

LESSON 19: Healing Meditation



REFERENCE

Page 142 [HEALING MEDITATIONS]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (2) TSM: 'The Sorrowful Mysteries'
- (3) Journals

AIM

- To allow learners to experience a Healing Meditation

OUTCOMES

- EXP Learners experience a healing meditation.
- DAP Learners appreciate this meditation style.

TEACHER'S NOTE

In this lesson and the following one you will lead the learners through a Healing Meditation exercise, designed to facilitate the healing of hurts and painful memories, and to free the person spiritually. After the exercise in Lesson 20 learners will be encouraged to analyse their experience, and to consider suggested steps for healing in prayer.

For the Healing Meditation to be successful, fruitful and effective you must create a quiet, prayerful atmosphere in the classroom.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Introduction

- Reflect with the learners on the following: since we live in a real and imperfect world, we are all at one time or another hurt by the events of life. These can be as insignificant as rain ruining a planned outing, to disappointment with school results, rejection by a friend, etc. We can handle it by either hiding it, or accepting it. The first strategy is dangerous because the hurt remains with us, and will influence our lives – often much later - in hidden ways. The second approach – acceptance - is difficult, and normally requires the assistance of others.
- Introduce the learners to the lesson: today we are going to try a method of accepting some of the hurts of daily living.

2 The Experience

- Tell the learners to clear their tables or desk in such a way that there is nothing that will distract them or take their attention away from the activity you want to do with them. If possible, have the learners sit in a circle that has a central focus.
- Ask everybody to be quiet and to call to mind the presence of God.
- When everybody is quiet, lead the learners through the exercise on the Lesson Materials page 'The Sorrowful Mysteries'.

3 Debriefing

If time permits and if the mood is correct ask the learners to share their experience, either in small groups, or with the class. Encourage them to journal their experience.

OTHER IDEAS

4 Healing of Hurtful Memories

This is a variation of Anthony De Mello's exercise 'The Sorrowful Mysteries'. Give learners the following instructions:

- i Return to some unpleasant event of the recent past, no matter how trying. Relive the experience.
- ii Now place yourself before Christ Crucified. Do not speak . . . only look and contemplate . . . If you must communicate, do so without words . . .
- iii Keep commuting between the unpleasant event and the scene of Jesus on the Cross for a few minutes . . .
- iv Then end the exercise.

(Anthony De Mello. 1978. Exercise 24 in *Sadhana: A Way to God*. Anand, India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, p 82)

5 Zen Meditation

Introduce the class to Zen Drawing. The principle behind the exercise is that we have only truly seen the things we've taken the time to draw. Make sure the learners are clear about the rules, otherwise what is essentially a meditative experience will degenerate into a mere drawing exercise. Emphasise that the product-on-paper is not what counts – and this is where the exercise can be used to focus on an important aspect of healing – that of non-judgement and acceptance. Our worth is not determined by what we produce, but by what we are. Furthermore, if entered into with the right disposition, the exercise itself creates in the person a sense of wholeness. Zen Drawing needs to be tried many times... Here are those rules:

1. You need pencil and paper-pad.
2. Sit outside, relaxed. Don't talk.
3. Select something in front of you - something simple.
4. Close your eyes for about five minutes.
5. Open your eyes and focus on what you selected beforehand.
6. Look it in the eye till you feel it's looking back at you: feel that only you and your subject exist, and that your subject is really important because it contains the riddles of life and death: now you are no longer looking but seeing.
7. Pencil in hand, focus on the subject and draw it. **DO NOT LOOK AT WHAT YOU ARE DRAWING, AND DO NOT LIFT THE PENCIL FROM THE PAGE.** Try not to draw with your mind but with your heart. Almost feel the subject with the point of your pencil - let the pencil follow what the heart's-eye sees. **IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THE DRAWING LOOKS LIKE!**

Naturally, silence is an essential condition for this exercise. Ask the class to articulate how the experience of silence (and of the exercise) affects them.

(Michael Burke. 1991. 'Zen drawing – instructions' 113 in *Connections*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 129-130)

MATERIALS

TEACHER

- Anthony De Mello. 1978. Exercise 19 in *Sadhana: A Way to God*. Anand, India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, p 67-69



Lesson Materials



The Sorrowful Mysteries

People sometimes carry with them wounds from the past that still rankle within their hearts. With the passage of time the rankling may no longer be felt. But the harmful effect of the wound, if it has not healed, will persist.

For instance, a child will be overwhelmed with grief at the loss of his mother. The grief may be repressed and forgotten. But it continues to influence the life of this child now become a man: he may find it hard to get close to people for fear he will lose them, or he may not be able to take in the love people are offering him, or he gradually loses interest in life and people in general because emotionally he is still standing at his mother's grave, refusing to let her go, demanding a love from her which she can no longer give him.

Or you may have been deeply hurt by a friend. The hurt turns into resentment that keeps smoldering within you and gets mixed up with the very genuine love you have for him, so that for some mysterious reason, the warmth goes out of your relationship with him.

Or something may have frightened you as a child, leaving an unpleasant memory and a propensity to fear and anxiety whenever you are faced with similar situations today.

Or you still carry around with you a feeling of guilt which you cannot get rid of and which serves no useful purpose.

It is helpful to return to the events that produced these negative feelings so as to drain them of any harmful effect they may be having on you today.

Return to some scene in the past where you have felt pain or grief or hurt or fear or bitterness . . . Relive the event . . . But this time seek and find the presence of the Lord in it . . . In what way is he present there ? . . .

Or, imagine that the Lord himself is taking part in the event . . . What role is he playing? . . . Speak to him.
Ask him the meaning of what is happening . . . Listen to what he says in reply . . .

It is a help to return to the event in imagination again and again until you are no longer affected by the negative feeling that is produced. Till you are able to let go of something that is causing you grief, to forgive someone who caused you pain, to face calmly what formerly caused you fright . . . Till you are able to re-live the event in peace. Possibly even with feelings of joy and gratitude.

It is quite possible/...

Lesson Materials



THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES (Cont)

It is quite possible that in reliving these events as I have suggested you will begin to understand that the Lord himself has had a hand in bringing them about . . . It is also likely that your feelings of resentment or anger or bitterness will then turn against him. If this happens it is important that you face these feelings and express them to the Lord without fear.

The Lord knows what is in your heart and nothing is achieved by hiding it. On the contrary, a frank expression of what you are feeling – even if you have to use bitter and hard words to express those feelings – will help to clear the atmosphere and will bring you closer to the Lord. It is wonderful that you should trust him so much, be so sure of his unconditional love for you that you can say hard things to him too! It is significant that Job in his sufferings said some very hard things to the Lord while his scandalized companions chided him and urged him to blame himself and not speak harshly about the Lord: but when the Lord finally appeared he exonerated Job and expressed displeasure with his well-meaning but insincere friends!

© Anthony De Mello. 1978. *Sadhana: A Way to God*. Anand, India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, p 67-69

LESSON 20: Stages of Healing



REFERENCE Page 142 –143[HEALING MEDITATIONS]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (2) Blank A4 Papers
- (2)(3) LSM: 'Healing of Memories'
- (2) Background music
- (4) LSM: 'The Enlightenment'

AIM

- To give learners a second experience of Healing Meditation, and to encourage their reflection on the process of healing

OUTCOMES

- EXP Learners experience a healing meditation.
- KUI Learners have an insight into how spiritual healing takes place .

TEACHER'S NOTE

This lesson begins with a second Healing Meditation experience. However it includes a time for reflection on the experience itself, and the healing that it hopes to initiate or facilitate. Again, make sure that you create a quiet and prayerful atmosphere in the classroom.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Introduction

Remind the learners that in the previous lesson (possibly some time ago) they did a healing meditation exercise. Ask them to recall this exercise and how they felt about it then. Indicate that today's lesson will provide them with another, different opportunity to consider healing meditations.

2 The Experience

- i Tell the learners to clear their tables or desk in such a way that there is nothing that will distract them or take their attention away from the activity you want to do with them.
- ii Distribute the Lesson Materials page 'Healing of Memories'.
- iii Ask everybody to be quiet and recall the presence of God. They could invite that presence, in prayer, to be more tangible to them.
- iv When everybody is quiet ask the learners to read quickly through the exercise 'Healing of Memories Square', and to ask for any necessary clarification.
- v Perhaps with restful background music playing, invite the learners to go through the steps of the exercise.

3 Steps in Praying for Healing

Draw the learners' attention to the steps in 'Praying for Healing' found on the Lesson Materials page already handed out. Together with the learners, reflect on the various stages or steps in the light of the meditation experience just concluded. Note particularly stages 5 and 6. This is not a quick fix method. Healing usually take time.

4 Conclusion

Provide each learner with the Lesson Materials page 'The Enlightenment'. It could be read silently by the learners to end the lesson, or used as a further exercise in healing meditation for them in their own time.

OTHER IDEAS

5 Healing of Memories Diamond

This exercise is very much like the 'Healing of Memories Square' in the Lesson Outline. Here however the focus is not on those who have hurt me, but on those I have hurt. Adapt the exercise as necessary. For instance you will need to change the language to include 'her'.

Look back at your life at the times you have hurt another.

- 1. Within the diamond write the names (initials) of 5 people you have hurt.*
- 2. Put a circle around those who are not closer to you now.*
- 3. Pick one of these. Tell Christ how you feel about hurting him. Be honest and get all the anger exposed for Christ to heal.*
- 4. When you can figure out why you may have hurt him, put a vertical line through his name (to indicate you were not reacting just to him but to other pressures too).*
- 5. When you feel that you can forgive both yourself and him to the degree that Christ has already forgiven both of you, draw a horizontal line through his name. Pray for a deepening of this.*
- 6. When you can see some good coming out of the hurt (some ways both you and he grew), X out his name.*
- 7. When you can think of some way to build a bridge to him, draw a triangle around his name. You have begun to forgive him and yourself and allowed God to enter the situation with His healing.*
- 8. Thank Christ for the growth and for beginning the healing.*
- 9. Add other memories to the diamond. Pick another hurt and repeat the process. Pick one that might be closer to the root memory.*
- 10. Hand over all the situations to Christ in confession, asking for forgiveness and a healing of the relationships.*

(Dennis Linn & Matthew Linn. 1974. Healing of Memories. New York : Paulist Press, p 96)

MATERIALS

LEARNER

- Dennis Linn & Matthew Linn. 1974. 'Healing of Memories Square' in *Healing of Memories*. New York: Paulist Press, p 94
- Michael Burke. 1991. 'Praying for Healing' 133 in *Connections*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 133
- Anthony De Mello. 1986. 'The Enlightenment' in *Wellsprings: A Book of Spiritual Exercises*. New York: Doubleday, p 53



Lesson Materials



Healing of Memories

On a blank sheet of paper draw a big square.

Slowly and prayerfully look back on your life at the times you were hurt.

1. Within the square write the names (initials) of 5 people who hurt you. (Think of whom you fear, avoid, judge harshly, etc.)
2. Put a circle around those who are not closer to you now. Pick one of these and tell Christ how you feel. Be honest and expose all.
3. When you can see why that person may have hurt you, put a vertical line through his name (to indicate the other pressures he faced).
4. When you feel that you can say what Christ would want to say to him, draw a horizontal line through his name.
5. When you can see that you were part of the problem and yet can forgive yourself as Christ has, make half an "X" through his name.
6. When you can see some good coming out of the hurt (at least 5 ways you grew), X it out. When you can think of some way to build a bridge to him, draw a triangle around his name. You have begun to forgive him and yourself and allow God to heal the situation.
7. Thank Christ for the growth and for beginning the healing.
8. Pick another hurt and repeat the process (be sure to add other memories to the square). Pick one that might be closer to the root memory.
9. Hand over all the situations to Christ in confession, asking for forgiveness and a healing of the relationships.

© Dennis Linn & Matthew Linn. 1974. 'Healing of Memories Square' in *Healing of Memories*. New York: Paulist Press, p 94

Praying for Healing

Steps suggested by Dennis and Matthew Linn in their book *Healing of Memories*

- 1 Thank Him for the gifts He gives me.
- 2 Ask the Lord what He wants to heal in me.
- 3 Share with Christ a painful memory that keeps me from getting healed.
- 4 Help Christ to take away hurt, anger, or other feelings that close me up, and help Him place in me the love of His Spirit by helping me forgive as He would those involved in the painful memory.
- 5 Continue to help Christ take away the hurt and accept the love of His Spirit by becoming thankful for that painful memory.
- 6 Thank God for healing and imagine myself acting in His healed way

© Michael Burke. 1991. 'Praying for Healing' 133 in *Connections*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 133

Lesson Materials



The Enlightenment

When I try to change what I dislike in me
by fighting it
I merely push it underground.
If I accept it,
it will surface and evaporate.
What I resist
will stubbornly persist.

I consider the example of Jesus, who sets himself the task of moving mountains
and battles with exasperating foes. Yet even in his anger he is loving – he
combines a keen desire for change with an acceptance of reality as it is.

I try to be like him.
I start with feelings I dislike.
To each of them I talk
in a loving, accepting kind of way
and listen to what each has to say,
till I discover that, while it can do me harm,
it also does me good,
that it is there for a benign purpose,
which I now attempt to see.

I keep on with the dialogue
till I feel a real acceptance of these feelings
– acceptance, not approval, not resignation –
so that I am no longer depressed about my depressions
or angry with my anger
or discouraged because of my discouragement
or frightened of my fears
or rejecting of my feelings of rejection.
I can live with them in peace
for I have seen that God can use them for my good.

I do the same
with some of the many other things about my life
that I want to change:

My body's disabilities . . .

My personal shortcomings . . .

The external circumstances of my life/ . . .

Lesson Materials



THE ENLIGHTENMENT (Cont)

The external circumstances of my life . . .

The happenings of the past . . .

The persons with whom I live . . .

The whole world as it is . . .

Old age, sickness, death.

I speak to them with love
and the consciousness that they somehow fit
into God's plan.

In doing so I undergo a transformation:
while everything about me is the same
– the world, my family, my feelings,
my body, my neuroses –
I am the same no longer.
I am more loving now,
more accepting of what is undesirable.
More peaceful, too,
for having come to see
that violence cannot lead to lasting change
– only love and understanding can.

© Anthony De Mello. 1986. *Wellsprings: A Book of spiritual Exercises*. New York: Doubleday, p 53

LESSON 21: The Examen



REFERENCE

Page 143 – 144[ADVANCED
PERSONAL SPIRITUAL CHECK –UPS]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) (3) Journals or RE Books
- (2) LSM: 'Ports of Entry'
- (2) Bibles
- (3) LSM: 'The Examen of Consciousness'

AIM

- To introduce learners to the discernment exercise called 'the examen'

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners know the steps in the examen exercise.
- SKL Learners are able to implement this exercise in their own lives.

TEACHER'S NOTE

Lessons, 3, 4 and 5 are closely linked. They are all concerned with means of keeping in touch with our spiritual lives. An examen is an exercise intended to help the practitioner to discern God's presence in the midst of their daily life. God's presence can be thought of as invitation or gentle nudging; it can also take more dramatic and disturbing forms. But – and this is the key – we can only recognise these invitations if we are open to them – i.e. by cultivating a disposition of openness to God.

This lesson introduces learners to the examen to help them recognise and respond to God's loving invitations in all their daily activities. If it is done often, the practitioner may only need 5-10 minutes to complete an examen. But your class is likely to need most of the lesson.

Suggest to the learners that they briefly write their responses to the questions in the examen process. They may wish to do this in their journals.

Some learners may have difficulty in recognising God's presence in their lives. In this case, you might like to begin the lesson with the Learners Materials page, 'Ports of Entry'.

Learners from faith background other than Christian might be able to adapt the examen steps to their own experience. The simplest way to try this, is to invite them to substitute their own name for God wherever there are references to 'God', 'Holy Spirit', and 'Jesus Christ'.

LESSON OUTLINE

I Reflection

- i Ask the class to reflect upon these questions in silence: Where did you find God communicating with you in some way today, yesterday, last week? Were you able to hear? How did you respond?
- ii Encourage them to write their answers in their RE Books or Journals. No sharing.

2 Ports of Entry

This exercise may be omitted if you want more time for the examen exercise, and if the learners are familiar in some way with these ways through which God communicates with human beings.

- i Arrange the class into small groups.
- ii Give the learners the Lesson Materials page 'Ports of Entry'.
- iii Ask them to read Part A.
- iv Provide each group with a Bible or ask them to take out their own if they have them.
- v Ask the groups to read the scripture passages in Part B and to link them to each port. (See below.)

Intellect / mind Isaiah 55: 8 – 9

Will Luke 1: 26 – 38

Emotions Mark 4: 35 – 41

Imagination 1 Samuel 3: 3 – 19

Memory Psalm 103: 1 – 5

3 Examen

- i Before leading the learners in an examen exercise, remind them of the importance of pausing and remembering the presence of God in our daily lives. Even though it is difficult to stop our daily rush, we need to set aside time to hear the God of love, saying to us: "I love you." We need to stop so that we can be conscious of God in our lives.
- ii Provide each learner with the Lesson Materials page 'The Examen of Consciousness'
- iii Create an atmosphere of prayer and then lead the learners through the examen. Do not rush it.
- iv You may wish to encourage them to write down some thoughts, reactions, feelings etc, in their RE Books or Journals.

OTHER IDEAS

4 Other Models

If you know and understand clearly other models of the examen exercises, you may prefer to use one in place of the one provided here.

5 Invite a Speaker

Invite a speaker to come to your school and address your learners about the importance of meditation.

MATERIALS

LEARNER

- Michael Burke. 1991. 'Examen of Consciousness' 134 in *Connections*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 133
- CIE. 2005. 'Ports of Entry'



Lesson Materials



Ports of Entry

Part A

God uses five 'ports of entry' to 'speak' to us:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Our Mind/Intellect | Let God put ideas into your mind
Ask God for his thoughts
How does God see "X" |
| Our Will | Ask God to strengthen your will to react to God's way |
| Our Emotions | Allow God to reach you through calm or turbulence. |
| Our Imagination | Let God put words in your mind; hear God's voice in the voice or your imagination. |
| Our Memory | All I ask of you is to remember me as loving you. |

Part B

Below are five scripture passages which can be linked to each of these 'ports of entry'. Read the passages and then write down next to each scripture reference that port to which it refers:

Passage	Corresponding Port
1 Sam 3, 3 – 19	
Lk 1, 26 – 38	
Mk 4, 35 – 41	
Ps 103, 1- 5	
Is 55, 8 – 9	

Lesson Materials



The Examen of Consciousness

Steps for a daily spiritual exercise (compiled from unknown sources, but the basic idea is a well-established tradition)

1. Presence

Relax in the presence of God – try to be aware of his loving presence in you and around you.

2. Thanks

Thank him for his gifts (especially those received since your last Examen).

Perhaps ask yourself:

- What have I got to be grateful for today?
- How much have I taken for granted?
- What has made me feel ungrateful or dissatisfied?
- Am I becoming more grateful and contented?

3. Prayer for Light

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the light to see your life as God is it.

4. Examination

Ask yourself how you have been responding to God's loving action in your life.

Some of these questions may help:

- How was I drawn to God today? a friend, an event, a book, the beauty of nature?
- Have I learnt anything today about God and his ways? In ordinary occasions, in spare moments?
- Did I meet God today in fears, joys, work, misunderstandings, weariness, suffering?
- Have I in any way been a sign of God's presence and love to the people I met today
- Did I go out to the lonely, the sorrowful, the discouraged, the needy?
- Was I aware of God's work in my own locality, my country, in the wider world, in the Church?
- Have I had a keener sense of being loved, of sinfulness, of dependence, of desire to give back what I have received?
- Is there some part of my life still untouched by Jesus Christ – an area in which he is calling me to a change of heart?

5./...

Lesson Materials

THE EXAMEN OF CONSCIOUSNESS (cont)

5. Sorrow

Express your sorrows to God for the ways in which you have failed to respond to his love at work in you. Note that pride (= a subtle belief that I manage without God) is likely to be the greatest 'block' here; and don't overlook spiritual pride (= a subtle belief that God's gifts make me better than other people).

6. Hope for the Future

Focus on the future. Know that all the events and contacts of the hours or days ahead will be full of gifts and full of their Giver. Set your mind and heart to be more aware of this. Be conscious of which parts of your life particularly call for the Lord's healing and protection. Face the future with hope in the Lord who raises you up from your weakness.

LESSON 22: Journalling



REFERENCE

Page 144[ADVANCED PERSONAL SPIRITUAL CHECK – UPS]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (2) Blank paper
- (2) RE Books or Journals

AIM

- To remind the class about journalling and to encourage them to develop the practice

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners have a clear understanding of journalling.
- DAP Learners are committed to the practice of journalling.

TEACHER'S NOTE

The idea of journalling was introduced in Grade 10 Spiritual Education. This lesson is an opportunity to revisit the idea, and to encourage the practice. In this lesson emphasise journalling's potential in the area of spiritual evaluation or check-up. Talking about journalling is not the main objective, though the lesson spends some time reflecting on the practice before introducing an experience.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Recapitulation

In the Grade 10 programme, journalling was introduced and the learners had some experience of it. Very few are likely to have committed themselves to practice it, so, taking nothing for granted, begin by recalling their experience of it. Discuss what journalling is, and what value it has for spiritual growth. Here are some ideas:

- A journal is a personal written reflection on a particular idea, passage, experience or event.
- It is a tool that can help you to discover and internalise the meaning of what you want to reflect on.
- It takes a little time and a little patience, but you will most likely find the results worth the effort.
- Remember the journal is yours – keep it safe – and write for yourself only.
- Journalling is not creative writing – it is a way (through words, graphs, drawings, etc) of putting down on paper what's floating around in our heads and hearts so that we can consider it in new ways – perhaps even some years later.

2 Spiritual Graph

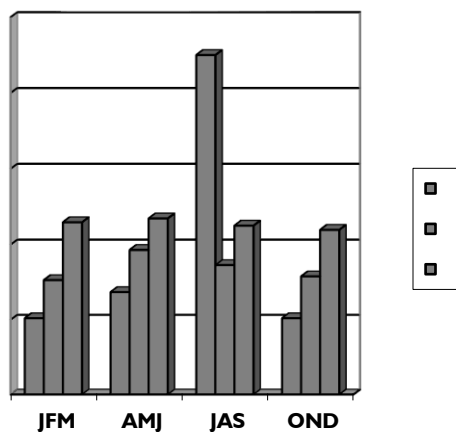
Take the learners through the following exercise. One way of drawing the graph is indicated below. Depending on when you are doing the exercise, the months on the horizontal axis will have to be changed accordingly so that the graph has a year's spread, starting and ending with the months in question.

- Draw a graph of your spiritual journeys (i.e. closeness to God and/or Jesus) over the past year and ending at the present time.

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- ii Reflect on the graph and write a journal entry containing your thoughts and feelings about the graph and what it represents.
- iii Choose someone with whom you would like to share your graph. Share the graph in turn; and then share also,
 - a. the high point of your spiritual awareness right now, and
 - b. your greatest spiritual need at this moment.

(Di Scott. 1984. *Youth Ministry in Time of Crisis*. Cape Town: Di Scott, p 154)



Graph - Closeness to God

OTHER IDEAS

3 The Risen Jesus

Remind the class that God is present.

- i Read, or have someone else read, Luke 24: 36 – 45. Other learners should all follow in their own bibles.
- ii Then invite the class to reflect in silence on the reading.
- iii After some time pose the following questions for them to reflect upon:
- iv The appearance of the Risen Jesus was a wondrous event for the Apostles. Reflect on some key events in your life, events that really caused you to grow. How have you grown because of these events?
- v After a few minutes of reflecting, invite the learners to write down their own personal thoughts, feeling etc, in their RE books or Journals. These will NOT be shared.

4 Peter's Denial

- i Read Luke 22: 54 – 62. Other learners should all follow in their own bibles.
- ii Then invite the class to reflect in silence on the reading.
- iii After some time pose the following questions for them to reflect upon:
 - a) When have you had the experience of denying what you believed in because of human pressures? When did you act like Peter?
 - b) What did you learn from the denial?
 - c) How did that exchange affect you?
- iv After a few minutes of reflecting, invite the learners to write down their own personal thoughts, feeling etc. These will NOT be shared.

MATERIALS

- There are no further materials provided for this lesson.



LESSON 23: Spiritual Direction



REFERENCE

Page 143 – 145 [ADVANCED
PERSONAL SPIRITUAL CHECK – UPS]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) Information about professionals and their coaches
- (3)(4) LSM: 'Companions on the Journey'

AIM

- To revisit the concept of spiritual direction, and to help the learners identify the qualities of a spiritual director

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners understand spiritual direction.
- DAP Learners appreciate the need for a spiritual director.

TEACHER'S NOTE

The purpose of this lesson is to help the learners identify the kind of person who makes for a good spiritual director. Learners could also be encouraged to find such a director, though it is more likely seen by them as an adult decision.

BACKGROUND

Among the resources available to a Christian to deepen the journey with Christ is spiritual direction. It can be defined as a relationship of personal trust, in which God leads someone to follow a course of spiritual growth and life directed by another pilgrim further advanced in the journey.

It is different from pastoral counselling in that solving of problems is not its main goal. It is the care of the spiritually healthy person and it is a way of life for many Christians. It is one of the normal ministries of the church, and is available to anyone.

Not everyone is led by God to use spiritual direction. Still rarer are the gifts needed to be a director. Spiritual direction is for those who are ready to work at their calling to growth. Motivation is not the ministry of the spiritual director. The calling to spiritual growth needs to be already there.

Each child of God is potentially growing in spirit. It has been often compared to the growth of a flower. At first there is a little shoot, which has the potential to grow into a larger plant with leaves, and finally a bud for the flower. This blossoming is the culmination of a patient process in which many things are needed. The flower is the goal in a sense, but in order for the growth to happen, the seedling, then the young plant, then the bud, need to be taken seriously as what they are. They need to be nurtured, and watered.

Spiritual direction is one way to help people take seriously who they are now, in the midst of sins and needful of development. Just as a plant doesn't need to design its flower but just to trustingly blossom by a plan beyond itself, so God has planned the spiritual beauty of each of us. Spiritual growth is our acceptance of who we are. It is opening ourselves to God in the faith that God has planned us well.

http://www.anglicancursillo.com/spiritual_direction.htm

The ministry of spiritual direction also dates from the earliest centuries of Christian life and comes to us first from the desert fathers and mothers. The starting point is the person as he or she is now, but the goal is to help a person come to profound union with God. Some of the "Sayings of the Fathers and Mothers" are as useful today as they were in the third and fourth centuries:

- *Give concrete advice to simple questions.*
 - *Give comfort and support, solace and reassurance; never stand in judgement.*
 - *Do not burden the person with such high ideals that he or she becomes discouraged.*
 - *Help the person bring his or her desires to consciousness because once they are acknowledged, they are no longer dangerous.*
 - *Enter the minds and the heart; of the persons; let them find their own way, their own answers.*
 - *Silence too can be an answer. Spiritual direction is not the place for theological debates!*
- The spiritual director too must be suffused by the Spirit, body and soul. The gift of discernment is absolutely essential. A director must be well-versed in both the mysteries of God and the mysteries of the human heart. One needs a long time in the desert dealing with one's own demons. Care for those one directs includes prayer for them. All of this wisdom continues to be part of the treasure of the Church today.*

(Sr Susan Rakoczy. *Trefoil 3*, 1996, p 7)

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Sportsmen/Sportswomen & Artists

Top professionals in sport and the performing arts have their personal coaches or directors. Identify one or two such professionals that your learners might admire and find out about their coaches and what they do for them. Present this to the class.

2 Spiritual Direction

Life is a journey, and we can think of the spiritual director as life's tour guide or coach. Introduce this idea to the class, using ideas from the background material given in the Teacher's Note above. Make the following points:

- In the same way that we try to grow and develop in other aspects of our lives, we should also try and grow and develop in our spiritual lives.
- Spiritual direction can be defined as a relationship of personal trust, in which God leads someone to follow a course of spiritual growth and life directed by another pilgrim further advanced in the journey.
- Spiritual direction is one way to help people take seriously who they are now.
- At some time in our lives we might be led to choose a spiritual director to guide us. (Later in the lesson you will ask the learners if they can think of people who are spiritual directors – or who they think would make good spiritual directors.)

3 Spiritual Director

- i Draw out from the learners the kind of support one receives from a friend. A friend is one who walks with me, who listens, who supports and who corrects. We have many who take on this role – classmates, friends, brothers and sisters, parents, teachers. Each of these supports us in a different way.
- ii Question: Who supports us on the spiritual journey? We do need this support. We cannot walk this alone. Do we have somebody who can do this for us?
- iii Discuss the following at class level. Again use the background material in the Teacher's Note to assist you.
 - What type of person would we look for as a spiritual director?
 - What are some of the characteristics the person would need?

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- What would we expect the person to do?
- What would be realistic frequency of meeting?
- iv Distribute the Lesson Materials page 'Companion on the Journey' and invite the learners to read the sections 'Spiritual Direction' and 'Spiritual Director' by way of consolidating their ideas.

4 Who Walks with Me?

Though it is, in most cases, too earlier to encourage learners to find a spiritual director, it is still a good idea to get them thinking about the people in their lives who have the necessary qualities. The gifts of the Spirit include four that are necessary for spiritual direction, namely knowledge, understanding, wisdom and counsel or right judgement. Ask the learners to respond to the following questions which are contained on the Lesson Materials page:

- i Name two persons who, in your judgement, know about the spiritual journey from their own experience.
- ii Name three persons you know who seem to have the gift of understanding – who understand people and how persons grow spiritually.
- iii Name two persons you consider truly wise in the decisions they make.
- iv Name the persons you usually turn to for advice when you have an important decision to make.
- v Does any one person stand out from all of this?

5 Sharing

Invite the learners to share any thoughts they may have had during the lesson about spiritual direction and a spiritual director.

OTHER IDEAS

6 Hymn

Invite learners to sing a song, such as 'Walk with me, O my Lord', 'Companions on the Journey', or any song that is relevant to the topic under discussion.

7 Invite a Speaker

Invite a speaker who has an experience on spiritual direction to come to your school and speak to your learners about the importance of having a spiritual director or companion in faith.

8 Imaginative Prayer

- i Create a climate of prayer and silence in the room. Get the learners to relax – that does not mean sleep – and lead them through an imaginary journey, based upon the story of the two disciples of Jesus on the Road to Emmaus. Slowly and quietly, pausing between words and lines at // marks. You may wish to add further details if you think them appropriate.
 - Imagine you and a friend walking home along the road. //
 - Become aware of the road, // the weather, // the trees, // any other travellers.
 - Become aware of your feelings as you recall the events of the death of a mutual friend.//
 - You talk to your companion about this death. What are you saying?//
 - How is the friend feeling? //
 - What does he think? //
 - A stranger joins you. // How do you feel about this intrusion? //
 - You tell him what you are talking about. // How does he react? //
 - Listen to him. He seems to know what you are talking about. //
 - What are your feelings? // How do you respond? //

GRADE 11 Spirituality

- As he leaves you, you experience a flash of recognition – he is your mutual friend! How do you feel about that? // What does your friend say, think, feel? //
- What do you do about this amazing realisation? //
- ii Bring the learners' consciousness back to the room.
- iii Allow the learners to share in small groups. Then take a few brief comments or sharing from the class.

MATERIALS

- CIE. 2005. 'Companions on the Journey'



Lesson Materials



Companion on the Journey

#Spiritual Direction

Among the resources available to a Christian to deepen the journey with Christ is spiritual direction. It can be defined as a relationship of personal trust, in which God leads someone to follow a course of spiritual growth and life directed by another pilgrim further advanced in the journey.

#Spiritual Director

Some of the "Sayings of the Fathers and Mothers" are as useful today as they were in the third and fourth centuries:

- Give concrete advice to simple questions.
- Give comfort and support, solace and reassurance; never stand in judgement.
- Do not burden the person with such high ideals that he or she becomes discouraged.
- Help the person bring his or her desires to consciousness because once they are acknowledged, they are no longer dangerous.
- Enter the minds and the heart; of the persons; let them find their own way, their own answers.
- Silence too can be an answer. Spiritual direction is not the place for theological debates!

The spiritual director too must be suffused by the Spirit, body and soul. The gift of discernment is absolutely essential. A director must be well-versed in both the mysteries of God and the mysteries of the human heart. One needs a long time in the desert dealing with one's own demons. Care for those one directs includes prayer for them. All of this wisdom continues to be part of the treasure of the Church today.

#My Companion?

- Name two persons who, in your judgement, know about the spiritual journey from their own experience.
- Name three persons you know who seem to have the gift of understanding – who understand people and how persons grow spiritually.
- Name two persons you consider truly wise in the decisions they make.
- Name the persons you usually turn to for advice when you have an important decision to make.
- Does any one person stand out from all of this?

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