

RHYTHM:

a weekly reflection guide for students

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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 Practice...

Have you ever felt like you were doing all of the right things but still found yourself exhausted? Missing something? Wondering why you weren't feeling filled up? Sometimes we can be doing a lot of good, important work, but we forget why we're doing it, who we're doing it for. Jesus tells Martha that he won't stop Mary from sitting in his presence, because that is what matters most. When was the last time you simply sat in the presence of Jesus? Take 5 minutes today to do this. Maybe the best way for you to do this is to go outside and be still, maybe it's reading your Bible in silence, maybe it's taking time away from the busyness of life and just taking a few minutes to be alone. Find time and simply sit with God.

Notes

We Read...

What does it mean to be connected to God? In Amos 8, we see God's response to the people who have become disconnected. They have trampled on the needy, ignoring what God has asked them to do. They have turned away from God, and Amos explains that because of this, they won't hear from God in the coming days. The people are disconnected in their minds, hearts, and lives. Psalm 52 shows us the difference between those who are disconnected and bring destruction, versus those who trust in God and rest in God's presence. It's clear which one will lead to a fuller life.

Colossians 1 paints a picture of Jesus as the head of the church and body; he is the originating source of all life. We need to stay connected to Jesus as we walk through life. In Luke 10, Jesus reaffirms this idea to us in the story of Mary and Martha. While Martha was busy doing what she was expected to do (not necessarily a bad thing), Mary wanted to stay connected to the source. Martha comes and asks Jesus to intervene, assuming that he would tell Mary to also do what was expected. But Jesus tells Martha that he won't do this, because Mary is where she needs to be. Mary is connected to her source of life.

Amos 8:1-12

This is what the LORD God showed me: a basket of summer fruit. ² He said, "Amos, what do you see?"

I said, "A basket of summer fruit."
Then the LORD said to me,
"The end has come upon my people Israel;
I will never again forgive them.
³ On that day, the people
will wail the temple songs,"
says the LORD God;
"there will be many corpses,
thrown about everywhere.
Silence."
⁴ Hear this, you who trample
on the needy and destroy
the poor of the land, ⁵ saying,
"When will the new moon
be over so that we may sell grain,
and the Sabbath

so that we may offer wheat for sale,
 make the ephah smaller,
 enlarge the shekel,
 and deceive with false balances,
⁶ in order to buy the needy for silver
 and the helpless for sandals,
 and sell garbage as grain?"

⁷ The LORD has sworn
 by the pride of Jacob:
 Surely I will never forget
 what they have done.

⁸ Will not the land tremble on this account,
 and all who live in it mourn,
 as it rises and overflows like the Nile,
 and then falls again,
 like the River of Egypt?

⁹ On that day, says the LORD God,
 I will make the sun go down at noon,
 and I will darken the earth
 in broad daylight.

¹⁰ I will turn your feasts into sad affairs
 and all your singing into a funeral song;
 I will make people
 wear mourning clothes
 and shave their heads;
 I will make it like the loss
 of an only child,
 and the end of it like a bitter day.

¹¹ The days are surely coming,
 says the LORD God,
 when I will send hunger and thirst
 on the land;
 neither a hunger for bread,
 nor a thirst for water,
 but of hearing the LORD's words.

¹² They will wander from sea to sea,
 and from north to east;
 they will roam all around,
 seeking the LORD's word,
 but they won't find it.

Psalm 52

¹ Hey, powerful person!
 Why do you brag about evil?
 God's faithful love lasts all day long.

We Believe...

Colossians 1 tells us that all life comes from Jesus, as God has always existed as the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). In Genesis, we read that God says, "Let us make humanity in our image" (Genesis 1:26 CEB). Just like the head of a stream is its source, Jesus is our source of life. We believe that a full and good life comes directly from Jesus. The good news for us is that the God of Creation loves us deeply and offers us a full and good life - we don't have to earn it or deserve it, because Jesus has gone before us and invites us in.

Notes

- ² Your tongue devises destruction:
it's like a sharpened razor,
causing deception.
- ³ You love evil more than good;
you love lying more than speaking
what is right.
- ⁴ You love all destructive words;
you love the deceiving tongue.
- ⁵ But God will take you down permanently;
he will snatch you up,
tear you out of your tent,
and uproot you from the land
of the living!
- ⁶ The righteous will see and be in awe;
they will laugh at those people:
- ⁷ "Look at them! They didn't make God
their refuge.
Instead, they trusted in
their own great wealth.
They sought refuge in it—
to their own destruction!"
- ⁸ But I am like a green olive tree
in God's house;
I trust in God's faithful love
forever and always.
- ⁹ I will give thanks to you, God, forever,
because you have acted.
In the presence of your faithful people,
I will hope in your name
because it's so good.

Colossians 1:15-28

- ¹⁵ The Son is the image
of the invisible God,
the one who is first over all creation,
- ¹⁶ Because all things were created by him:
both in the heavens and on the earth,
the things that are visible
and the things that are invisible.
Whether they are thrones or powers,
or rulers or authorities,
all things were created
through him and for him.
- ¹⁷ He existed before all things,
and all things are held together in him.

¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church,
 who is the beginning,
 the one who is firstborn
 from among the dead
 so that he might occupy
 the first place in everything.
¹⁹ Because all the fullness of God
 was pleased to live in him,
²⁰ and he reconciled all things to himself
 through him—
 whether things on earth
 or in the heavens.
 He brought peace
 through the blood of his cross.

²¹ Once you were alienated from God and you were enemies
 with him in your minds, which was shown by your evil actions.
²² But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through
 death, to present you before God as a people who are holy,
 faultless, and without blame. ²³ But you need to remain well
 established and rooted in faith and not shift away from the
 hope given in the good news that you heard. This message has
 been preached throughout all creation under heaven. And I,
 Paul, became a servant of this good news.

²⁴ Now I'm happy to be suffering for you. I'm completing what is
 missing from Christ's sufferings with my own body. I'm doing
 this for the sake of his body, which is the church. ²⁵ I became a
 servant of the church by God's commission, which was given to
 me for you, in order to complete God's word. ²⁶ I'm completing
 it with a secret plan that has been hidden for ages and
 generations but which has now been revealed to his holy
 people. ²⁷ God wanted to make the glorious riches of this secret
 plan known among the Gentiles, which is Christ living in you,
 the hope of glory. ²⁸ This is what we preach as we warn and
 teach every person with all wisdom so that we might present
 each one mature in Christ.

Luke 10:38-42

³⁸ While Jesus and his disciples were traveling, Jesus entered a
 village where a woman named Martha welcomed him as a
 guest. ³⁹ She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's
 feet and listened to his message. ⁴⁰ By contrast, Martha was
 preoccupied with getting everything ready for their meal. So

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 is it easiest for you to trust God? When is it hardest to trust?
- Martha was concerned about what she was expected to do, while Mary was ready to be in the presence of Jesus. Who do you relate to this week?

Notes

Martha came to him and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to prepare the table all by myself? Tell her to help me."

⁴¹ The Lord answered, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things. ⁴² One thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the better part. It won't be taken away from her."

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?
- Why does God care about the people who are usually at the bottom of society?
- Why is it important to stay connected to God?
- How can we put ourselves in a position to hear from God?
- What does it mean to be reconciled to God?