



GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study

#201 - November 1, 2023

A Best Practice:

In [GEMS #159](#), we looked at Prayer Stations. To provide an experience of various ways of prayer, Erin Wolfe, Pastoral Associate for Adult Religious Formation & Ministry, RCIA, and Infant Baptism at St. Mary Magdalen Parish, Brighton, MI, created ten-twelve different prayer stations. It was designed so that participants could pick which stations they wanted to take part in. They could pick what was comfortable to them, but were also encouraged to try others too, in an effort to stretch their methods, definitions and experiences of prayer.

Since their first endeavor in 2022, as they have continued it, there have been a few changes and additions. After you revisit [GEMS #159](#), peruse these changes and additions.

- For which groups in your parish could you plan an opportunity such as this?
- Which types and methods of prayer would you include?

One Change

In Lent of 2023, they had to move the Prayer Experience into the gym because Coffee and Donuts was in the room they had previously used. This allowed them to spread out a bit as well as add some new stations.



They were also able to invite the parishioners to participate after the RCIA folks had their time for prayer (about an hour and fifteen minutes). Since the gym is attached to the room with Coffee and Donuts, they hung the “Now entering Sacred Space” signs on the doors. It was quiet for the RCIA folks because they participated during the second liturgy of the morning.

Prayer Experience in Progress!
Now entering
Sacred Space



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A Look at Some of the Additional Prayer Stations

Prayer Rocks: People chose a smooth, flat rock and wrote a prayer word on them. They were kept on the table until the end, when each person took their rock home.



Labyrinth: The previous year, the parish used finger labyrinths. This year they were able to borrow a HUGE labyrinth from a neighboring church. (It was a good thing they were now in the gym!) A handout was created for the participants to use as they walked through the labyrinth. Several of the Prayer Stations were placed within the labyrinth. Many people shared that the labyrinth was their favorite prayer experience.



Walking the Labyrinth

Welcome to the Labyrinth. You are about to step into ancient spiritual archetypal path that is hundreds of years old. The pattern has been walked by millions of people of all cultures for many reasons. The labyrinth is a form of prayer that allows you to use your body and your posture to pray.

The labyrinth is a sacred place set aside for you to reflect, look within, and pray. The rhythm of walking, placing one foot in front of the other, empties the mind, relaxes the body and refreshes the spirit. Follow the pace your body wants to go.

The labyrinth can be walked in four stages. As you encounter other people walking the same path, simply allow them to pass. You walk the labyrinth with your body and rest your mind.

Remember

Before walking the labyrinth

Take time in gratitude be thankful for your life. Bless the people in your life. Bring them to mind in prayer. If there is a specific event or situation troubling you, bring it to mind and form a healing question if possible.

Release

Walking into the labyrinth

This is the time to quiet the mind, let go of the mind chatter and release your troubles. Open your heart to feel whatever it might feel. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you as you become aware of your breathing. Take slow breaths. Relax and move at your own pace.

Receive

Standing or Sitting in the Center

This is a place of reflection. Pause and stay as long as you like. Open yourself to God. Listen to that small inner voice. In the safety of the labyrinth have a heart-to-heart talk with God. Listen as God responds.

Return

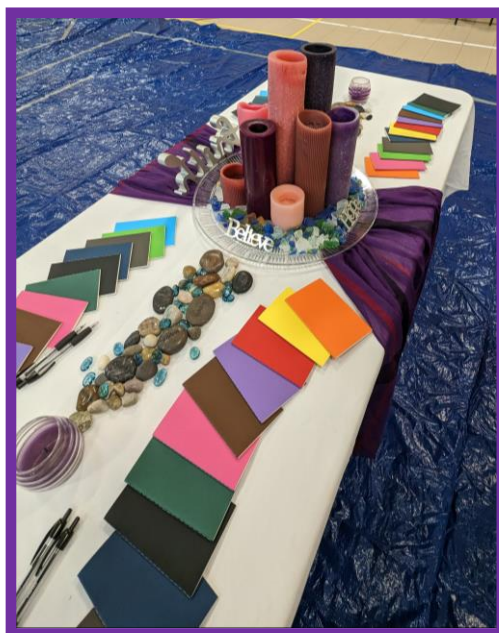
Walking out of the labyrinth

When you are ready, begin walking out the same path you followed in. Walking out, integration of your experience happens. Experience God's presence in you and the sense of well-being, healing, calm or peace that comes from this journey. Each labyrinth experience is different. You may feel nothing or have a powerful reaction. Whatever, listen to your heart and take all the time you need.



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This focal center table contained journals if the participants wanted to sit in the center of the labyrinth and write their reactions/prayers.



Praying with Mary Magdalen: This was the same as the Praying with Mary Station the previous year, but because they were in a different room, it was set up under a large banner of their patroness, St. Mary Magdalen.

In front of the picture, a table was set up with thin taper candles in a large silver bowl of sand.

The RCIA elect were invited to take an unlit taper and pray their prayer as they light their candle from an already-lit candle and placed it back in the sand.)



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Favorite Bible Stories: This comfortable corner contained a chair with a lamp and side table. A Bible and a list of favorite Scripture stories were placed on the table.



Favorite Bible Stories

Creation of Adam and Eve: Genesis 1-3

Noah's Ark: Genesis 6-8

Joshua and the Battle of Jericho: Joshua 5-6

David and Goliath: 1 Samuel 17

Jonah and the Whale: Jonah 1-4

Birth of Christ: Matthew 1; Luke 1-2

Jesus feeds the Multitudes: Matthew 14:13-21

| Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:5-15

The Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25-37

The Prodigal Son: Luke 15:11-32

Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ: Matthew 27-28;

Mark 15-16; Luke 23-24; John 19-20

Scrabble Prayers: This station invited the participants to add their prayers by spelling them out with Scrabble tiles. After there were more words on the table, Erin went back and added all the names of the RCIA participants. (A note for anyone wanting to have this station: Amazon sells bags of the letter tiles. Also, this works best without the Scrabble board because the board ends up limiting the number of prayers that can be added.)



May Our Prayers Be United

Please use the Scrabble tiles
to spell out your prayer request
on our Communal Prayer Board.

|
After you have added your own prayer,
look at the other prayer requests and
pray for them.

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GEMS Wonderings

- For which groups in your parish could you plan an opportunity such as this?
- Which types and methods of prayer would you include?



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Past issues of **GEMS** are archived at www.janetschaeffler.com

❧ Previous Prayer Stations: Revisit [GEMS #159](#) for many more stations, including:

- ❖ I am Thankful for...
- ❖ RCIA Candle
- ❖ Prayer with the Saints
- ❖ Let Your Light Shine
- ❖ Finger Labyrinth
- ❖ I am Sorry for...
- ❖ Praying Through Art
- ❖ Prayer Doodles
- ❖ Hand Crosses

Additional ideas for Adult Faith Formation Planning and Best Practices can be found in:

- *Deepening Faith: Adult Faith Formation in the Parish*
<https://www.litpress.org/Products/4652/Deepening-Faith>
- Lifelong Faith Training: <https://www.lifelongfaithtraining.com/>
- Lifelong Faith: <https://www.lifelongfaith.com/>
- Lifelong Faith Studio: <https://www.lifelongfaithstudio.com/>
- Seasons of Adult Faith website: <https://www.seasonsofadultfaith.com>
- The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation:
 - <https://www.lifelongfaith.com/books.html>
 - https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/seasons_of_aff_journal_special_issue.pdf