



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 Practice...

Reflect on how your life is different because of your faith. Who has been a pillar of faith for you? Who has pointed you to Jesus in the ways they speak and live? Maybe share with this person if you're willing. Let them know how they have shown Jesus to you! After you reflect on this, consider how you have impacted others. Write down what someone would say about you if they were reflecting on your life like Hebrews 11 does for Abraham!

Notes

We Read...

A theme from our readings this week feels pretty obvious - our lives should match up with what we believe about God. Isaiah shares that God isn't impressed with religious practices and checking boxes if we aren't living out God's love and justice to the people we meet. The psalmist calls for us to live into God's righteousness, and the author of Hebrews lists out a variety of people from the faith who have matched their lives to their belief.

It's important to remember that the works we do can't earn us God's love and grace. This isn't a defense for working hard enough to receive forgiveness. Instead, it's a reminder that if Jesus has entered your heart, your life will look different. When the Spirit is at work in our hearts, our lives will be fruitful. God doesn't want us to post the best selfies in the sanctuary and then turn around and live selfish, uncaring lives.

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

The vision about Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah, Amoz's son, saw in the days of Judah's kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

Isaiah 1:10-20

¹⁰ Hear the LORD's word,
you leaders of Sodom. Listen to our God's teaching,
people of Gomorrah,

¹¹ What should I think
about all your sacrifices?
says the LORD.

I'm fed up with
entirely burned offerings of rams
and the fat of well-fed beasts.
I don't want the blood of bulls,
lambs, and goats.

¹² When you come to appear before me,
who asked this from you,

this trampling
 of my temple's courts?
¹³ Stop bringing worthless offerings.
 Your incense repulses me.
 New moon, sabbath,
 and the calling of an assembly—
 I can't stand wickedness
 with celebration!
¹⁴ I hate your new moons
 and your festivals.
 They've become a burden
 that I'm tired of bearing.
¹⁵ When you extend your hands,
 I'll hide my eyes from you.
 Even when you pray for a long time,
 I won't listen.
 Your hands are stained with blood.
¹⁶ Wash! Be clean!
 Remove your ugly deeds
 from my sight.
 Put an end to such evil;
¹⁷ learn to do good.
 Seek justice:
 help the oppressed;
 defend the orphan;
 plead for the widow.
¹⁸ Come now, and let's settle this,
 says the LORD.
 Though your sins are like scarlet,
 they will be white as snow.
 If they are red as crimson,
 they will become like wool.

We Believe...

As we briefly mentioned earlier, it's important to see that our passages this week are not saying that works save us. Instead, we see that the works that flow through us (like living out justice and caring for those who have been pushed aside) are a response to the new life Jesus has given us. We know that Jesus has offered us love, grace, forgiveness, and salvation, and all we have to do is accept that invitation. But when we have experienced the radical love of God, we will want to live in response. When we experience the love of God, we will want to share that love with every person we meet in every way that we live!

Notes

- ¹⁹ If you agree and obey,
you will eat the best food of the land.
- ²⁰ But if you refuse and rebel,
you will be devoured by the sword.
- The LORD has said this.

Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23

- ¹ From the rising of the sun to where it sets,
God, the LORD God, speaks,
calling out to the earth.
- ² From Zion, perfect in beauty,
God shines brightly.
- ³ Our God is coming;
he won't keep quiet.
- A devouring fire is before him;
a storm rages all around him.
- ⁴ God calls out to the skies above
and to the earth
in order to judge his people:
- ⁵ "Bring my faithful to me,
those who made a covenant with me
by sacrifice."
- ⁶ The skies proclaim his righteousness
because God himself is the judge.
- ⁷ "Listen, my people, I will now speak;
Israel, I will now testify against you.
I am God—your God!
- ⁸ I'm not punishing you for your sacrifices
or for your entirely burned offerings,
which are always before me.

Psalm 50:22–23

²² So consider this carefully,
all you who forget God,
or I'll rip you to pieces
with no one to deliver you:

²³ The one who offers
a sacrifice of thanksgiving
is the one who honors me.
And it is to the one who charts
the correct path that I will show
divine salvation."

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

11 Faith is the reality of what we hope for, the proof of what we don't see. ² The elders in the past were approved because they showed faith.

³ By faith we understand that the universe has been created by a word from God so that the visible came into existence from the invisible.

Hebrews 11:8–16

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out without knowing where he was going.

⁹ By faith he lived in the land he had been promised as a stranger. He lived in tents along with Isaac and Jacob, who were coheirs of the same promise. ¹⁰ He was looking forward to a city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

¹¹ By faith even Sarah received the ability to have a child, though she herself was barren and past the age for having children, because she believed that the one who promised was faithful. ¹² So descendants were born from one man (and he was as good as dead). They were as many as the number of the stars in the sky and as countless as the grains of sand on the seashore. ¹³ All these people died in faith without receiving

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 is a pillar of faith in your life?
- Who is someone who has shown you what it means to follow Jesus, and how have they done that?
- How does it make you feel to know that God wants you to receive God's Kingdom?

Notes

the promises, but they saw the promises from a distance and welcomed them. They confessed that they were strangers and immigrants on earth. ¹⁴ People who say this kind of thing make it clear that they are looking for a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking about the country that they had left, they would have had the opportunity to return to it. ¹⁶ But at this point in time, they are longing for a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God isn't ashamed to be called their God—he has prepared a city for them.

Luke 12:32-40

³² "Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights in giving you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to those in need. Make for yourselves wallets that don't wear out—a treasure in heaven that never runs out. No thief comes near there, and no moth destroys. ³⁴ Where your treasure is, there your heart will be too.

³⁵ "Be dressed for service and keep your lamps lit. ³⁶ Be like people waiting for their master to come home from a wedding celebration, who can immediately open the door for him when he arrives and knocks on the door. ³⁷ Happy are those servants whom the master finds waiting up when he arrives. I assure you that, when he arrives, he will dress himself to serve, seat them at the table as honored guests, and wait on them.

³⁸ Happy are those whom he finds alert, even if he comes at midnight or just before dawn. ³⁹ But know this, if the homeowner had known what time the thief was coming, he wouldn't have allowed his home to be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, because the Human One is coming at a time when you don't expect him."

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 call the people's offerings worthless in Isaiah 1?
- What does God ask of us, and what does this mean for life today?
- Why does the author of Hebrews give these examples of people from the Old Testament in Hebrews 11?