



Weaving faith into everyday life through the value of...**COMMUNITY**

A community is a group of people who have something in common. Each family, school, neighborhood and team is a community. Can you name any others? Wonder what God's love has to do with community.

Connecting Faith with COMMUNITY



Jesus and the disciples were a 'community'. At their last meal together, Jesus showed the disciples by example how to love each other. **Read the story from John 13:1-17.**

Imagine being there. Wonder what you would have done.

Later, Jesus shared an important rule for living. **Read John 13:34.** Jesus' command to love one another is how we are to be in community. Tell about a time that someone in one of the communities you named earlier showed love to you. What was that like?

Faith practice: The Bible is filled with ways that we can love one another. Here are some of them: encourage, forgive, serve, don't judge, care for and be kind to one another. What else would you add? Choose a "one another" to focus on for a week or month. Write it down so you'll remember. Later, share your experiences with each other.



Be-ing Community

Look around. Is there someone within your community who could use a friend or a helping hand? Are there newcomers in need of a welcome? List some names and make a plan. Some ideas to get you started: organize a picnic or a playdate, create or join a community garden, make or bake something to share, organize a soccer game, participate in a park clean-up, invite others to join you in making art with sidewalk chalk and blowing soap bubbles. What will you do?



Breath Prayer

Begin by getting comfortable – perhaps by placing your hands on your heart or loosely open in front of you and taking a few deep breaths together. Inhale while silently praying the first phrase, exhale on the second phrase, and repeat.

I live each day (inhale) in community (exhale). Help me love others (inhale) as you have loved me (exhale).





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Between---the---Seams

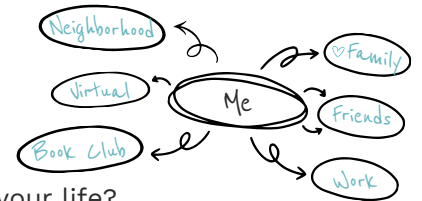
Slow down enough to see where love and God are already moving.

What communities are you a part of? How is God at work in them? How might God be calling you? Here are two fun ways to engage with those questions. Try one (or both!) ideas this month.

1. Grab a few moments to yourself, a sheet of paper and something to write with: pen, coloring pencils, markers; it's up to you. Using circles, lines or other shapes, make a visual drawing or map of the groups you're connected to.

After drawing your map, reflect:

- What do you give to and receive from each community?
- What hopes and dreams do you have for each community?
- Which communities do you want to spend more time in? Less time?
- Are there communities missing from this map that you wish existed in your life?



End with a doodle prayer – as you doodle around the name of a particular community, ponder the ways that you've seen God at work in that space...and where God might be calling you.

2. Choose a part of your community to explore by walking, biking or driving. Go slowly and pay attention. What things, people, spaces, nature do you notice and experience? Meditate on things you notice – both things you lament and things you celebrate. How and where is God working in this community?

Prayer

The Examen is a form of prayer that is usually done at the end of the day to reflect on the day and to prepare for tomorrow. The version below has four parts. If you find the format helpful, you could use those four parts as a simple prayer guide in the future too.

Breathe. Get comfortable. Breathe deeply. Become aware of God's presence.

Review the day with gratitude. Reflect on 1-2 ways in which a community connection positively impacted you today.

Reflect. How did you engage with others? How were you present in an affirming way? Were there ways you were less present? Spend time in prayer, seeking grace and understanding.

Look forward. How would you like to be present for various groups or people? What do you wish or hope for them? Ask God to give you capacity, wisdom and opportunity to be a positive influence on specific communities around you.