needful right now and right here, the conviction to act on their God-given vision, and the courage to entrust every step of the way to you, empowered by the deep knowledge that indeed you work through all public efforts to advance human and environmental justice. Amen

(Take a minute to breathe and be quiet)

I now invite you into practices #2 and #3:

Practice #2: Develop Relationships: Consciously awaken the power-among that arises when we engage in authentic conversation and relationship.

Practice #3: Discover our Stories: Consciously recognize the power of God's presence at work within our lived experience, the lives of others, and the stories of the places we live.

Split into pairs for about 10 minutes total, with these instructions:

Share with your partner what, if anything, was particularly powerful for you in this experience

Share a story from your life that connects to something you wrote down in the journaling portion of the exercise.

After 10 minutes, call people back and ask one or two people to share something they appreciated from their conversation.