



Centering Prayer

An online course from the
Center for Transforming Engagement



© 2021 THE SEATTLE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY & PSYCHOLOGY

Groups and their facilitators are independent of The Seattle School of Theology & Psychology. Therefore, The Seattle School of Theology & Psychology cannot be held responsible for any harm incurred by participation.

Meet Your Instructor

Welcome!

I'm delighted to join you in the first steps of developing a practice of centering prayer.

My name is Maddy Miller and I am a 2017 graduate of the Seattle School of Theology & Psychology and a licensed therapist in private practice in Seattle. I have been practicing Centering Prayer for several years, after first being introduced in a spiritual disciplines class I took at The Seattle School.

What I appreciate about centering prayer, is that it acknowledges the spiritual and the psychological nature of my humanity and invites me to join the Spirit of God there. Centering prayer offers rest for my mind and draws me to the deeper places within. Without words, without agenda, the practice of Centering Prayer draws me to the inmost place in me where I am finding more connection to the divine as home.

I hope the same for you.

Blessings,



Maddy Miller, LMHC

Centering Prayer Practice

How to Prepare Your Space

Centering prayer is a discipline of intentional silence. You may think of it as clearing the table to prepare a place for the Divine to come and be with you. Intentionally cultivating your external space can help you to cultivate your interior space.

Here are some suggestions for preparing your space to facilitate your centering prayer practice:

- Choose a quiet place where you will be uninterrupted for about 20-30 mins each time. Ideally, you would use the same space every day.
- Select a time of day that you will practice. By practicing at the same time each day, you are helping yourself to create a new habit. You may consider “habit stacking” - pairing this new practice with something you already routinely do, such as brushing your teeth, getting dressed in the morning, after lunch, etc.
- Bring a pillow or blanket to your space. If you are new to meditative practice, it may take you some time to figure out what position feels most relaxing for your body - sitting on a pillow or chair, or laying down on the floor. Try out different postures to find what feels good for your body.
- Light a candle or incense. This can serve as a beginning ritual to mark your time as set apart from the rest of your day. The scent can serve as a grounding sensation, inviting you to the present. To mark the close of your practice, extinguish the candle or incense.

As you prepare your space, consider your senses. Ask yourself:

- What do I see? Do I need anything to focus my practice?
- What do I feel? Do I need anything to comfort my body?
- What do I smell? Do I need anything to ground me?
- What do I hear? Do I need anything to calm or quiet me?

If anything in your environment would cause a distraction for you - a bright light, an uncomfortable floor, a loud noise, your cell phone notifications - consider removing it or removing its impact on you (by moving yourself, or with earplugs, for example).

Lesson 1:

The Sacred Word

Reflection Prompts

What am I hoping for as I begin learning about and practicing Centering Prayer? ⁺

How do I respond to my many times of surrender? What words could I offer myself that are kind and true?

What parts of the practice do I feel comfortable or maybe even relaxed in? What do you wonder about this? ⁺

What parts of the practice am I uncomfortable with? Why might this be so? ⁺

How do your agitations, anxieties, and addictions add to your mental stress? What does your mind do with them?

Write down your Sacred Word.

⁺ Denotes questions in the Group Leader guide for weekly reflection questions