

RHYTHM:

a weekly reflection guide for students

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YEAR C	HANNAH JONES-NELSON		

What is Rhythm?

Rhythm is a weekly lectionary reflection guide designed with students in mind! Each week you'll find lectionary readings from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, and Gospels, along with different types of questions and readings to reflect on. Rhythm will help students connect with God and each week's readings in various ways, challenging students to put what they're hearing into practice throughout the week.

Rhythm is broken up into five sections, each with a unique purpose. In *We Read*, students are guided in reflecting on an initial reading of the week's passages. In *We Think...* students are encouraged to engage scripture on a deeper level by asking questions about the text. *We Feel* invites students to engage their emotions, bringing their feelings into conversation with God's word. In *We Believe*, students are invited to connect what they've read in scripture to the larger Wesleyan theological heritage. Finally, *We Practice* guides students in discovering the practices they might use to help develop a rhythm of life shaped by scripture and the community of faith to which they belong.

Rhythm: A Weekly Reflection Guide for Students can be used in a small group setting, as a guide for youth group time, or even with adults! We hope you find Rhythm as something that leads you and your students into a deeper faith.

We Read...

If you only read the passages from Jeremiah and the book of Psalms today, you might not be feeling extra hopeful or encouraged. Everything is in chaos; humanity has caused some major problems, and all have gone astray, leaving God frustrated. The psalmist tells us that God is with the righteous people, but have we ever felt like we're able to match up with the righteousness of God? What does it mean for us to see ourselves in the chaos, to identify with the humans who don't always have life figured out? Is all hope lost?

Luckily for us, the story doesn't end with these passages. They're a part of the story, but they aren't the entire thing. We keep reading in 1 Timothy and Luke 15, and we're reminded about who God is, how God cares for us, and where our hope can be found. Even when there is chaos around us, even when we don't meet the standard, even when our choices lead us astray, God's mercy and grace and love are enough. It's more than enough! God has chosen us and loves us, and God's righteousness becomes our righteousness. We are transformed and invited into new life.

Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28

¹¹ At that time, this people and Jerusalem will be told: A blistering wind from the bare heights; it rages in the desert toward my people, not merely to winnow or cleanse. ¹² This wind is too devastating for that. Now I, even I, will pronounce my sentence against them.

Jeremiah 4:22-28

²² My people are foolish. They don't even know me! They are thoughtless children without understanding; they are skilled at doing wrong, inept at doing right. ²³ I looked at the earth, and it was without shape or form; at the heavens and there was no light. ²⁴ I looked at the mountains and they were quaking; all the hills were rocking back and forth. ²⁵ I looked and there was no one left; every bird in the sky had taken flight. ²⁶ I looked and the fertile land was a desert; all its towns were in ruins before the LORD, before his fury. ²⁷ The LORD proclaims: The whole earth will become a desolation, but I will not destroy it completely. ²⁸ Therefore, the earth will grieve and the heavens

grow dark because I have declared my plan and will neither change my mind nor cancel the plan.

Psalm 14

¹ Fools say in their hearts, There is no God. They are corrupt and do evil things; not one of them does anything good. ² The LORD looks down from heaven on humans to see if anyone is wise, to see if anyone seeks God, ³ but all of them have turned bad. Everyone is corrupt. No one does good— not even one person! ⁴ Are they dumb, all these evildoers, devouring my people like they are eating bread but never calling on the LORD? ⁵ Count on it: they will be in utter panic because God is with the righteous generation. ⁶ You evildoers may humiliate the plans of those who suffer, but the LORD is their refuge. ⁷ Let Israel's salvation come out of Zion! When the LORD changes his people's circumstances for the better, Jacob will rejoice; Israel will celebrate!

1 Timothy 1:12-17

¹² I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength because he considered me faithful. So he appointed me to ministry ¹³ even though I used to speak against him, attack his people, and I was proud. But I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and without faith. ¹⁴ Our Lord's favor poured all over me along with the faithfulness and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ This saying is reliable and deserves full acceptance: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—and I'm the biggest sinner of all. ¹⁶ But this is why I was shown mercy, so that Christ Jesus could show his endless patience to me first of all. So I'm an example for those who are going to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷ Now to the king of the ages, to the immortal, invisible, and only God, may honor and glory be given to him forever and always! Amen.

Luke 15:1-10

¹ All the tax collectors and sinners were gathering around Jesus to listen to him. ² The Pharisees and legal experts were grumbling, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." ³ Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ "Suppose someone among you had one hundred sheep and lost one of them. Wouldn't he leave the other ninety-nine in the pasture and search for the lost one until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he is thrilled and places it on his shoulders. ⁶ When he arrives home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to

We Practice...

In 1 Timothy, we read about how the author was once proud, speaking out against God, but then, because of Jesus, he is now an example to others. Reflect on this statement: I was once _____, but then because of Jesus, I am now _____. What would you put in those blanks? How have you seen God work in your life? Take this statement and encourage your small group or close friends to reflect, too. Ask them how they have seen God in their own lives. Then, share how you see God in one another!

Notes

them, 'Celebrate with me because I've found my lost sheep.'⁷ In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who changes both heart and life than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to change their hearts and lives.⁸ "Or what woman, if she owns ten silver coins and loses one of them, won't light a lamp and sweep the house, searching her home carefully until she finds it?⁹ When she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Celebrate with me because I've found my lost coin.'¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, joy breaks out in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who changes both heart and life."

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We Believe...

In Luke 15, we see two different parables about something that is found. In the first, we see a shepherd finding his lost sheep. In the second, we see a woman finding her lost coin. Both reveal the heart of God and how God searches after us! We also know that it doesn't matter how we got lost, God will continue to search and seek and celebrate when we're found. Maybe the sheep ran away from the group, perhaps the sheep got turned around, maybe the sheep got pushed out - it doesn't matter. The shepherd sets out to find the sheep, even if the sheep did this to itself. And we know that coins can't lose themselves! A coin can't run away or hide; it was lost because of something out of its control. Even when we feel lost because of things others have done, God still searches for us. These parables are a beautiful picture of who God is and how much God loves us.

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We Think...

- What stands out to you in these verses? Does anything confuse you or not make sense? How do these verses compare to your own experience in life or the church?
- What are you considering? What questions come to mind?
- What is righteousness?
- What does it mean to be considered righteous?
- Why does Jesus tell these parables in Luke 15 to the Pharisees?

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We Feel...

- What emotions are you experiencing today? How are you making space for these feelings?
- Where have you seen God today or this week? What is pointing you to God (maybe it is something in creation, a friend or adult that cares for you)?
- What has God made new in your life? In your heart?
- When have you lost something important? What was your response to finding it?
- When have you needed Jesus's grace? When have you given grace to other people?