



June Membership Resource

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Beach Theology: A Meditation on Sand and Water

About This Resource:

When on your summer vacation to the beach or lake, we invite you to take this meditation with you onto the sand to begin or end the day. It can be used individually, or you can ask your family and friends to join you. This resource was designed to be inclusive of children ages 9 and up.

Alternatively, you can fill a bowl of sand and a bowl of water for use in your home, church, or parish. If engaging in this exercise as an individual, substitute group reflection for journaling.

Mindfulness Meditation - 10 minutes

If in a group setting, invite participants to sit comfortably in the sand near the water. Guide the group through the following instructions, with long pauses between each line.

Use these or similar words: This exercise is intended to guide us in noticing the Kingdom of God, which is already here, despite that we often fail to notice it. Begin by taking a few deep breaths. You can close your eyes if that's comfortable for you.

Breathe in, and imagine that you are breathing in life and light.

Breathe out, imagining worry and pain leaving your body.

If you are at the beach, dig your toes in the sand.

Feel the sunlight or the breeze against your skin.



Ask participants to notice silently (or name aloud if children are present):

- What do you hear?
- What do you smell?
- What do you feel?
- What do you see?

Biblical Reflection: 10 minutes

Read aloud the following passage from Psalm 139:7-10, 17-18 (CEB). If children are present, ask a child to read.

Where could I go to get away from your spirit?
Where could I go to escape your presence?
If I went up to heaven, you would be there.
If I went down to the grave, you would be there too!
If I could fly on the wings of dawn,
stopping to rest only on the far side of the ocean—
even there your hand would guide me;
even there your strong hand would hold me tight!

God, your plans are incomprehensible to me!
Their total number is countless!
If I tried to count them—they outnumber grains of sand!
If I came to the very end—I'd still be with you.

Ask participants to notice a word or phrase that stands out to them as another volunteer reads the passage a second time.

Then ask participants to share their word or phrase and why they chose it.



Reflection - 10 minutes

Reflect aloud upon the following questions.

- What does it mean that God holds our hand even “on the far side of the ocean”? Where are those faraway places in your life? In our world?
- What are some signs that God is with us, even when we are “on the far side of the ocean”? When you feel far from God, who or what gives you hope?
- Why do you think the author meant by saying that God’s plans outnumber the grains of sand? (Question for adults - how does the incomprehensible nature of God affect your understanding of your relationship with the Divine?)

Prayer (5 minutes)

Invite participants to touch the water. You may need to be closer to the ocean or lake.

The facilitator reads slowly:

Creator God,
We thank you for going with us - even to the far side of the ocean.
Give us the courage to hold the hand of someone who is hurting,
that, through holy friendship, we might experience your peace.
We pray especially for those who are sad, sick, or in need of your strong hand,
whom we name aloud.

Invite participants to touch the sand. The facilitator reads slowly:

Redeeming God,
We place our hope in your mystery.
As we rest in the sand,
as we are held by the water,
whisper to us your plans for our lives,
that we might leave this time of rest



reenergized to participate with you
in the healing of the world.

Amen.

*If you are interested in further reflection on the wisdom of contemplation, consider signing up for our program, **EngagingSpirituality**. Nurtured by the spiritual practices of Centering, prayerful listening, spiritual reading, and outreach, participants seek to apply the teachings of Jesus to the struggles of our world. To learn more visit: <https://justfaith.org/programs/engaging-spirituality/>.*