



Faith in Action

“Serenity”

“Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life...” Matthew 6:25 a

Lesson: Believed to have been written in the early 1930's by American theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, the Serenity Prayer opens by asking God to "grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change" – an inner peace, that is, that can come only when we willingly relinquish total control of our lives to God. No easy task as our worries would remind us, especially in times of personal and global despair, uncertainty and struggle. We humans like to think that we have all of the power, even over the things we are powerless to control. So, how do we move from suffering to serenity then? The first (and final) step begins with acceptance – acceptance of our frail humanity and our limitations to control everything that comes our way, acceptance to live in the moment without fear, acceptance to let go to a loving God.

Let Your Fingers Do the Walking to Inner Peace

While labyrinths may be filled with the familiar twists and turns of mazes, they have one clear distinction – one path, with no dead-ends, that, in Christianity, is believed to show the lifelong way to the one true, centric God. Whether using your feet or your finger to wind your way through them, labyrinths are also scientifically proven to produce positive brainwaves and neurological responses that help trigger relaxation and calming. So, what are you waiting for when this introspective and holistic spiritual practice is literally waiting at your fingertip to help you find some of God's inner peace!?

Relax 4 Life has more resources than you'll ever need to start winding your way through various finger labyrinths, as well as histories, activities, and a kid's corner to set you on the right path
<https://www.relax4life.com/labyrinth-resources/>

Want to make your own labyrinth out of Play Dough? Then stop by here
<https://educationsvoice.wordpress.com/2017/03/09/mindfulness-in-the-classroom-using-play-dough-part-2/>

Doggone Worries!

The only thing more irresistible than a big worry is an adorable, little dog who seems to have as many as we do!

The last we saw Chester, the canine mascot for stress-outs, he was trying to sell us Travelers Insurance. But it's his extreme and irrational fears over finding a secure spot to keep his bone safe from imaginary thieves that keep him up at night, AKA worries, that is his best sales pitch. Schools reopening, COVID-19, finances, homework, virtual jobs and learning, homework, a dog bone. Sound familiar?

This week is a great week to take some downtime with your child to watch this video together, then have a good talk about what worries are keeping them up at night and how God can be our life travelers insurance policy for inner peace.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ea2elPCEfqk>

Every Breath You Take... Can be a prayer

Dubbed the “prayer of the heart” for the intimacy it fosters between the faithful and God, breath prayer is an ancient Christian spiritual practice that dates as far back as the 6th century AD. Like other forms of meditation, it uses breath to create a rhythmic pattern upon which a short, repetitive prayer can be based. While its centering method helps to better connect us with God’s presence that surrounds us, by blocking out daily distractions and worries and replacing them with God’s peace instead. AKA the perfect remedy for the world’s ills. Plus, it’s easy to teach to children!

The first line of the Serenity Prayer is a great place to start. Start by taking a few deep breaths in, while asking God to help fill you with God’s life-giving breath. Slowly exhale, releasing the worries and stress of the day. Next pray, “God give me the serenity” as you deeply breath in. Hold for a second, then slowly exhale, “to accept the things I cannot change.” Repeat as often as needed.

Remind your child (and yourself) that the breath prayer can be done anytime, anywhere and makes a blessed alternative to the anxiety, anger and helpless feelings the uncontrollable circumstances in life hand us.

The Small, Still Voice of Peace

The prophet, Elijah, found for himself that God was neither in the powerful wind, nor in the fire or earthquake, but came in a gentle whisper instead (I Kings 19:11 – 12).

This week, take some time to listen for God’s small, still voice by just lounging on your lawn with your child and quietly watching the clouds pass by. Feel the inner peace that comes when we sit with God instead of our worries, then share the discovery of pure serenity with them.

Worry Stones for the Worry Wart in ALL of Us

Our worries can make us feel fidgety, being all built-up and pent-up inside...and our children are no exception. So, why not start sending those pesky fidgets packing with a good stoning – as in worry stone-ing that is!

Worry stones can be a great tool in helping to keep your child’s body and mind distracted by those stressful moments that creep into all of our lives by centering their focus on the present moment, as they rub the stone,

Teaching your child to combine focused and prayerful thought while rubbing the stone, such as silently praying the first line of the Serenity Prayer, can enhance the benefits of this ancient calming technique, while further making your child more aware of God’s abiding presence.

Worry stones can be made with clay <http://creativeelementaryschoolcounselor.blogspot.com/2012/10/worry-stones.html> or with the real deal. If choosing the latter, why not make a relaxing day of it walking the beach or another outdoor recreational area in quest of the perfect stone? Make sure that the stone you choose is smooth and fits comfortably in your child’s hand and pocket. Then find the perfect stone for you too! Finish the day by painting your stones together with inspirational words...like serenity.

The Peace and Presence of God

True serenity begins in our awareness of God’s abiding presence, which can often seem difficult – even impossible – in the midst of all of the worries in our world and our lives. This week and onwards, help your child to know God’s presence by acknowledging God at the start and finish of each day, so that they may know God’s lasting peace also.