

1) ACCESS Spiritual Power: Consciously connect with the indwelling God to rediscover our belovedness, our God-given power, and our place within God's evolving universe.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) In what ways do you most easily, regularly, or powerfully connect with God?
- 2) Does your current spiritual practice lead you to rediscovering your belovedness, your God-given power, and your place within God's evolving universe? If not, what has helped you in these areas?
- 3) Do you find that you access spiritual power more easily in solitude or community? Indoors or outdoors? In silence/wordlessness or through engagement with something (words/objects/people, etc.) outside yourself?
- 4) Experiment with practices that are less familiar or comfortable for you. What do you discover?

Personal: We acknowledge and name the destructive powers we experience in our lives, and seek the God of love, whose life-giving power is **accessible** through our embodied experience in creation.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) What are the destructive powers you experience in your life?
- 2) How, specifically, do they impact you and/or those you love?
- 3) How do you experience the God of love strengthening or sustaining you in the presence of those destructive powers?
- 4) Visualize the love of God pouring healing balm on all the wounds caused by these destructive powers, as well as on the people/systems that appear to be channels for those destructive powers.

Interpersonal: We *acknowledge* the ways we isolate ourselves and objectify others, and instead **access** the power of love by awakening to God's indwelling presence in the people and other members of God's creation we encounter.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) It can sometimes be difficult to identify ways we isolate ourselves. Consider what concerns or pains you deeply. With whom are you able to share these concerns? Ask yourself why you choose to bear some burdens alone, if you do?
- 2) It can also be difficult to acknowledge ways we objectify others. When we objectify others, they have no voice so we rarely hear or see them — they become like “objects” providing background or silently doing our bidding. Consider the human (and other living) beings you encounter on a typical day. Imagine them greeting you with a hello and a wave. How might you let their voices and stories be more consistently heard in your life?
- 3) Experiment with the practice of seeing and hearing all the living beings you encounter each day. (You may wish to focus on one group to start, e.g. people you see on public transportation, or trees you walk by, or people you pass on a sidewalk.)

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

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) How have you heard of or experienced the resources and practices of your faith tradition being used to harm, exclude or control yourself or others?
- 2) Name ways you have experienced or witnessed healing, reconciliation or liberation through the very same resources and practices?

- 3) As active participants in a faith tradition, we bear responsibility for how our faith traditions are expressed and used in the world. Consider how you/your faith community might repent for harm incurred through the specific aspects of our faith tradition named in the previous questions, and reclaim the power of those resources and practices to honor human dignity and the integrity of creation.

Public Sphere: We *acknowledge* our collective failures in acting for justice, and instead **access** the power of the indwelling God of love, who works through public efforts to advance human and environmental justice.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Name the ways your faith community/tradition has acted for justice.
- 2) Consider the times, places and issues in which your faith community/tradition has remained silent, failed to act, or failed to act powerfully in the face of injustice. Without judgment, reflect on why your faith community/tradition failed to do so. What steps might you take to prepare to act more powerfully in the future?
- 3) What is the role of prayer in your life? If God works through public efforts to advance human and environmental justice, how can you utilize prayer to empower such efforts? How can prayer help lead you to ways you can more powerfully act in the public sphere? Consider including the public sphere, and your role in the public sphere, more consistently in your prayers.

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

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Think of the last time you had a meaningful one-to-one conversation with someone. What did you feel like before, during and after the conversation? Rank your energy levels on a scale of 1 - 10. Did your energy change? How?
- 2) Now think back more deeply into the conversation. What was it about the exchange that affected you? When did you feel energy shifts happening inside you? Is there energy from the conversation you want to build on in future conversations?
- 3) Consider cultivating a practice of intentionally and regularly having one-to-one conversations. Reflect on these questions after every conversation.

Personal: We **develop** a compassionate relationship with our powerful yet limited selves as beloved by the indwelling God, and deeply connected to all other powerful yet limited beings.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) How would you describe the nature of your relationship with yourself?
(Nonexistent? Loving? Compassionate? Harsh? Judgmental?)
- 2) What are your typical means for communicating with yourself? (To-do lists? Journaling? Self-talk? Choices based on felt needs?)
- 3) How might you nurture a more compassionate relationship with yourself given both your power and your human limitations? How might you foster a deeper awareness of your interconnectedness with all living things?
- 4) Think of someone you naturally and instinctively treat with compassion and unconditional love. Consider a practice of treating yourself with that same unconditional compassion and love.

Interpersonal: We **develop** relationships with other peoples, lands, and creatures, discovering our respective interests, and seeking to see the world from other points of view.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Think about the people you are most regularly in contact with. How deeply do you really know each other? Choose one person you are already close to and make an intentional effort to have a one-to-one conversation to get to know them more deeply.
- 2) Consider the place where you live — its land, flora, fauna and history. Take a moment to see the world through the point of view of the place itself (or you may more specifically see through the lens of an old tree or the soil, for example). What do you notice? How might you develop a deeper relationship with your place?
- 3) As you develop deeper relationships, what needs/hopes/values/interests do you have in common?

Faith Community: We disrupt the culture of isolation by **developing** relational cultures within and among diverse human communities, and between those communities and the natural world.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Developing a relational culture starts by articulating a common value of developing strong relationships, and by normalizing the practice of one-to-one conversations. How can your faith community raise relationship development to the level of a commonly shared value?
- 2) What might your community's first step be in normalizing the practice of one-to-one conversations? Are there smaller groups within the community who

can commit to making one-to-one conversations an expected part of their group's process?

- 3) Consider the existing ways the community interacts with other communities and with the natural world. Name some specific ways your community can intentionally deepen those existing relationships, as well as inviting new relationships.

Public Sphere: We **develop** relationships of accountability between diverse human communities and public leaders, for the sake of restoring public commitment to the common good and the community of creation.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Make a list of public leaders ranging from the very local to the global. Reflect on whom, to your knowledge, those leaders are accountable to. Who determines their priorities?
- 2) How do you currently participate in holding public leaders accountable? Have you ever, along with others, directly held public leaders accountable to the common good and the community of creation? What was that experience like?
- 3) Do some research on times when local citizens put public pressure on leaders to enact just and fair policies for the common good. Who was involved? How and why were they able to claim their power in that situation?

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.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Share a story of a time you felt God's presence at work in your life. How do you recognize God's presence in that story?
- 2) Share a story about a place in the natural world that is special to you. Why is it special? How do you recognize God's presence there?
- 3) Share a story about a time you recognized God's presence at work in someone else's life. How did you recognize God's presence in that story?

Personal: We **discover** the power of our own stories, and the ways our stories have been shaped by the land as well as our cultures, economies, religious traditions, political systems, and personal and collective histories.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Write or share several mini-autobiographies, tracing in broad brushstrokes the impact each of these forces had on your life and your family's life (note: this is not an exhaustive list by any means, just a place to start):
 - a) Lands/geographies in which you have lived
 - b) Ethnic/racial cultures you were born into and shaped by
 - c) Economic systems
 - d) Religious traditions
 - e) Political dynamics
 - f) Other significant forces particularly relevant to your experience

Interpersonal: We **discover** the transformative power of our stories by sharing our stories with others, and inviting others to share their stories with us, paying special attention to peoples and creatures whose stories have been silenced.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) If sharing our stories with one another has transformative power, how might I invite people to share their stories with me?
- 2) What are the qualities of a good listener? How do I know when someone is really listening to me and hearing what I am saying? What helps me feel empowered and free to share my story with others?
- 3) Do I practice deep listening and honoring of what others are saying? How do I actively create welcoming situations where others might feel courageous enough to share their stories, and where their stories will be heard and honored?

Faith Community: We **discover** common interests and the public dimensions of our stories through organized, focused listening seasons within and between our communities.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) A listening season is a time period (often 6 - 8 weeks) in which a faith community commits to having one-to-ones and group meetings with people for the specific purpose of hearing their stories about the pressures/issues they are struggling with, discovering common themes among the stories, and identifying the public dimensions of those stories in order to act together to help one another and the larger community. Have you ever participated in a focused listening season? What was it like?
- 2) In your own faith community, what do you imagine are the most prevalent pressures/issues people are dealing with? How might it benefit the community to find out about those pressures from the people themselves?

- 3) Are their neighboring faith communities, or other organizations, whom you would like to experience this process with? Which ones? Why?

Public Sphere: We **discover** our collective power by sharing our stories in the public arena to develop as community leaders and advance human and environmental justice.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Have you ever been to a public event in which you were moved by the story or testimony of someone on stage? Tell the story of that experience. How did the story change you?
- 2) In collective public actions, those kind of moving stories are not coming from strangers or celebrities, but from ordinary people, possibly even from your own neighborhood or faith community. Now imagine that the person who shared the story in the previous question was you, or someone you know — someone who had previously felt disempowered and yet found their voice and their power in their story. What feelings are evoked in you?
- 3) It can sometimes be hard to believe that our personal stories can generate enough collective power to change public policy, for example. What are the negative cultural messages you have heard about people sharing their stories in public? How might organizing our stories using the Practices for Awakening Leadership be different than the cultural messages you hear?

4) MENTOR One Another: Consciously draw out the gifts, wisdom and life-giving power of others, and share our own, by mentoring and being mentored.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Who in your life would you consider a mentor? How did they mentor you? What difference did that mentoring make in your life?
- 2) Have you ever formally or informally mentored someone? What were the circumstances? What impact did being a mentor have on you?
- 3) Is being a mentor a role you consider a regular or “normal” part of your life? What might change in your self-understanding, as well as your daily life, if you were to consider mentoring part of your vocation?

Personal: Recognizing the deeply relational nature of the universe, we acknowledge our need for **mentors** from the whole community of creation for the sake of own development as leaders.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Learning from the natural world and the whole community of creation may come naturally to some and be unfamiliar or awkward to others. Share some wisdom you have gained from the plant, animal or elemental world.
- 2) Imagine that there are invisible threads connecting everything we can imagine. Now imagine that each being has something to teach every other being. Who or what do you feel you have the most to learn from right now?
- 3) What assumptions or beliefs do you have that might get in the way of being mentored by the natural world? Do any of these come from your faith tradition? How might an earth-honoring faith encourage a willingness to be mentored by all creation?

Interpersonal: We are **mentored** by and **mentor** others, naming the gifts we recognize in one another, and inviting and extending constructive feedback for the sake of our mutual leadership development.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Name someone in your life who you might consider a mutual-mentor — someone with whom you can both give and receive attention, wisdom and feedback. What qualities of the relationship make this kind of co-mentoring possible?
- 2) Many people feel shame when receiving constructive feedback. Likewise, many of us are afraid to offer such feedback for fear of hurting someone. What helps you be willing and able to receive and grow from constructive feedback?
- 3) Brainstorm a list of things you can do or say to people you trust in order to open up the possibility for co-mentoring one another.

Faith Community: We seek to develop **mentoring** relationships and a culture of mutual-**mentoring** within all of our communities.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Many would argue that we live in a shame-based culture. Faith communities are no exception and can often amplify that shame-based culture. Begin to imagine what a culture of mutual-mentoring might look like in your faith community. How is co-mentoring talked about? How is it practiced? How is a mutual-mentoring culture nurtured?
- 2) Often people will only give us permission to give them constructive feedback if we have both invited such feedback and demonstrated gratitude for receiving such feedback ourselves. How might you intentionally invite and demonstrate gratitude for other people's constructive feedback?
- 3) Mentoring is not only about giving and receiving feedback but about drawing out the gifts, wisdom and power of others. Who from your faith community might you

want to support in letting their light shine and bringing their gifts, wisdom and power into the world?

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

Public Sphere: We seek out experienced leaders of public actions to **mentor**, challenge and teach us as we learn to express our power in the public arena.

- 1) Many of us can't imagine faith communities engaging in organized public actions because we have never experienced it ourselves. Is there anyone from your own faith community (or another one you know) who might have experience in this area? Set up a one-to-one conversation with them and see what you might learn.
- 2) In many communities there are community organizing efforts in which faith communities partner with other organizations to affect change. Research your own area and find out if any such organizations exist. An organizer can likely connect you with experienced leaders in the community.
- 3) Pay attention to local leaders. Who strikes you as a role model for the kind of leadership you long to activate within yourself or your faith community?

5) ACT together: Consciously engage the power of collective action, in the service of God's healing and justice-seeking work for human communities and the whole creation.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Share a story about a time you acted together with others for a larger purpose. What happened? How did it impact you?
- 2) In your experience, what kind of resistance did you encounter in the process? Was there external resistance? Internal resistance?
- 3) People often avoid working together on something important because conflicts and "messiness" so often arise in the process. Do you find that to be true for you? What helps you overcome that resistance?

Personal: We discern our unique call to participate with others in organized **actions**, for the sake of mending the brokenness in our communities, and restoring our connection to the places we live.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) When working for justice with others, we can often feel overwhelmed by the needs and pressured into doing "everything." Part of mending the brokenness of our communities is honoring the fact that we need each other — no one person can do it all, and we each have unique gifts to offer. What are some of the unique gifts and skills that you bring to God's healing justice work?
- 2) What part of God's healing justice work do you feel most passionately called to? Where does that passion come from? How does that connect with your own story? How might it feel to act only out of that passion and let go of other less-life-giving ways of participating?
- 3) Often participating in organized actions invites us to stretch into areas of growth that are uncomfortable or make us feel vulnerable. What might be an area of

uncomfortable growth for you? What support do you need to nurture that growing edge rather than turning away from it?

Interpersonal: As we recognize our deep interconnectedness with earth and diverse human communities, we identify our mutual interests, and we invite those close to us to join us in **acting** on those common interests.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) As children we often have experiences of acting together from common interests, but don't recognize them as such (e.g. going with a friend to talk to a teacher about something you both perceived as unfair.) Share a story about a time when you and others close to you acted together out of mutual interest/need.
- 2) As we develop deeper relationships with those close to us, those in our communities, and the natural world, more possibilities open up for acting together. Share a story about a time you participated in something (an event, e.g.), not because it was your primary passion, but because it was important to someone you love. What impact did your participation have on your relationship? On you?
- 3) In a culture that thrives on exacerbating differences between people, we can sometimes forget the common interests and needs we have. Though we can't speak for others, what are some basic human/earth needs that are likely shared people/beings vastly different from us?

Faith Community: We nurture relational cultures, identifying common interests and public issues affecting our communities, so that we are ready to **act** together to promote justice and healing for the whole community of creation.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Reflect on the readiness of your faith community to act together for justice and healing.
 - a) How strong are the relationships within the community?
 - b) How practiced are people at telling their stories and hearing other people's stories?
 - c) What kind of intentional listening process have we done? Have common interests been identified?
 - d) Do we have experienced leaders within or connected to the community who can mentor newer participants in acting together?
 - e) Have we done our research so we deeply understand the issues we are facing and our strategy for making change?
 - f) Are we staying grounded in our own faith tradition and rooted in the power of the indwelling God?

Public Sphere: We join or develop community organizing efforts, through which we identify mutual interests, research issues, conduct power analyses and **act** together to promote greater justice for human communities and the community of creation.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) No one faith community can act alone and hope to affect real change. What other faith communities or organizations might be or are partners in a local organizing effort?
- 2) If there is an existing community organizing effort, what steps do we need to take to discern our participation in that organization?
- 3) While working with other organizations or institutions is an opportunity and vehicle for affecting real change in our communities, it can also feel threatening to members within our own communities. What intentional steps can we take to continually weave the stories of the community members and the partners together?

6) REFLECT on our Actions: Consciously reflect upon and evaluate our actions and the ways we use power, in order to learn and grow into mature and courageous leaders.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

- 1) Do you have a regular practice of reflecting on the events of your day? If so, what is it? If not, what might that look like for you?
- 2) What helps you be reflective about your own actions without blaming and shaming yourself?
- 3) For everyone, but especially for people with some kind of privilege (economic, racial, gender, ability, for example), reflecting on the ways we use power is how we mature and learn how to live in a life-giving way with others. And yet such reflection on power is rare and very difficult to do in isolation. Begin by asking yourself, how did I use (or not use) my power today? Invite a trusted friend to answer this question as well.

Personal: We evaluate our actions and the ways we use or experience power, integrating what each experience has to teach us, by regularly **reflecting**, praying, and/or spending time in conscious relationship with the natural world.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

Interpersonal: We **reflect** with others on our actions, as well as our experience and use of power, gaining wisdom from diverse perspectives, and learning from one another.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

Faith Community: We create a culture of **reflection** and evaluation within our communities, regularly assessing power dynamics, and learning from our gatherings and actions, in order to mature as leaders and communities.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

Public Sphere: We collectively **reflect** on and evaluate the power dynamics of all public actions, including their impact on relationship development, leadership capacity, public systems, marginalized communities and the natural world.

Questions and Practices for Deeper Reflection:

7) RESTORE Balance: Consciously re-align our lives with the sacred and natural rhythms of Life expressed through the whole of God's creation.



Personal: We **restore** our bodies and spirits, practicing Sabbath and regaining a balance of work and rest, as modeled in Scripture and creation.

Interpersonal: We receive and offer support to one another as we seek to practice healthy rhythms and **restore** balance in our lives.

Faith Community: We incorporate Sabbath practices into the culture of our communities, honoring the limits of both human and earth's capacity, and our need for **restoration**.

Public Sphere: We intentionally practice healthy cycles of public engagement, participating in organized actions while also taking time to celebrate, grieve, and **restore** our energy, in keeping with the Sabbath rhythms of the God of creation.