

Jesus Centering Prayer: Small Group Guide

Purpose: This one-page guide facilitates a small group discussion and practice after watching the *Centering Prayer* video, helping participants explore this contemplative prayer practice.

Welcome (5 minutes)

- **Icebreaker:** "What is the longest you've ever sat in total silence? What was that experience like—peaceful, awkward, or something else?"
 - "Who is the person in your life with whom you are most comfortable being silent? Why do you think that is?"
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Opening Discussion (10 minutes)

1. **When you think about just being with God without words or agenda, what comes to mind?**
 - How does the idea of “holding God’s hand” (like a walk with a loved one) resonate with you?
2. **What challenges do you anticipate in practicing Centering Prayer?**
 - Why might distractions (like the “goldfish” analogy) be a normal part of this practice?

Quote to Discuss: *Mother Teresa* – When asked what she says in prayer, she replied, “I don’t say anything. I just listen.” When asked what God says, she answered, “Nothing. He just listens, too.”

- What does this exchange suggest about the nature of Centering Prayer?
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Key Insights (10 minutes)

What is Centering Prayer?

- A practice of resting in God’s presence, not asking or doing, but being.
- **Scripture:** *Psalm 46:10 (NIV)* – “Be still and know that I am God.”
 - How does this verse inspire you to seek stillness with God?

Handling Distractions:

- Distractions are normal. Use a sacred word (e.g., “Jesus”) or image (e.g., sitting by a river with Jesus) to refocus.
- **St. Francis de Sales:** “If all you do is return to God’s presence after distraction, then this is very good prayer.”
 - How does this encouragement shift your view of “success” in prayer?

Scripture: *Psalm 62:1-2 (NIV)* – “Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.”

- How does this scripture encourage you to trust in God’s presence during Centering Prayer?
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Practice Together (10 minutes)

Group Practice (5 minutes):

1. Sit comfortably in silence.
2. Read *Psalm 62:1-2* aloud once or twice.
3. Choose a sacred word (e.g., “Jesus,” “Love”) to anchor your focus.
4. Spend 5 minutes in Centering Prayer, gently returning to your word when distracted.

Debrief (5 minutes):

- What was it like to sit in God’s presence?
 - How did distractions feel, and how did returning to your word or image work for you?
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Application and Closing (10 minutes)

- **Discussion Questions:**
 - Does your life include moments of stillness with God? How might Centering Prayer fit into your routine?
 - How could this practice (reducing stress, improving focus) impact your daily life?
- **Group Challenge:** Commit to practicing Centering Prayer for 5-10 minutes daily this week. Share your chosen sacred word or image and why you picked it.
- **Grace Analogy:** Centering Prayer is like being under anesthesia, letting the Great Surgeon (God) work His grace in you. How does this image encourage you?

Closing Prayer:

Loving God, help us rest in Your presence, trusting You are near even in distractions. Teach us to be still and know You are God, shaping us by Your love. Amen.