

Centering Prayer

1. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, *settle* briefly, and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.
3. When engaged with your thoughts,* return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

**Thoughts include body sensations, feelings, images, and reflections.*

Centering Prayer Guidelines

- I. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.**
 - The sacred word expresses our intention to consent to God's presence and action within.
 - The sacred word is chosen during a brief period of prayer to the Holy Spirit. Use a word of one or two syllables, such as: God, Jesus, Abba, Father, Mother, Mary, Amen. Other possibilities include: Love, Listen, Peace, Mercy, Let Go, Silence, Stillness, Faith, Trust.
 - Instead of a sacred word, a simple inward glance toward the Divine Presence, or noticing one's breath, may be more suitable for some persons. The same guidelines apply to these symbols as to the sacred word.
 - The sacred word is sacred not because of its inherent meaning, but because of the meaning we give it as the expression of our intention to consent.
 - Having chosen a sacred word, we do not change it during the prayer period because that would be engaging thoughts.
- II. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, *settle* briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.**
 - "Sitting comfortably" means relatively comfortably so as not to encourage sleep during the time of prayer.
 - Whatever sitting position we choose, keep the back straight.
- III. When engaged with your thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.**
 - We close our eyes as a symbol of letting go of what is going on around and within us.
 - We introduce the sacred word inwardly as gently as laying a feather on a piece of absorbent cotton.
 - If we fall sleep, we simply continue the prayer upon awakening.
 - "Thoughts" is an umbrella term for every perception, including body sensations, sense perceptions, feelings, images, memories, plans, reflections, concepts, commentaries, and spiritual experiences.
 - Thoughts are an inevitable, integral and normal part of Centering Prayer.
 - By "returning ever-so-gently to the sacred word" a minimum of effort is indicated. This is the only activity we initiate during the time of Centering Prayer.
 - During the course of Centering Prayer, the sacred word may become vague or disappear.
- IV. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.**
 - The additional two minutes enables us to bring the atmosphere of silence into everyday life.
 - If this prayer is done in a group, the leader may slowly recite a prayer, such as the Lord's Prayer, while the others listen.