

# Planning



Sunday, October 15 – Saturday, October 21 • 2023

## Engaging Emotions

As the people of Israel gather around a golden calf seeking comfort in new and unfamiliar circumstances, we explore our own emotions and the moments that cause us to falter in our faith.

### This Week...

#### Ecumenical prayer calendar

Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico

As listed in *Pilgrim Prayer: The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, edited by Ester Pudjo Widiastih and Karen L. Bloomquist. (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2018). <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle> offers valuable aids for intercessory prayers, prayer on behalf of and in solidarity with others.

#### Special days ([commentary](#) on p. 100)

**October 16** – World Food Day (UN)

**October 18** – St. Luke

#### Personal reflection

As you enter into Exodus 32 this week, consider the mighty works that God asks us to remember. For the people of Israel, there is a strong story of salvation woven throughout our story. Is this the same story of salvation your community shares now? What are the mighty works of God most remembered in your community? How do these memories hold you together?

*The planning page is provided in text format for copying, adapting, and adding to your bulletin or online worship resources or website or social media (see Text folder, Worship Outline).*

#### October 15, 2023

20th Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 23 (28)

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

#### Revised Common Lectionary (Year A)

##### Exodus 32:1–14

the focus in age-level materials

Psalms 106:1–6, 19–23

Philippians 4:1–9

Matthew 22:1–14



*Seasons of the Spirit™*  
is based on semi-  
continuous readings of the  
*Revised Common Lectionary*.

**Liturgical colour** Green

The Season after Pentecost is a time to tell stories about God and who we are as Christ's disciples. Use the Storytelling Starters each week as an opportunity to encourage new stories. "[Can We Use Emotion to Interpret the Bible??](#)" on p. 101 offers a fresh engagement of Exodus 32:1–14.

### Online Resources

#### Lection Connection

Essays and discussion prompts linking current events with this week's scriptures. Use for sermon preparation, Bible studies, and small groups or share on social media at <https://www.seasonsonline.ca/10/>.

#### Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home

An easy-to-share, weekly online resource supports the spiritual lives and faith formation of individuals and families at home. It is provided in the [Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home](#) folder.





**Exodus 32:1–14**  
the focus in age-level materials  
**Psalms 106:1–6, 19–23**  
**Philippians 4:1–9**  
**Matthew 22:1–14**



Seasons of the Spirit™ is based on the semi-continuous readings of the Revised Common Lectionary.

God of Moses, we acknowledge those elements in life that separate us from your presence. Whatever our blockages, be they economic, political, or cultural, forgive us and grant us peace and reconciliation at this time. Amen.

# Engaging Emotions

**T**his week's texts invite reflection on moments that make us falter in our faith, the moments when our fear, however small, prevails over our instincts to do good.

**Exodus 32** The people are camped near Mount Sinai. Moses has gone with his assistant Joshua to meet with God. Moses has left his brother Aaron and nephew Hur in charge of the camp. Moses and Joshua are gone for 40 days and 40 nights – a biblical number symbolic of birth, rebirth, and change. While they are away, the people get restless and make demands on Aaron. They seek assurance of God's presence, but in the form of idols from nature-religions of the ancient Near East with which they would have been familiar and comfortable. The golden calf was an image of strength and virility, common in religions of that area – it was meant to soothe their troubled hearts.

Moses returns from the mountain to the camp with clear divine instruction about how the gold brought from Egypt (Exodus 11:2) is to be used, only to find that it has been moulded into an idol of another religion. Four things become clear as a result of the encounter with God that follows. First, God pays attention: God is frustrated with the behaviour of these chosen people, calling them perverse, stiff-necked, and disobedient. Second, God is being changed: it's clear from the interaction with Moses that God can be influenced. Third, God seeks relationship: Moses is remembered as the prophetic leader who had a direct and dynamic relationship with God. They argue, they commiserate, they cajole, they rant, and they care. A healthy relationship with the holy can include all that and much more. Fourth, God loves: perhaps God's anger, judgment, and repentance are all grounded in the reality that the creation is beloved of God.

In the story of the golden calf, Moses stands, according to **Psalms 106:1–6, 19–23**, "in the breach" that has developed between God and the rest of the community. Moses repairs the broken trust on both sides, calling God and the people back into covenant. Who stands in the breach today? How can we be people who repair broken trust between different entities? What kind of faith, leadership, and patience would that entail?

Having a sense of centredness helps. Paul calls for such a state of being in **Philippians 4:1–9** writing the iconic phrase, "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding." His is a plea, like Moses' plea, to not be afraid, even when the world seems to let go of the possibility of liberation, physical or social or spiritual. But how does one not fear? Paul seems to suggest that the lack of fear comes from a grounding in the promise of love.

Amid these calls for peace and freedom from fear, **Matthew 22:1–14** seems jarring. At a surface level, it appears that the people who do not dress right are the ones whom God punishes. Why would God do this, forgetting a preferential option for the poor and oppressed? God is the one who teaches that fineries matter less than spirit.

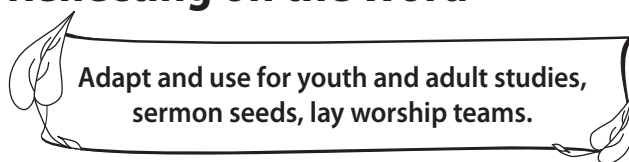
This is a parable, and parables speak in symbol and irony. Read on a deeper level, the clothing signifies our spiritual preparedness for what God provides. Perhaps the robe is a robe of justice, or equality, or community. When are we so busy or fearful or distracted and forget to clothe ourselves in these values?

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The people of Israel encountered issues of leadership choices and vulnerability when they were removed from familiar surroundings and facing unknown circumstances. They were on a journey, as were those who are responding to the teachings of Jesus and the apostle Paul. It is the same for us as we journey in faith.



## Reflecting on the Word



### Connecting with life

- How do you engage with your emotions – hold them at bay, with mistrust? Or do you pay attention to what they show you of the meaning you may make of your experiences?

### Scripture

**Exodus 32:1–14** might have us wonder about how we respond to our emotions in helpful ways, or not.

- What emotions can you identify in the story? for Aaron in response to the people? for the people, reaching out into their liberation? for Moses, in the face of the rift between God and the people? for God?
- What do we make of the emotions portrayed of God in this story? How do those emotions connect with us and our experience of God?
- What emotions arise for you, in response to this story?
- In what ways do your emotions connect to the emotions of Moses, God, Aaron, and the people?
- If a “golden calf” leads to unhelpful responses, what “golden calves” do we build, personally and as a community, state, and nation?
- What type of leadership is needed for a community to remain faithful to the God who liberates?

**Psalms 106:1–6, 19–23** celebrates Moses as a leader with moral clarity who remembers God’s goodness and vision for humanity.

- What does it mean that Moses stands in the breach?
- What might “righteousness at all times” look like?
- What does the wrath of God mean in this context? What would it mean for us today?

- How does the psalm shift if we hear “I” in the context of community?

**Philippians 4:1–9** Paul is especially concerned about the shaping of community.

- What norms are named by Paul that might be essential for a community of liberation?
- What norms might undermine the life of a community?
- How do we discern whatever is true, just, honourable...? How might Paul have defined it?

**Matthew 22:1–14** is a challenging parable. Have courage and pay attention to your emotions in response:

- What do we make of the emotions portrayed of God in this story? How do those emotions connect with us and our experience of God?
- What emotions arise for you, in response to this story?
- What do our emotions reveal? In what ways do our emotions connect with the emotions to the parable Jesus tells?

### Connecting scripture and life

Anxiety, fear, and a desire for quick solutions are an understandable and common response to uncertain times.

- What are sources of anxiety and fear for your community?
- What are the sources of uncertainty in the world that evoke anxiety, fear, and a desire for simple answers?
- Where do you see leadership reinforcing those fears, and where do you see leadership challenging those fears?
- How might we encourage the naming of fear, and other emotions, with safety for all, in response to our uncertain times?

## Focus for Worship, Learning, and Serving

Worship is often confused with praise as if this is the only emotion we can bring before our God. This week we find space for some unfamiliar emotions within the context of worship, including confusion, lament and even rage. Some people struggle to understand their emotions and may not even know how to name them. Though they might be aware of what results from that emotion, an emotional vocabulary hasn’t been cultivated and so it is best to create

a space with great gentleness. Call upon the wisdom in “Can We Use Emotion to Interpret the Bible?” on page 101 as well as any wise elders, therapists, retired clergy and spiritual directors in your congregation. Be aware that feelings might overwhelm and the most gracious thing might be to provide appointed people to hold the depth of emotion with those that are overwhelmed.



# Engaging Emotions

## Prepare

NOTE: The following suggestions are mere starting points; adapt, delete, and add according to your local needs and context. If a community is gathered in person, they may speak the **bolded** lines. If worshippers are not all physically present, consider having a different individual say the bolded responses. Instructions are *italicized*.

- ❑ Recruit volunteers needed for worship: several to play rhythm instruments for the gathering, call to worship, and blessing.
- ❑ Choose an option for hearing Exodus 32:1–14. For the Bible story, arrange for a storyteller to present “God’s Big Feelings” on p. 102. Alternatively, for younger children, arrange for a storyteller to present “Moses and the Golden Calf” in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week’s materials. For the engaged storytelling, arrange for someone to tell the story confidently and, if possible, without the script. Prepare the space and materials for individuals to respond. Materials might include sand, a small sandbox, pens, paper, and coloured pencils. Notecards with questions might be provided to each person, or questions might be shared in the bulletin or on a screen. Doors to the outside might be opened, or chairs arranged with wide aisles to encourage meditative walking.
- ❑ Bring items for setting the worship space: bowls of water, dissolving paper, and pens for the Prayers of the People.
- ❑ You might choose to print Desert Dancing on or in your bulletin (in the Images to Project and Images for Printing folders). See “Connecting with the Art” on p. 8 for background to the art and artist.
- ❑ Bring song such as “I Feel God around Me” (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9, #20 on *Seasons Music CD*, vol. 9. Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at [https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order\\_products/](https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/)).
- ❑ Set stations as described on pp. 103–104.



## Music Suggestions

### Hold Us in Your Grace

Keri K. Wehlender; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9

### I Feel God around Me

Bruce K. Harding; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9

### Gather Us, O God

Monica Brown; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6

### I Rejoiced!

Lynn Bauman; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6

### Joy for You and Me

Maria Millward; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6

### May the God of Hope

Argentine Folk Melody; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6

### Live in the Spirit of Love

Ed Seabough; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 3

### Turn Our Sadness Upside Down

Leigh Newton; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 3

### Nada Te Turbe

Taizé Community



A chart that shows the licence holder(s) for each song in each of the 9 *Seasons of the Spirit* Music Volumes can be found at [www.seasonsonline.ca](http://www.seasonsonline.ca). Click on Library; Seasons Music Information. Please contact a licence holder for permission to duplicate.

## Gather

*Provide rhythm instruments to a few people, such as music leaders or the children and have them make a joyful noise with the instruments after each spoken bit. As people gather, encourage this joy as people bring joy into the space with these instruments.*

### Call to worship

How could we ever tell how good our God is?

What would we say? How would we move into such praise?

How would it feel to be there together with such joy?

*Play instruments.*

Bring every joy. Come with every bit of delight.

Gather it all in

this pleasing, commendable, and worthy of excellence, with drum, trumpet, and tambourine. Praise God!

*Play instruments.*

How could we live into God’s love?

We could rejoice and shout. We could jump and sing.

We could tell the truth and hold space for every emotion.

Yes! This is what we praise. Praise God, who gathers us together.

*Sing a song such as “Gather Us, O God” (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6, #3 on *Seasons Music CD*, vol. 6. Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at [https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order\\_products/](https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/)) with instruments.*



## Worship Outline • October 15, 2023

### Opening prayer

We might not all come with praise.  
Joy might be furthest from our hearts.  
Anger, sadness, and anxiety might mingle here too.  
O God, you make space for it all.  
Bring us together today to experience the fullness of your steadfast love.  
May we find your grace holding us close, now and always.  
Amen.

### Prayer of confession

God rages hot over the stiff-necked people.  
Jesus' parable concludes with a limbless soul pushed into the outer darkness.  
That is what anger feels like. Joy is not the only faithful emotion.

We are people who weep and gnash our teeth.  
It is faithful to express our anger.  
To resist the notion that this is just the way it is.  
To demand answers when none are given.  
To insist that this is not what love does.  
Moses had to remind God what love looks like.  
Sometimes we forget, too. Our fury cuts in harsh words.  
Our anger tightens into clenched fists. O God, forgive us.  
Assure us that even when anger flares, it is your steadfast love  
that upholds everything and everyone. Hold us in that love  
that is more powerful than the worst we can do, we pray.  
Amen.

### Words of affirmation

Share in affirming the steadfast love of God in this chant.

I'll hold you, you'll hold me, we're held here to - geth - er in love.  
in ho - ly, ho - ly love.

From September 3, 2023 through to November 26, 2023 you may make copies of the words only of this song for use in your congregation. Please include the copyright information. All copies are to be destroyed after this time period.

Words and music copyright © Sarah Agnew  
Arrangement: Alan C. Whitmore

## Engage

### Opening the word

Enter into **Psalm 106:1–6, 19–23** with a sense of wonder. There is condemnation in these words of praise, reminding us that not every emotion is pure. Sometimes it mingles with others. Engage in the quest of remembering the mighty works of God together. What are these mighty works in your community's past and present? How do you hold these important reminders together?

**Exodus 32:1–14** the focus scripture for age-level materials in *ENCORE*

Choose from the following.

**Bible story** Arrange for a storyteller to present “God’s Big Feelings” on p. 102. Alternatively, for younger children, tell the story “Moses and the Golden Calf” (in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week’s materials).

**Engaged storytelling** Invite a small group of storytellers to read “[Can We Use Emotion to Interpret the Bible?](#)” on page 101 and reflect on Exodus 32:1–14. Learn the story by heart, choosing to notice how you feel and what you know by feeling in this story. How might you retell Moses’ story engaging those emotions?

After the storytelling, provide a space for quiet contemplation with soft music, pens, paper, coloured pencils, and space to walk around so that the hearers can respond to these questions. You might conclude this engaged reflection by inviting people to share one or two things they are learning about their own emotions.

- **What did you feel?**
- **What was Moses feeling?**
- **How did you know what you were feeling?**
- **How might God be sharing in your emotions?**

If gathering in person, invite children, young people, and all who wish to move to the stations.  
Others will remain seated for proclaiming the word. For those participating at home,  
you might encourage them to use materials that have been sent.



## Respond

**Sing** or listen to a song such as “I Feel God around Me” as people gather again (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9, #20 on *Seasons Music CD*, vol. 9. Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at [https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order\\_products/](https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/)).

### Prayers of the people

*Arrange bowls of water around the worship space, ensuring there is space for people to gather around each bowl. Before the prayers begin, distribute water-soluble paper and pens to each individual.*

You are with us in every part of our journey, Holy One.  
You invite us to come and share the fullness of our lives with you.

You call us to trust and live in anticipation of your unfolding ways.

No one is beyond the reach of your gaze and attention.  
No one is ignored in your arena of activity.

**We put our trust in you, Holy One,  
and are sorting through all of our emotions  
to understand what it means to stand firm in our faith.**

Far from igniting fear, your awareness is stirred by concern that all may enjoy justice, freedom, and fullness of life.

**We pray for courage to be led by you to speak up,  
question, challenge, and offer alternative actions as Moses  
did for you.**

You ask us to remember your favour and help  
and to be shaped by this growing sense of identity.  
Your sacred story changes us and gives new meaning to  
our lives.

**We pray for compassion as we try to make sense of your  
loving ways.**

Holy One, bring us together in the peace we cannot quite  
understand

and bring us more and more into the steadfastness of your love.

Reveal to us the way of your love in every emotion.

**We pray for faithfulness on the journey toward hope and healing.**

Still, there are things that we don't know.

There are things that we cannot know and things that break our hearts with grief and sorrow.

**We pray for your love in all that is unknown.**

Holy One, we invite you into our pain and sorrow.

We need your comfort and grace.

Beloved, you are invited to write or draw a prayer for comfort on the provided paper.

It could be a prayer for a person, a place, or an issue that brings tears to your eyes.

When you are ready, move to a bowl of water, gently place the paper in the bowl of water, and watch it dissolve in the faith that God's tears will absorb your pain and sorrow.

*Soft music could play as people move to the bowls, or the congregation could sing “Hold Us in Your Grace” (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9, #11 on *Seasons Music CD*, vol. 9. Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at [https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order\\_products/](https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/)) with instruments.*

### Prayer of dedication or offering prayer

Thank you, Holy One, for the fire in our bellies and the hope in our hearts.

It is with every emotion that we share these gifts with your people.

May they conspire with the work of your steadfast love.  
Amen.

## Bless

*Invite the community to hold on to their hearts by placing their own hands over their hearts. Recruit several people to create a gentle heartbeat on the drums they made at the station or brought to worship. Let this soft sound underscore these words of blessing.*

Remember, dear one, every emotion that you have felt this morning.

God does mighty works in this heart. Remember these things.

Rejoice in these things as you go into the world to help others find the truth in their hearts.

Go and love in the faith that God's steadfastness endures and surprises.

God's love and peace will be with you always.

### Special Days Commentary

#### October 16 – World Food Day

World Food Day marks the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) founding in 1945. Many churches and communities use this day (or the previous Sunday) as an opportunity to highlight hunger, agriculture, land use, and development issues.

#### October 18 – St. Luke

Tradition suggested that St. Luke was one of Paul's traveling companions and the author of the gospel that bears his

name and the book of Acts. Other traditions have long suggested that Luke was a physician, although most scholars question this.

The gospel of Luke has a particular emphasis on those who were on the fringe of “acceptable” society. Luke proclaims that the good news is not just for Jews but everyone: the poor, the oppressed, Romans, Samaritans, and all who find themselves marginalized. There is an emphasis on women in the gospel narrative – a group often sidelined in first-century society.



# Can we use emotion to interpret the Bible?

Sarah Agnew

Seminary students embodying biblical compositions for a performance as part of their studies experienced a profound depth of engagement and understanding, unlike more traditional learning. Students previously “discussed the humanity of Jesus in Mark’s portrayal, but they did not really understand what this *meant* until they played Jesus themselves in flesh and blood.” Students described feeling and thereby understanding Jesus’ human emotions, the challenges he faced, and his challenge to the traditions and customs of his time and their own.

Biblical storytelling is the art of embodying or internalizing a portion of the Bible to tell by heart for an “audience” or congregation. As I engaged in this practice over many years, I observed how my emotions interpreted the biblical compositions as I inhabited them to tell by heart. I spent some time exploring this phenomenon through the work of scholars in such fields as psychology, philosophy, and theatre studies. It turns out that paying attention to our emotions might be quite important, as our emotional responses to the world *are* making meaning of the world *and* interpreting our experiences.

Emotions such as fear have kept us alive. Learning how to act on fear keeps us alive. Telling the story of experiences of fear and successful action has kept others alive after us: think encountering a black bear, making oneself appear large and

frightening the bear away from us, rather than trying to outrun a bear, which may not have been successful for others.

When we come to the compositions in the Bible, we may have learned to put emotion aside as “unreliable” or “irrational.” This is to misunderstand what we are always feeling in response to the world. Emotions may be understood as particular felt experiences that dynamically engage our cognition, sensory-motor, neurological, and “soulful” responses to circumstances and events. When we name such felt experiences, meaning becomes clear to our conscious selves. I have spent many years developing a method to help us pay attention to that meaning we naturally make through our felt responses to the Bible to enrich interpretation of our Sacred Story.

The classic example I give is this. As I tell the story of Jesus admonishing the disciples to “let the children come to me,” my body reaches out as if to call a toddler to run into my arms and lift them up with mutual delight. In that movement, I *feel* the delight of Jesus welcoming the children, which Jesus says is a picture of the realm of God, and I understand as I cannot understand by any other means than emotion. This is the invitation. This is the delight God feels, Jesus shows us, when we accept the invitation into God’s embrace. Don’t get in the way of that for anyone. Try it. Learn a story by heart. Watch how your body moves and your emotions stir. Pay attention: what do you feel and know by feeling?

This essay adapts material from Sarah Agnew, *Embodied Performance. Mutuality, Embrace, and the Letter to Rome*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2020.

Opening paragraph engages with Philip Ruge-Jones, “The Word Heard: How Hearing a Text Differs from Reading One.” In *The Bible in Ancient and Modern Media: Story and Performance*, edited by Holly E. Hearon and Philip Ruge-Jones, Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009, 101–13.

Learn more about biblical storytelling through the Network of Biblical Storytellers International: [nbsint.org](http://nbsint.org)



# God's Big Feelings

Based on Exodus 32:1–14

Moses had moved away from the community for some weeks now for time alone with Holy One, listening, talking, and preparing for the next steps.

For a day or two, Moses had started to feel uneasy. And now, all of a sudden, Moses felt fury all around and deep down. Furious anger. Furious pain. Furious, burning hot, bubbling over tears of hurt and disappointment. "What's happened?" he asked, and at first, all he felt in response was that pain.

Then, in the strange coming from within and all-around, all-at-once way, Moses heard God.

"The people. Your people. They have hurt me again. They have turned away again. They have built a different god, a god of gold, a god in the image of a calf. And they are praising that calf as the one who set them free and brought them out of Egypt. So soon after I showed them the way to live well with me. I can't even be with them anymore. I'm going to start again. Moses, let's start again with a different people."

Moses was stunned. That the people would turn from God was not what surprised him. He knew they were unhappy. He knew they were finding it hard to live in tents on borrowed land and moving on every few years. It was hard to start to feel settled, only to hear God call them to move again. Start over again.

Moses supposed it wasn't easy for Aaron and Miriam to have Moses away for these long periods of time alone with God. To hear the continual complaints of the people who did not really understand, even though Moses tried to tell them God was with them and they would find their way to a land of their own as God had promised.

What shocked Moses was the feeling that God was considering *not* being with the people anymore. The pain Moses could feel all around and deep down was like his own feeling of betrayal from his brother with this action, but heavier, hotter, sadder. Enough for hundreds and hundreds of people feeling betrayed was the closest he could come to describing it.

"God, are you sure that's what you really want? Or is that the pain talking? Because I don't know how the nations would view a God who brought their people out of slavery only to abandon them now. I don't feel that's the God I have come to know. I feel your anger, frustration, and the hurt of the people turning away from you, their God, again. I know they keep turning away, and they don't understand. But God, who are you? You are Holy One. Creator of all that breathes and sustains life. When you choose a people to show all the peoples who you are, you can't abandon them. We are in this promise together. You remember that, don't you?"

*Silence.*

Then what felt like a sigh from deep under the earth and out through the four winds.

"OK." And another sigh.

"OK, Moses. I will remember who I am and the promise I have made. Go and call the people back to the Way again."

Phew. Now it was Moses' turn to sigh deeply with all creation. Then he picked himself up and started back towards the camp.

A recording of this story is available in MP3 format in the Audio Stories folder.



## Bible story

### Materials

- Recording of "God's Big Feelings"
- Alternatively, arrange for a storyteller to present the story
- Paper or drawing pads
- Basic supplies

## The practice of storytelling

### Directions

1. Listen to the story "God's Big Feelings."
2. Moses wants God to remember something important. What is something important you want God to remember? Write or draw your important message to God.



## Living, Learning, Growing as Disciples

The following stations might be set up around your worship space, or in other places around the church, in your home, or outdoors. Choose one or more practices, depending on your space and numbers. Display the directions for all to see onscreen or in person. Adapt stations for use when physically distancing and above all, follow the safe practices of your congregation and local health officials.

**For your convenience, directions are formatted for printing and available in the Stations folder.**

### Health and Safety Practices

**Basic supplies** pens, pencils, markers, crayons, white glue/glue sticks, scissors, hand sanitizer, wipes placed in a basket or bin, two containers marked "clean" and "used"

**Setting the space** Utilize large spaces where people can maintain a safe physical distance. Spread out chairs around a large table or use tape to mark off the space around stand alone chairs.

**Keep it clean** Wipe down and disinfect places used for stations. Provide enough arts and crafts supplies to reduce sharing and mark containers "clean" and "used." Remind people to use hand sanitizer as they begin and as they end stations.

### Praying in Colour

#### Materials

- Basic supplies
- Paper



**Suitable for all ages working together**

#### The practice of prayer

##### Directions

Moses prayed for the people and showed that speaking up or speaking for another can change things. Consider who you might want to pray for now, perhaps because you want to change God's mind. Use this practice of prayer inspired by Sybil MacBeth's book *Praying in Color*.

1. In the middle of your page, write the focus of your prayer. It could be a person's name, a place, a region, an issue or whatever feels like it needs truth right now.
2. Draw a circle around that name, imagining God's love holding this prayer with you. You might choose to draw more circles to magnify your prayer and invite God into this prayer with you.
3. Imagine you, like Moses, are in conversation with God. What do you want to say to God about the situation of this person/situation, how you feel about it, and what you would like to be different? Keep your hand busy as you pray by adding shapes, lines, and colours through these questions.
4. Words might come to you. Add them to your prayers as you add more colour and shape to the focus of your prayer.
5. Continue adding lines and colour until your prayer feels complete. With your last few lines, thank God for listening with you and holding this space.

**Younger children** might need help to write the name of their focus, or they might begin by drawing that person or place. They will follow along with the meditation by watching and might be asked afterwards, how did it feel to pray with colour?

### Percussion instruments

#### Materials

- Materials for percussion instruments (see *Virtual Resource Booklet* in the Library at [seasonsonline.ca](https://www.seasonsonline.ca) for ideas)
- Song "I Will Sing, I Will Sing" (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 3, #28 on *Seasons Music CD*, vol. 3. Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at [https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order\\_products/](https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/))

#### The practice of joy

##### Directions

Some would say, "God is the heartbeat of life." In this week's reading from the book of Psalms – Psalm 106:1–6, 19–23 – we are encouraged to praise God and give thanks for God's steadfast, never-ending love.

1. Enter into this joy by making percussion instruments/ or using already created instruments (including your own body) to play as you sing or listen to the song "I Will Sing, I Will Sing."
2. Listen to your heartbeat after playing. How is God moving your heart in this life right now?



**Suitable for all ages working together**



## Response centre

### Materials

- Basic supplies
- Paper bags
- Paper and card stock
- Containers to hold a variety of art materials such as play dough, construction paper, newspaper, recycled magazines with many pictures, tissue paper, pipe cleaners, coloured yarn, chalk
- The article "Response Centres" in *Virtual Resource Booklet* at the Library at [www.seasonsonline.ca](http://www.seasonsonline.ca)



**Suitable for  
all ages**

## The practice of creativity

### Directions

1. If possible, spend some time outside drinking in the environment around you.
2. Take a paper bag with you and collect things along the way.
3. When you return, add your collection to the containers of art materials on the table.
4. Think about what you might take to remind yourself of God's love and promises if you had to go into the unknown.
5. Look at the craft materials on the table.
6. What might you use or make that could help you remember, think about, or tell the story of the people of Israel at Mount Sinai waiting for Moses?

A response centre can encourage exploring personal responses to the story of the people of Israel as they wait at Mount Sinai. It provides an opportunity to relive the story within our own experiences and learn from it deeply. Often, what we may be unable to articulate with words becomes clear when we encounter paper, cloth, yarn, paper, and scissors.

## Emotional inventory

### Materials

- Basic supplies
- Calendar or diary pages
- Smiley face stickers (optional)



**Suitable for all ages  
working together**

## The practice of reflection

### Directions

In her book *Atlas of the Heart*, Brené Brown writes, "Joy is sudden, unexpected, short-lasting, and high-intensity. It's characterized by a connection with others or with God, nature, or the universe. Joy expands our thinking and attention, and it fills us with a sense of freedom and abandon." We feel like our days should be full of praise. Paul seems to insist on it, but many emotions fill our days.

1. Reflect on the last 24 hours of your life, paying particular attention to the emotions you felt within each hour. Calendar or diary pages might be helpful so that you can remember first what you were doing at each hour of the day: happy, sad, stressed, angry, frustrated, nervous, joyful, afraid, curious, bored, fearful, surprised, etc.
2. With each hour, notice the emotion that you felt most. Resist the temptation to judge but simply notice the emotion. Use smiley face stickers or write down the emotion to record your findings.
3. When you have looked back upon the whole 24 hours, notice what emotions were most common. Again, resist the temptation to judge but simply notice it. Invite God into your reflection and wonder together.

■ **What emotions do you want more of in your life?**

■ **What does God most hope you feel?**

■ **How does God make space for all your emotions?**

**Younger children** might be asked how they feel right now compared to how they felt yesterday. What emotions do they feel most often? What emotions does God hope you feel?

The article "[Connecting with the Art](#)" on page 8 provides background to this season's posters and art engagement ideas for individuals and groups. You might add an Art station and select one of the art engagement ideas.



Story and activities for the very young to use in church or at home.

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# Moses and the Golden Calf

Based on Exodus 32:1-14

Up, up, up the mountain Moses hiked. Moses had an important job to do. Moses was leading the people to a new and better land, which wasn't always easy. Now Moses wanted to talk with God.

While Moses was on the mountain praying with God, he felt that something was happening with the people. Moses wasn't sure what, but he had a feeling that he needed to be back with them. He was worried about his friends. So Moses started to walk back down the mountain.

Down, down, down hiked Moses. It was a long way down. The path was very steep. Moses had to walk carefully so that he didn't slip. As Moses reached the bottom of the mountain, he could hear the sounds of music. And Moses could see something glittering in the sun. It was a calf made of gold. Moses didn't know what this meant, but he was not happy.

"What are you doing?" Moses asked the people.

"We were waiting and waiting for you to come back. We also needed to talk with God, but we did not know what God looked like... We decided to make a god. We made this beautiful golden calf."

Moses knew that this was not the way to talk with God. He was scared and said to his friends, "Take away this golden calf quickly! This is not God's way. We can pray to God anywhere, at any time. God is always listening. God is interested in everything that makes us worry or fear. God rejoices with us and cries by our sides. God hears it all."

The people felt very sorry for what they had done. They realized that what they did mattered to God. This made Moses happy.

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## Dancing Plates

God cares about what we do and how we express our feelings.

**You will need** a sturdy paper plate, five lengths of ribbon.

### Directions

- Print "God Cares" along the top of your plate.
- Decorate your plate with markers.
- Punch holes along the bottom of each plate and tie lengths of ribbon through the holes.
- Curl the ribbon using scissor blades.
- Shake your plates and dance your feelings as you think about God's love.



God's love goes on and on,  
and we can show God's love when we...

*(Circle some of the things you do to show God's love,  
then use markers and pencils to decorate the page.)*

