

RHYTHM:

a weekly reflection guide for students

VOLUME	02	09 SEPTEMBER	WEEK ONE
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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...

In Luke 14, Jesus challenges the people at the table to invite someone else to sit in the place of honor. Who do you normally choose to sit by when you're eating at school or with friends? How and where do you choose to sit? Consider inviting someone different to sit with you this week. Maybe this is a public invitation, or perhaps it's a private meal or coffee meet-up. Reflect on how you intentionally (or maybe subconsciously) have chosen your seat, and try to choose a different place this week.

We Read...

There is power in remembering where God has been at work in the world. The author of Hebrews instructs us to look to the people in our lives who have been examples of this faith and then do what they have done. Jeremiah and the Psalmist both recall God's work in Egypt and how God moved to deliver the Israelites time and time again. We remember who God is and how God has worked in events and through people who have gone before us.

And this remembering should lead us to action. We're reminded of the chaos that happens when we aren't in step with God. We can see the results of stubbornness and forgetfulness. But when we remember God and live into the ways God has called us to live, we enter into full life with Jesus. And this full life leads to seeing others with the eyes of Jesus, like he commands us to do in Luke 14. This full life in Jesus leads us to care for our neighbors and to share what we have, like the author of Hebrews instructs. It leads us to live into the upside-down Kingdom of Jesus, where the poor are given the seat of honor at the banquet. And this way of living is a reflection of God in the Old Testament, God in the New Testament, and God today.

Jeremiah 2:4-13

⁴ Listen to the LORD's word,
people of Judah,
all you families
of the Israelite household.

⁵ This is what the LORD says:
What wrong did your ancestors find in me
that made them wander so far?
They pursued what was worthless
and became worthless.

⁶ They didn't ask,
"Where's the LORD who brought us up
from the land of Egypt,
who led us through the wilderness,
in a land of deserts and ravines,
in a land of drought and darkness,
in a land of no return,
where no one survives?"

⁷ I brought you into a land of plenty,
to enjoy its gifts and goodness,

but you ruined my land;
 you disgraced my heritage.
⁸ The priests didn't ask,
 "Where's the LORD?"
 Those responsible for the Instruction
 didn't know me;
 the leaders rebelled against me;
 the prophets spoke in the name of Baal,
 going after what has no value.
⁹ That is why I will take you to court
 and charge even your descendants,
 declares the LORD.
¹⁰ Look to the west
 as far as the shores of Cyprus
 and to the east
 as far as the land of Kedar.
 Ask anyone there:
 Has anything this odd ever taken place?
¹¹ Has a nation switched gods,
 though they aren't really gods at all?
 Yet my people have exchanged
 their glory
 for what has no value.
¹² Be stunned at such a thing, you heavens
 shudder and quake,
 declares the LORD.
¹³ My people have committed two crimes:
 They have forsaken me,
 the spring of living water.
 And they have dug wells,
 broken wells that can't hold water.

Psalm 81:1

¹ Rejoice out loud to God, our strength!
Shout for joy to Jacob's God!

Psalm 81:10–16

10 I am the LORD your God,
who brought you up from Egypt's land.
Open your mouth wide—I will fill it up!
11 But my people wouldn't listen to my voice.
Israel simply wasn't agreeable toward me.
12 So I sent them off
to follow their wilful hearts;
they followed their own advice.

Notes

We Believe...

It's interesting that both Jeremiah and the Psalmist call back to Egypt and the exodus story, where God intervenes on behalf of the Israelites and rescues them from slavery. This historic moment was one of the most foundational stories for the Israelites! It was a perfect picture of God seeing them, hearing them, choosing the side of the oppressed, showing God's power to the world, and providing in miraculous ways. But even in the desert after this event, the Israelites began to grumble and forget about all that God had just done. This cycle of crying out to God, God delivering, and the people forgetting continues throughout basically the whole Old Testament - but the most important part of the story is that God continues to hear, God continues to listen, God continues to see. Even when we turn away, God is ready to draw near to us the moment we turn back around.

- ¹³ How I wish my people would listen to me!
How I wish Israel would walk in my ways!
¹⁴ Then I would subdue their enemies
in a second;
I would turn my hand against their foes.
¹⁵ Those who hate the LORD
would grovel before me,
and their doom would last forever!
¹⁶ But I would feed you with the finest wheat.
I would satisfy you with honey
from the rock."

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

Keep loving each other like family. ² Don't neglect to open up your homes to guests, because by doing this some have been hosts to angels without knowing it. ³ Remember prisoners as if you were in prison with them, and people who are mistreated as if you were in their place. ⁴ Marriage must be honored in every respect, with no cheating on the relationship, because God will judge the sexually immoral person and the person who commits adultery. ⁵ Your way of life should be free from the love of money, and you should be content with what you have. After all, he has said, *I will never leave you or abandon you.* ⁶ This is why we can confidently say,

*The Lord is my helper,
and I won't be afraid.*

What can people do to me?

⁷ Remember your leaders who spoke God's word to you. Imitate their faith as you consider the way their lives turned out. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

Hebrews 13:15-16

¹⁵ So let's continually offer up a sacrifice of praise through him, which is the fruit from our lips that confess his name. ¹⁶ Don't forget to do good and to share what you have because God is pleased with these kinds of sacrifices.

Luke 14:1

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to share a meal in the home of one of the leaders of the Pharisees, they were watching him closely.

Luke 14:7-14

⁷ When Jesus noticed how the guests sought out the best seats at the table, he told them a parable. ⁸ "When someone invites

you to a wedding celebration, don't take your seat in the place of honor. Someone more highly regarded than you could have been invited by your host. ⁹ The host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give your seat to this other person.' Embarrassed, you will take your seat in the least important place. ¹⁰ Instead, when you receive an invitation, go and sit in the least important place. When your host approaches you, he will say, 'Friend, move up here to a better seat.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. ¹¹ All who lift themselves up will be brought low, and those who make themselves low will be lifted up."

¹² Then Jesus said to the person who had invited him, "When you host a lunch or dinner, don't invite your friends, your brothers and sisters, your relatives, or rich neighbors. If you do, they will invite you in return and that will be your reward. ¹³ Instead, when you give a banquet, invite the poor, crippled, lame, and blind. ¹⁴ And you will be blessed because they can't repay you. Instead, you will be repaid when the just are resurrected."

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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?
- Who has been a leader in your faith walk? How have you tried to imitate their faith?
- When have you tried to do something by your own power (instead of relying on God)?
- When did you realize that you needed God's help? How did you feel when you were able to invite God in and ask for that support?

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

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 remind God's people about their deliverance from Egypt?
- Jesus tells his listeners to invite a different kind of crowd to their banquets. How do you think they would have responded to this?

Notes