

SESSION 4

Scripture: Ruth 1:1-22

¹ ¹⁻² Once upon a time—it was back in the days when judges led Israel— there was a famine in the land. A man from Bethlehem in Judah left home to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The man's name was Elimelech; his wife's name was Naomi; his sons were named Mahlon and Kilion—all Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They all went to the country of Moab and settled there.

³⁻⁵ Elimelech died and Naomi was left, she and her two sons. The sons took Moabite wives; the name of the first was Orpah, the second Ruth. They lived there in Moab for the next ten years. But then the two brothers, Mahlon and Kilion, died. Now the woman was left without either her young men or her husband.

⁶⁻⁷ One day she got herself together, she and her two daughters-in-law, to leave the country of Moab and set out for home; she had heard that GOD had been pleased to visit his people and give them food. And so she started out from the place she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law with her, on the road back to the land of Judah.

⁸⁻⁹ After a short while on the road, Naomi told her two daughters-in-law, "Go back. Go home and live with your mothers. And may GOD treat you as graciously as you treated your deceased husbands and me. May GOD give each of you a new home and a new husband!" She kissed them and they cried openly.¹⁰



They said, "No, we're going on with you to your people."

¹¹⁻¹³ But Naomi was firm: "Go back, my dear daughters. Why would you come with me? Do you suppose I still have sons in my womb who can become your future husbands? Go back, dear daughters—on your way, please! I'm too old to get a husband. Why, even if I said, 'There's still hope!' and this very night got a man and had sons, can you imagine being satisfied to wait until they were grown? Would you wait that long to get married again? No, dear daughters; this is a bitter pill for me to swallow—more bitter for me than for you. GOD has dealt me a hard blow."

¹⁴ Again they cried openly. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye; but Ruth embraced her and held on.

¹⁵ Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law is going back home to live with her own people and gods; go with her."

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ But Ruth said, "Don't force me to leave you; don't make me go home. Where you go, I go; and where you live, I'll live. Your people are my people, your God is my god; where you die, I'll die, and that's where I'll be buried, so help me GOD—not even death itself is going to come between us!"

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ When Naomi saw that Ruth had her heart set on going with her, she gave in. And so the two of them traveled on together to Bethlehem.

When they arrived in Bethlehem the whole town was soon buzzing: "Is this really our Naomi? And after all this time!"

²⁰⁻²¹ But she said, "Don't call me Naomi; call me Bitter. The Strong One has dealt me a bitter blow. I left here full of life, and GOD has brought me back with nothing but the clothes on my back. Why would you call me Naomi? God certainly doesn't. The Strong One ruined me."

²² And so Naomi was back, and Ruth the foreigner with her, back from the country of Moab. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

-Prayer of the Day-

Loving Spirit, You are active and alive, always moving and stirring within and around us! Please be an encouraging wind at our backs, giving us open minds and soft hearts to follow where you lead. Make us flexible and present in each moment that we might embrace compassion by letting go of what we expected. Amen.



Who in your life are you closest to?
Reflect on what about them draws you to them, and what about your relationship works or doesn't.

Reflect

What does it mean to BE with someone in their hurt?
Have you ever done this?
What was it like for you?
Have you ever let someone be with you in your hurt? How did you feel about letting someone in that space with you?

Think of a time when you grieved a person you loved; what was something that you needed from people around you?

Think of a person who sat with you during your grief; what about them was helpful (or not)?

Create



God Moments
photo album on
your phone.

Each time you encounter God in the world,
snap a photo and put it in the album.

Any time you are low and need a
pick-me-up, look at your photo
album full of God's love in the
world around you.

Start your album out by taking a walk outside



Start a journal entry written directly to some you love. Tell them what about them you love and why. Thank them for the addition they are in your life. Tell them what they mean to you.

After you finish, reflect: Is this something you could send to this person? If so... you should!

Everyone loves receiving snail mail! Think of some you know who might appreciate a note! Grab a postcard or notecard and send it their way! It is a quick and easy way to show we appreciate someone.



YOGA



Yoga began as a spiritual practice in ancient India, centering on bringing the mind, body, and spirit into oneness with the Divine. This meaningful practice has grown globally, with people of all faiths and belief systems finding nourishment in different variations - a powerful reminder of how we learn from one another. When we say, "Namaste," we connect with siblings across the world.

Breathing is the heart of yoga, and breath itself is a physical way to receive and release. As we reflect on the ways compassion makes us release, accept, and welcome, we will focus on breath alongside some basic yoga poses.

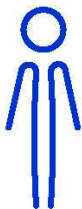


Sit on the floor, legs crossed. Take three deep, slow breaths together, with one person saying the following during inhales and exhales:

INHALE: *With an open heart...*
EXHALE: *I am present to the Spirit within and around me.*

INHALE: *With an open heart...*
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INHALE: *With an open heart...*
EXHALE: *I am present to the Spirit within and around me.*



Slowly rise, stand in mountain pose (Tadasana), arms straight and strong by your side, feet firmly planted on the ground. One big breath in, one big breath out. One person can say:

"In mountain pose, we feel our strength. We are unshakeable."

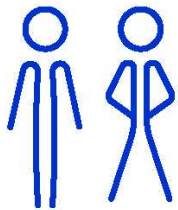
Let Your Heart be Flexible...



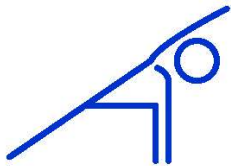
Reach your arms up to the sky, then back down as you bend into forward fold (Uttanasana), hands on the ground or resting on your shins (wherever is comfortable). Take a breath in and raise your hands to your knees, head looking forward. One person can say:

"We prepare and focus our eyes forward."

Take a breath, and put your hands back to the ground in forward fold.

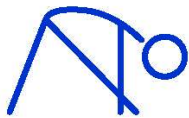


Roll your back up and rise to mountain pose. Turn to face sideways on your mat (if using). Step (or jump!) your feet apart into a V with hands on your hips. Turn your left toes slightly in, and point your right foot forward, toward the top of your mat.

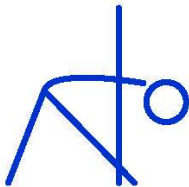


Deeply bend your right knee, place your right hand on the floor, and stretch your left arm up and over your ear in extended side angle pose (Utthita Parsvakonasana). Hold, breathe, and feel your side stretch and strengthen. One person can say:

"The Spirit stretches and opens us to new flexibility."



With your right knee still bent, turn toward your foot, and move into a lunge with your hands on either side of your foot. Slowly straighten your right leg and bend your head toward your knee into a modified pyramid pose (Parsvottanasana), hands on the ground beside your feet.



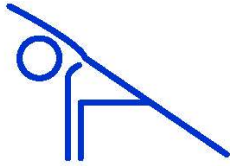
From Pyramid Pose, place your right hand on the ground and stretch your left arm to the sky in triangle pose (Utthita Trikonasana). One person can say:

"When we are open and flexible, we see the world in a new way."

Lower your left arm and place your hands on either side of your right foot.

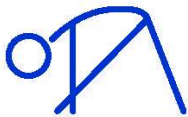
Raise your upper body, legs still in a V, and turn your left foot toward the back of the mat. Repeat this whole sequence on the left side.

Relax and Rest

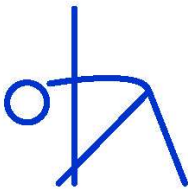


Deeply bend your left knee, place your left hand on the floor, and stretch your right arm up toward the sky in extended side angle pose. Hold, breathe, and feel your side stretch and strengthen. One person can say:

"The Spirit stretches and opens us to new flexibility."



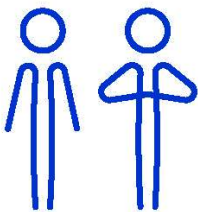
With your left knee still bent, turn toward your foot, and move into a lunge with your hands on either side of your foot. Slowly straighten your left leg and bend your head toward your knee into a modified pyramid pose.



From Pyramid Pose, place your left hand on the ground and stretch your right arm to the sky in triangle pose. One person can say:

"When we are open and flexible, we see the world in a new way."

Lower your left arm and place your hands on either side of your right foot.



Raise your upper body, and step or hop the feet together to reach mountain pose. Reach your arms up to the sky, then draw them into prayer form, right by your heart. End with a bow of your head and hands as you share the foundational yoga greeting - "Namaste" - a call to see one another the way God sees each of us. One interpretation of the phrase is "The Light in me sees the Light in you."

COLORING



LOVING SPIRIT

you are

Active & Alive

ALWAYS MOVING AND STIRRING
WITHIN AND AROUND US

Please be an

ENCOURAGING WIND

AT OUR BACKS

GIVING US

OPEN MINDS

AND

SOFT HEARTS

TO FOLLOW
WHERE
YOU LEAD



Flexible
PRESENT

IN EACH MOMENT

that we
might

EMBRACE
COMPASSION

by LETTING
GO
OF WHAT WE

EXPECTED.

amen

the EXAMEN

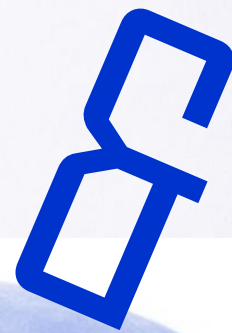
The Daily Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and discern his direction for us. This is an ancient practice in the Church that can help us see God's hand at work in our whole experience.

Blessings

Where have you felt the presence of God?
What brought you joy this day?

Where have you found
peace?

*Blessings & Bruises can be
done daily or whenever you feel
the urge. They are a great
"around the campfire" conver-
sation and way of connecting!
You can even journal or draw*



Bruises

Where have you felt an ab-
sence of god?
Have there been moments
of unrest?

Songs to Listen to:

Everything (Lauren Daigle),
Feel Good (Jordan Smith),