

Action-centred spirituality

People who connect through action may find the following helpful:

- Getting involved in community work - litter picking, foodbank,
- Getting involved in advocacy and fighting for justice,
- Outward focussed intercession,
- Prayer activities with a purpose,
- Social justice prayer communities e.g., Iona, Northumbrian Community, Greenbelt, Franciscan 3rd order.

This is to love God with all your strength.



When preparing worship try different types of prayer for different sessions or devote some sessions to different ways of prayer. Talking about our prayer life can be difficult - its personal and hard to put into words, and we are often embarrassed by how poor it seems. Creating a supportive environment where people can be honest can be liberating.

Resources

Christian bookshops can provide a range of resources for exploring prayer and spirituality.

On the Diocesan website you will find:

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/small-group-leaders-sessions/>

- Who is God for me? A series of pictures as a starting point for discussing what has God been like for me today.
- God emojis. A starter activity on how I feel about God today.
- A Rhythm of Life. Ways to create a workable life pattern that includes prayer.
- Prayer and spirituality audit. An activity to take stock of one's prayer life.

More on types of spirituality can be found at:

- <https://www.rootsontheweb.com/discover-roots/spiritual-styles>

Developing Prayer and Spirituality



Small Group Leaders

December 2020

Relating to God

It is often easier to talk about God than be with God. We study God; we talk about his Word, his deeds, his love. We talk at God; we tell God things he already knows. We stay in control. And although we know God loves us, and is with us, we can struggle to feel connected to God in our prayer. At times prayer is a joy, at other times a slog. All Christians down the centuries have grappled with this and left us their wisdom to pass on to our groups.

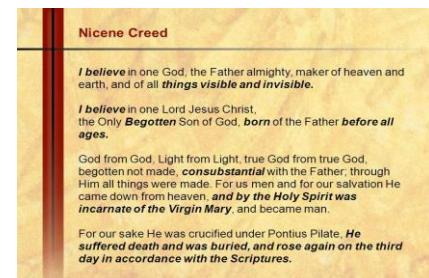
Sometimes, the problem is that we have been taught a way of prayer that does not come naturally to us. It is easy for group/ church leaders to assume that we must all pray in the same way. But God has made us unique. We each relate to God in our own way that grows and changes. Indeed, Christians have related to God in many ways through history, some of which now seem alien, but were genuine aids to encountering God at the time. As group leaders we can help each other by introducing a variety of ways of praying, being careful not to suggest one way is better than the others.

Csinos' Spiritual Styles

Although we each relate to God uniquely, Csinos suggests we can group those ways into four broad categories. Initially, working with children, he noted four styles of spirituality. People connect with God through

- words
- emotions
- contemplation
- action

It is good for us to relate to God in all four ways, but usually two or three will be easier than the others.



Word-centred spirituality

People who connect through words may find the following helpful:

- Written liturgy/ daily office or writing their own liturgy,
- Hymns with depth of theology,
- Deep theological/ doctrinal discussions, new learning and bible studies (shoddy logic and irrational arguments may be annoying),
- Lectio divina prayer, carefully crafted intercessions,
- A rule of life.

This is to love the Lord your God with all your mind.

Emotion-centred spirituality

People who connect through emotions may find the following helpful:

- Songs/ choruses/ poems that express feelings,
- Art, beauty, nature, pictures studied or created as part of prayer,
- Parables and stories, read or enacted,
- Opportunities for emotional outpouring: praise, lament, anger etc.,
- Ignatian imaginative prayer,

- Spiritual journals,
- Stream of consciousness prayers.

This is to love God with all your heart.

Symbol-centred spirituality

People who connect through symbol may find the following helpful:

- Silence and stillness to listen to God,
- Rituals and symbols to reach stillness,
- Icons and readings from the mystics,
- Quiet Days, silent retreats,
- Julian services of wordless prayer,
- Christian meditation.

This is to love God with all your soul.