

RHYTHM:

a weekly reflection guide for students

VOLUME	02	05 MAY	WEEK FOUR
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...

Are we willing to listen when God speaks to us? Paul was prompted to go, Lydia was prompted to hear, and the paralyzed man was asked what he wanted. In all these stories, God was at work in different ways, and the people needed to listen. Sometimes God speaks to us through Scripture, through our friends, even through nudges in our hearts. Are we willing to listen? It can be easy to find a million excuses as to why we shouldn't go, change our lives, or accept the invitation. Jesus asks the paralyzed man if he wants to get well, and instead of saying yes, the man lists the reasons why he can't. He lost all hope of getting well, but Jesus has good news for him. Are we willing to listen? Are we willing to hear Jesus's good news for us today?

Acts 16:9-15

⁹ A vision of a man from Macedonia came to Paul during the night. He stood urging Paul, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" ¹⁰ Immediately after he saw the vision, we prepared to leave for the province of Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

¹¹ We sailed from Troas straight for Samothrace and came to Neapolis the following day. ¹² From there we went to Philippi, a city of Macedonia's first district and a Roman colony. We stayed in that city several days. ¹³ On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the riverbank, where we thought there might be a place for prayer. We sat down and began to talk with the women who had gathered. ¹⁴ One of those women was Lydia, a Gentile God-worshipper from the city of Thyatira, a dealer in purple cloth. As she listened, the Lord enabled her to embrace Paul's message. ¹⁵ Once she and her household were baptized, she urged, "Now that you have decided that I am a believer in the Lord, come and stay in my house." And she persuaded us.

Psalm 67

- ¹ Let God grant us grace and bless us;
let God make his face shine on us,
² so that your way becomes known
on earth,
so that your salvation becomes known
among all the nations.
³ Let the people thank you, God!
Let all the people thank you!
⁴ Let the people celebrate
and shout with joy
because you judge the nations fairly
and guide all nations on the earth.
⁵ Let the people thank you, God!
Let all the people thank you!
⁶ The earth has yielded its harvest.
God blesses us—our God blesses us!
⁷ Let God continue to bless us;
let the far ends of the earth honor him.

Revelation 21:10, 21:22-22:5

¹⁰ He took me in a Spirit-inspired trance to a great, high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

Revelation 21:22–22:5

²² I didn't see a temple in the city, because its temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ The city doesn't need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because God's glory is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵ Its gates will never be shut by day, and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ Nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is vile and deceitful, but only those who are registered in the Lamb's scroll of life.

22 Then the angel showed me the river of life-giving water, shining like crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb ² through the middle of the city's main street. On each side of the river is the tree of life, which produces twelve crops of fruit, bearing its fruit each month. The tree's leaves are for

We Practice...

Psalm 67 tells us that God is the light that people walk by, and God's river of life produces fruit. These descriptions of God use everyday things to help us better understand who God is and the love that God has for us. Find a light in your house, preferably someplace that is dark without it. Reflect on the room without the light. Then turn on the light and see how bright the room becomes, even if it is just a small bulb. How does God's light help you to walk in faith? Find a place with water, maybe somewhere outside you can go to, or use a faucet in your house. Reflect on how God is like our river of life. How is God like the water you're looking at? How is God's water of life producing good fruit in your own life?

Notes

the healing of the nations. ³There will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵Night will be no more. They won't need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine on them, and they will rule forever and always.

John 5:1-9

After this there was a Jewish festival, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ²In Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate in the north city wall is a pool with the Aramaic name Bethesda. It had five covered porches, ³and a crowd of people who were sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed sat there. ⁵A certain man was there who had been sick for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there, knowing that he had already been there a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

⁷The sick man answered him, "Sir, I don't have anyone who can put me in the water when it is stirred up. When I'm trying to get to it, someone else has gotten in ahead of me."

⁸Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."

⁹Immediately the man was well, and he picked up his mat and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath.

Notes

We Believe...

We believe the Spirit of God is alive and working in our hearts and the world. The Spirit speaks to us in different ways, as we discussed above. Sometimes, maybe even most times, this can be subtle. We feel a push to go and say something, we feel a tug to call that one friend, we hear our conscience ask if that's the best decision. All of these things can be God speaking to us! We don't have to hear a loud booming voice for God to be speaking.

Notes

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 does it mean for God's face to shine on us?
- Why did the paralyzed man in John 5 avoid Jesus's question?

Notes

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 experienced God's light and river of life?
- Have you ever felt prompted by God to go somewhere or do something? Why did you choose to listen or not listen?