

Light Visualization

Many New Testament references draw out the power of light as a symbol for God's radiant, loving truth as well as its occasional physical manifestation when God's glory has a visible effect: "God is light" (1 John 1:5), "the glory of the Lord shone around them" (Luke 2:9), "[Jesus] is the light of the world" (John 8:12), "you are the light of the world" (Matt 5:14) and "walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8).

One of the ways light can be visualized is by closing your eyes and letting a bright, white star of light emerge in the middle of your forehead, allowing it to become as still and three dimensional as possible. If you have difficulty with such imaging, you can simply sense that the light is there, feeling its warmth. Let this light stand for the light of Christ through which you are lovingly known, a light which gently absorbs all the thoughts and feelings that arise. Be very still and present to God through this time. The more you still your mind, the more still the light will be.

This practice can be extended now or at another time by letting the light slowly expand through your body as an opening, cleansing light, and then beyond your body, so that within and without there is an even light of God, and your breathing in and out is filled with this light.

Excerpted from Tilden Edwards, Living in the Presence: Spiritual Exercises to Open Our Lives to the Awareness of God.

Dwelling in the World

Reflect on a time during the day or previous week when you had an opportunity to share God's peace with someone (this could be a co-worker, stranger, neighbor, family member, etc.). Sharing the peace means participating in God's life and work to bring healing and wholeness.

Sharing God's peace can come in many forms: acknowledging the presence and humanity of the person ringing up your groceries or delivering your mail, making time to listen to a neighbor, delivering a meal or a plant, or supporting someone who is isolated, stressed out, or depressed, whether that be a friend, family member, co-worker, or someone you've just met.

Go back imaginatively into that encounter. What might God have been up to there? If you were to return to that relationship, what might God want to do?

Trusting God & Taking a Risk

This exercise invites you to reflect on risk-taking and its relationship to following God's lead. Take a few moments to journal your responses to the following questions, either alone or during a small group gathering, then break into pairs to share what came up for you.

- What have you considered trying in your life but haven't had the courage or opportunity to do yet?
- What is something that you've wanted to do in your life for many years but haven't ever pursued?
- Is there anything you think God might be inviting you to try that you haven't stepped into yet?
- List the reasons you haven't yet pursued these things.
- Now name some ways God has been faithful to you in the past.
- What would need to be true of God in order for you to step out and take a risk on any of the things you wrote about above?
- If this were true about God, what is one step you could take towards something you think God might be inviting you to try?

This exercise comes from Faith+Lead at Luther Seminary.