

Plan a **Personal Retreat Day**

“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

Preparation:

Intentionally plan and anticipate this time. Consider what you enjoy, what takes you deeper and closer to God, what you find freeing and fulfilling. What are your needs at this time? Perhaps you need to take time for quiet rest, or to prayerfully explore a theme or issue God has placed on your heart? Ask for God’s wisdom as you discern and make these decisions.

Choose a suitable venue: a quiet place away from routines, distractions & interruptions. Perhaps a park, garden, beach, retreat centre, art gallery, sculpture park, etc. Or join a retreat or quiet day here at NewHope, or at a spirituality centre (eg. WellSpring, <https://www.wellspringcentre.org.au/>)

What to bring:

May include: journal, Bible, a book, poetry, art materials, music, camera – but don’t over-schedule your time!

As you begin:

Settle into a time of quietness, acknowledging and welcoming God’s presence with you, using whatever means you find helpful. Perhaps repeating a favourite scripture, noticing the rhythm of your breathing, listening to the sounds of nature, music, etc. Pay attention to the ways God ‘speaks’ to you through your senses: through what you see, hear, smell, touch and taste. Savour these experiences!

Explore new ways of praying:

Try one or two new or creative approaches to prayer and notice where God leads you. Journal about it – notice and reflect on your insights, feelings, emotions, reactions, questions, etc

For instance:

- A **prayer walk**
- Imaginative **contemplation** of scripture passage
- **Lectio divina** – use scripture, reflect on a work of art, poetry....
 - Reading. Read a passage slowly and carefully within the bible.
 - Prayer. Having a loving conversation with God.
 - Meditation. Thinking deeply or swelling upon a spiritual reality within a text.
 - Contemplation. Resting in Gods presence.

- Action. Go and do likewise.
- **Examen** – of past day, week etc but maybe also of a book you have read, a film or TV program – many possibilities here! Here's a link to an Examen format -
<https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/jesuit-a-z/terms-e/daily-examen#:~:text=St.,for%20peaceful%20daily%20reflective%20prayer.&text=The%20Examen%20is%20simply%20a,the%20presence%20of%20the%20H%20oly.>
- **Body prayers** or prayer with movement. **Body prayer** involves all of who you are as you enter into communion with God, either individually or with other believers. Join Christians throughout history who used their entire being as a **prayer**—in expressions of joy, gratitude, and entreaty, as well as worship and devotion to God.
- **Breath prayers** Link for ideas -
<https://www.guideposts.org/faith-and-prayer/prayer-stories/pray-effectively/10-breath-prayers>
- Make a **photo journal** of the day
- Make a **gratitude journal**
- **Draw** or sketch, make a collage (eg. explore a theme or experience: joy, gratitude, hope, connections ... or if appropriate: grief, sadness, alienation, fear ... etc)
- **Walk a labyrinth** - many spirituality centres have labyrinths. There is now a labyrinth at McClelland Sculpture Park and Gallery in Langwarrin, just down the freeway
- **Prayers for the world** - use a globe or map, etc
- **Focussed prayers** of intercession - ie praying for others.
- **Write** a prayer or poem

Afterwards:

- In what ways did you experience God's presence during this retreat time.
 - Reflect on the gifts, insights or invitations you received today?
 - Is there a response, action or 'next step' you plan take?