**Contemplative Curriculum**

**A Selective Bibliography**

Here are some examples of contemplative materials that have been used in churches, mostly in small groups but which can be adapted to other learning contexts. This bibliography focuses on “spiritual disciplines” (contemplative practices), but it also includes materials that explore “faith practices” which is the broader category and is understood to be those ways of living to which Jesus-followers are called.

**Faith Practices** (Pilgrim Press)

You may already know about or have used the UCC *Faith Practices* program published by The Pilgrim Press. This program explores “12 spiritual practices, crafted for 12 diverse groups and purposes, with 100s of activities, able to be used over and over in exciting ways …” The 12 practices are:

• Giving and Receiving Hospitality

• Living Stewardship

• Praying and Making Ritual

• Playing and Living Joyfully

• Keeping Sabbath

• Giving Testimony and Witness

• Encountering Scripture

• Working for Justice

• Experiencing Beauty

• Discovering Gifts of Ministry

• Honoring the Body

• Blessing and Letting Go.

**The Practices of Faith series** (Dorothy Bass, et. al.)

Dorothy C. Bass was the director of the Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith, a Lilly Endowment project supporting the renewal of Christian theology and life. During the twenty-five years she headed up this project, she wrote, edited, or coedited more than a dozen books.

Bass, Dorothy, ed. *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People.* (The Practices of Faith Series). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019.

Bass, Dorothy C. *Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time*. (The Practices of Faith Series). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019.

Long, Thomas G. *Testimony: Talking Ourselves into Being Christian*. (The Practices of Faith Series). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.

Paulsell, Stephanie. *Honoring the Body: Meditations on a Christian Practice*. (The Practices of Faith Series). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019.

Saliers, Don & Emily Saliers. *A Song to Sing, A Life to Live: Reflections on Music as Spiritual Practice.* (The Practices of Faith Series). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019.

Volf, Miroslav & Dorothy C. Bass, eds. *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2001.

Bass, Dorothy C. & Susan Briehl, eds. *On Our Way: Christian Practices for Living a Whole Life*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room, 2009. (for young adults).

Bass, Dorothy C, ed. *Practicing Our Faith: A Guide for Conversation, Learning, and Growth.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997

Dykstra, Craig. *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practice*. 2nd edition, Westminster John Knox Press; 2005.

**Renovare** (Richard Foster)

Foster’s book, *Celebration of Discipline*, helped to re-introduce the concept of spiritual disciplines to the Protestant (non-liturgical) world when it was first published in 1978. Since then, over 2 million copies have been sold. Each of the 12 disciplines Foster names could be the subject of a teaching/learning event. The various Workbooks that Renovare has published are also excellent guides.

Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978; rev.ed., HarperOne, 2018.

*Richard J. Foster's Study Guide for "Celebration of Discipline."* San Francisco: HarperOne, 1983.

Foster, Richard J & Kathryn Helmers. *Celebrating the Disciplines: A Workbook Journal to Accompany Celebration of Discipline*. San Francisco: HarperOne, 1992.

Foster, Richard J. & James Bryan Smith, eds. *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*. San Francisco: HarperSanFranciso, 1993.

Foster, Richard J. & Emilie Griffin, eds. *Spiritual Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups on the Twelve Spiritual Disciplines*. San Francisco: HarperSanFranciso, 2000.

Foster, Richard. *Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992; HarperOne, rev. ed. 2002.

Foster, Richard. *Freedom of Simplicity: Finding Harmony in a Complex World*. Revised ed. New York: HarperCollins, 2005

**The Spiritual Disciplines series** (Richard Peace)

In the mid-1990s when the church began to be interested in contemplative practices, there was very little lay-oriented small group material that served to introduce these various practices. Since I had already published a number of small group study guides, I decided to try my hand at putting together such a series. The first book in the series introduced the art of spiritual journaling. Spiritual journals (both oral and written) have long been a part of contemplative practices. My book sought to introduce the Intensive Journal system developed by Dr. Ira Progoff. The second book in the series built on the journals people had kept (though keeping a journal was not a requirement to be a part of this group) and focused on writing and then sharing in the small group, a spiritual autobiography. Over the years I have discovered that a Spiritual Autobiography small group is one of the best ways to begin an emphasis on spiritual disciplines in a church. The third book introduced the ancient art of *Lectio Divina* (contemplative Bible reading) and the fourth book introduced various forms of prayer (meditative prayer). The most recent small group book in this series explores the process of spiritual formation. My *Noticing God* book focuses on the spiritual discipline of noticing God and *Holy Conversation* explores the spiritual practice of talking about our faith.

Peace, Richard. *Spiritual Journaling: Recording Your Journey Toward God*. (The Spiritual Disciplines series). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1995.

Peace, Richard. *Spiritual Autobiography: Discovering and Sharing Your Spiritual Story*. (The Spiritual Disciplines series). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998.

Peace, Richard. *Contemplative Bible Reading: Experiencing God Through Scripture*. (The Spiritual Disciplines series). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015.

Peace, Richard. *Meditative Prayer: Entering God’s Presence*. (The Spiritual Disciplines series). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015.

Peace, Richard. *Spiritual Transformation: Taking on the Character of Christ*. (The Spiritual Disciplines series). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016.

*Holy Conversation: Talking About God in Everyday Life*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.

Peace, Richard. *Noticing God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012.

**The Transforming Resources series (Ruth Haley Barton)**

Barton, Ruth Haley. *Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence*. (The Transforming Resources series). Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Barton, Ruth Haley. *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*. (The Transforming Resources series). Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Barton, Ruth Haley. *Longing for More: A Woman's Path to Transformation in Christ*

(The Transforming Resources series). Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press, 2010.

Barton, Ruth Haley. *Life Together in Christ: Experiencing Transformation in Community*. (The Transforming Resources series). Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press, 2014.

Barton, Ruth Haley. *Invitation to Retreat: The Gift and Necessity of Time Away with God.* (The Transforming Resources series). Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press, 2018.

Barton, Ruth Haley, *Embracing Rhythms of Work and Rest: From Sabbath to Sabbatical and Back Again.* (The Transforming Resources series). Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press, 2022.

**Spiritual Disciplines/Practices** (Various authors)

Here are some background materials to the art of contemplative practices. This section could be expanded greatly. Other categories could be added (e.g., *The Spiritual Discipline of Simplicity*).

*General*

Allen, Diogenes. *Spiritual Theology*. Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1997.

Boyd, Jared Patrick. *Imaginative Prayer: A Yearlong Guide for Your Child's Spiritual Formation.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017.

Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005, 293 pp.

Chan, Simon. *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

Chittister, Joan D. *Heart of Flesh: A Feminist Spirituality for Women and Men*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Cunningham, Lawrence S. & Keith Egan. *Christian Spirituality: Themes from the Tradition*. New York: Paulist Press, 1996, 216 pp.

Finley, James. *The Contemplative Heart.* Sorin Books, 2000.

Haase, Albert, OFM. *Becoming an Ordinary Mystic: Spirituality for the Rest of Us.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019.

Holt, Bradley P. *Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*. 2nd. ed., Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2005, 226 pp.

Holmes, Barbara A. *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*. Fortress Press, 2004.

Jacobsen, Dennis. *A Spirituality for Doing Justice: Reflections for Congregation-based Organizers.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2021

Macaulay, Ranald and Jerram Barrs. *Being Human: The Nature of Spiritual Experience*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978.

Mass, Robin and Gabriel O'Donnell. *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1990.

Rice, Howard L. *Reformed Spirituality*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991.

Rolheiser, Ronald. *The Holy Longing: The Search for A Christian Spirituality*. NY: Doubleday, 1999, 241 pp.

Rohr, Richard. *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer*. Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003.

Sittser, Gerald. *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007, 364 pp.

Warner, Larry. *Journey with Jesus: Discovering the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010. An excellent guide to the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises.

Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives.* New York: Harper & Row, 1988. Willard was a Professor of Philosophy for many years at the University of Southern California. He was Richard Foster’s mentor.

Willard, Dallas. *In Search of Guidance: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.

*Centering Prayer*

Butcher, Carmen Acevedo. *The Cloud of Unknowing and The Book of Privy Counsel*. Shambala Publications, Inc, 2009.

Bourgeault, Cynthia, *The Heart of Centering Prayer: Nondual Christianity in Theory and Practice*. Shambala Publications, Inc, 2016.

Chase, Steven. *The Tree of Life: Models of Christian Prayer*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2005.

Kaisch, Ken. *Finding God: A Handbook of Christian Meditation*. New York: Paulist Press, 1994.

Keating, Thomas. *Intimacy with God: An Introduction to Centering Prayer*. Crossroad Publishing Company, 2009.

Keating, Thomas. *Open Mind, Open Heart: The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel*. The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2002.

Laird, Martin. *Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Laird, Martin. *A Sunlit Absence: Silence, Awareness, Contemplation*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Laird, Martin. *An Ocean of Light: Contemplation, Transformation, and Liberation*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Nouwen, Henri. *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1981.

Thibodeaux, S.J., Mark E. *Armchair Mystic: Easing into Contemplative Prayer*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2001; Franciscan Media, 2019. I have found this to be one of the very best books to introduce Ignatian prayer to a congregation.

*Lectio Divina*

Casey, Robert. *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*. Triumph Books, 1996.

Hall, Thelma. *Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina*. NY: Paulist Press, 1988.

Paintner, Christine Valters and Lucy Wynkoop, Lucy. *Lectio Divina: Contemplative Awakening and Awareness*. Marwah: Paulist Press, 2008.

Pennington, M. Basil. *Lection Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures*. Crossroad Publishing Company, 2017.

Vest, Norvene. *Bible Reading for Spiritual Growth*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993, 108 pp.

*Mindfulness*

Anonymous. *The Way of a Pilgrim and The Pilgrim Continues His Way*. Trans. by Helen Bacovcin. Garden City, NY: Doubleday (Image Books), 1978.

Lawrence of the Resurrection, Brother. *The Practice of the Presence of God*. Intro. and translation by John J. Delaney. NY: Doubleday (Image Books), 1977, 1996.

Underhill, Evelyn. *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man’s Spiritual Consciousness*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1911.