

Create

A Sacred Summer

STORY

When I pull out my watercolor paints and take time to paint, I am able to enter a uniquely sacred space where imagination and creativity guide me closer to the Holy Spirit. Many times I hear others say, "I'm not creative. How can I create as a spiritual practice?" We can easily look at the world's standards of art and creativity and feel as though our own creativity isn't good enough. But, I would argue that we all are creative in our own ways, designed this way by God the Ultimate Creator. We simply must let go of the expectations of what creativity might be defined as to those around us. To be creative is to enter into a place of imagination, to open our hearts to what the Holy Spirit is doing within us, and to allow ourselves to feel and express our hearts to God. I give you permission to imagine, feel and create with messy abandonment, with an open spirit, and with non-judgment.

God, our Creator, made our world and each of us with intention, love, and delight! When we create something, we experience a small glimpse of what it means to place our heart into the world, express ourselves, and uniquely connect to God or others. In this experience, you will use the ideas provided to communicate with God through creativity. Set aside any worries of perfection or how this looks and think of it as a way to tap into the heart of God. Open the gift of creativity!

*Written by Joanna Cummings.

PRACTICES

Each day of the week, take time to do the 5 or the 15-minute practice.

Plan a time to do the Going Deeper practice sometime during the week.

- **5-minute Practice:** Read Isaiah 64:8. Use Play-Doh or some modeling clay to create something as you read the scripture and pray. Thank God for creating you as you mold your clay. You can also find recipes for homemade Play-Doh online.

- **Optional 5 min Practice:** Find something made by hand you have at home. Hold it in your hand as you read Isaiah 64:8 consider how it was made. Consider how long and thoughtfully the maker worked on this. Thank God for this maker and thank God for taking special care in creating you!

- **15-minute Practice:** When you make yourself food this week, take time to notice the process of creating, like when you make a sandwich or scramble an egg or even pour out a bowl of cereal. Think about every step of the process. Spend time thanking Jesus for the ingredients, for the people who grew them and for the ability to make something new out of different pieces. Enjoy each bite as you eat whatever you've made.

- **Going Deeper: Watch**
 - Watch a potter create a pot on a potter's wheel. Search on YouTube and find a video of potter "throwing a pot" or working with clay.
 - Find a video online and watch a baker knead dough and make bread. You might want to try this yourself.

Read about or watch a video about an artist you don't know well. Learn about their creative process.

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 64:8, Psalm 139:13-14, John 2:1-12

QUESTIONS for Journaling and Discussion

Read the scripture provided and use the questions below to reflect or talk about what God is saying to you through the Bible. You might use art supplies or pen and paper to draw your reflection or write about it. Younger children can respond through drawing as you share each prompt with them.

- I wonder: What does it feel like to know God created you much like a potter forms their own creation?
- Everyone is created by our Creator to be creative! What is your favorite way to be creative? Cooking, Music, Art, Hospitality, Carpentry, Decorating, Writing?
- How do you feel about the things you create?
- Knowing how you feel about your own creation, what does that tell you about how God feels about you?
- Do you see Jesus as a creator? Read John 2:1-12. Jesus created wine from water. What do you notice about the wine he created? What does this say to you about creating things?

EXPERIENCE

Choose one or several to try.

- **Watercolor Wonderings**

- Supplies: (per person or shared in group) cup with water, paper towels, paint brushes, watercolor paint, watercolor paper or heavy-weight paper/cardstock
- Instructions for Families: Gather as a family with supplies available for creating and reflecting. Use the supplies provided to create watercolor art on the paper. Think about the question: What is God creating inside of me today?
- Instructions for Groups/Churches: Create space for a group to gather or move through this experience. You might have a table set up, bags of supplies and instructions that are grab and go, trays to pick up the supplies from, etc. Use the supplies provided to create watercolor art on the paper. Think about the question: What is God creating inside of me today?

- **Doodling with the Creator**

- Supplies: coloring supplies of your choice, plain white paper
- Instructions: Gather as a family/group or individual with supplies available for creating and reflecting. If you are doing this with a group, create space for a group to gather or move through this experience. You might have a table set up, bags of supplies and instructions that are grab and go, trays to pick up the supplies from, etc. Use the supplies provided to create.
- Sit in a quiet and calm space and take a moment to pause. As you feel centered and ready, take a moment to think about a name for God that you connect with (Shepherd, Friend, Parent, etc.). Write this down in the center of the paper. Now, create a shape or doodle around the name for God, make this as creative and detailed as you like! Once you are ready to move on, think of additional words, names for God, phrases or scriptures that you would like to add around the page. Write, doodle, draw, add color, and have fun as you create. Remember that God created you and made you creative too! As you create, God is meeting you in this practice in new ways.

- **Play-Doh Creation**

- Supplies: Play-Doh, clean and clear surface to create
- Instructions: Choose a passage of scripture and create something from it using modeling clay or Play-Doh. Consider selecting a scripture that God is guiding you towards in this season or a Psalm. Invite God, the Creator, to guide your imagination and express your heart as you create with your hands and the clay/Play-Doh.

- **Create In Your Favorite Way**

- Supplies: select your own creative supplies
- Instructions: What is your favorite way to be creative? Perhaps you enjoy creativity through art, music, words, writing, cooking/baking, woodworking, coloring books, paint, chalk, dance/movement or yoga. Plan a time to do your favorite creative thing this week! The Creator invites you to be creative!

- **Read and Watch: *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making*** by Makoto Fujimura and check out Makoto Fujimura on YouTube.

PUSHBACK

Maybe you think, “I’m not creative. So, how can I connect to God through creativity?” Think back to where you learned that message about yourself. Did a teacher tell you that you weren’t creative? A parent? Or, maybe you said to yourself that when your art project got a C, and everyone else got A’s or B’s.

One of the first things we learn about God in Genesis is that God is not just a creator; God is THE Creator. And God says, in Genesis 1:26, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.” God has put a spark of creativity in you. How can you fan that flame? Practice telling the internal critic (that we all have) to be quiet because you were created by the Great Creator in the Creator’s image!

PRAYER

(Breathe In) Creator God, (Breathe Out) You delight in me!

*Consider doodling or creating art that shares this breath prayer (or one you create yourself) to display this week and bring you back to your Creator.