

Family Formation

Session 9: Method of Intercessory Prayer #1: Going Down Deep

Handouts: Chapter 6, *Interceding with Jesus*, “They that hope upon the Lord. . . .”

Background for Parents

One method of intercessory prayer is to go down deep to where you feel the presence of God, and then you allow Him to “bring” other people there. This is similar to the prayer experience from Week 2 but this time after feeling Jesus’ presence within, we bring people to Jesus. If you have never experienced this form of prayer, we recommend that you try it out yourself on several different occasions before trying to explain it to your children.

This is a very peaceful, rich way to pray for the needs of others. Not only does it help others, but it fills up those who are praying!! We encourage you read the attached portion of Mother Nadine's book *Interceding with Jesus* to help make this more clear.

With the family

First explain this type of prayer. Read the story of the friends of the paralytic man in Mark 2: 1-12. The point of this story is that the paralytic’s friends simply brought him into Jesus’ presence and then Jesus took it from there! This was their role, and like the friends of the paralytic, our role is to simply to bring others into Jesus’ presence.

Then lead your family in this prayer experience. First you go down deep—this is where you feel peaceful and full of God's love. It is usually pretty easy for children to get here to this "inner room"—this is where journaling comes in handy because the children that journal are already accustomed to going down deep and listening to that soft, still voice of God. Only if necessary, use the stair method in Session 2.

After the presence of the Lord is felt, allow the Lord to bring people to mind—maybe someone on your sport's team, maybe a friend, maybe a teacher, maybe a sibling. Thoughts of these people will just “pop” into your head. Allow the Lord to bring someone or some situation to your mind and then very gently, bring them into the presence of the Lord deep within you. You don't have to pray any words for them—simply “bringing” them into the presence of the Lord will be enough. Then when you feel like you are "done" with that person, ask the Lord to reveal another person to you, and continue the process. If at any time you lose "contact" with the Lord, then have the children themselves go back to the first step of going down deep to where they feel the presence of God.

Allow your family to pray in this fashion for three or four different people. Then discuss their experience of this kind of prayer. As the parent, make sure you share your experience, also. Then go back into your prayer posture and allow the Lord to bring someone to mind that you are having difficulty loving. Bring this person into the peace and presence of God deep within you. Discuss. It is amazing but when we start to bring people that have hurt us or people that we don't necessarily like to this deep “inner room,” we find that our heart starts to change toward them. We start to experience God’s tremendous love for them also! We begin to love a little more like God loves. We may begin to see relationships change because we were open to love.

If time permits, have the children briefly journal their experience of this prayer form. Encourage them to write their feelings and any insights that come. They may find an increase in love for the people they have prayed for. This is a very peaceful, rich way to pray for the needs of others. Not only does it help others, but it fills up those who are praying!!

Throughout the week

Lead your family in this type of prayer experience at least several times. They need to become familiar enough with this prayer form so they can pray this way on their own. We encourage you to have your family journal out their experience of this form of prayer and to watch and see if there is a change in the people they have prayed for. Mention who the Lord has invited you to pray for this week and mention any changes you may see or feel.

Periodically review the need to journal. Modify your schedules if necessary to enable all family members quiet time with the Lord and time to journal.

Interceding with Jesus

Mother Nadine

Portion of Chapter 6

There are many different methods we can use to achieve this deep level of communication. I'm going to mention several methods of intercession which uses our imagination. Intercession can be very relaxing and easy. It can even be without words once we make connection with God. First we always ask the Holy Spirit to come and overshadow us with His peace and presence, with His knowledge and understanding, with His gifts that we received at Confirmation.

Get comfortable, though not too comfortable(!), close your eyes and spend some time becoming aware of Jesus. Get in touch with an awareness of the presence of Jesus within you, or the presence of the Father, or the presence of the Spirit. If you have thoughts bouncing around in your mind, just let them rest. Just imagine that Jesus is flooding you with His light. Try to see in imagery the whole inside of your self being lit up by His Light. God is Light. You might imagine that you're going down to the very center of your being. You might find that it's dark, maybe it's not light. You might just let yourself sink into His presence and let His light fill you. You might find the fountain Jesus talked about, deep within you. "Whoever drinks the water I give him will never be thirsty; no, the water I give shall become a fountain within him, leaping up to provide eternal life"(Jn 4:14). It just bubbles up toward God.

Or you might imagine that you find a living flame of Love deep within. You might just imagine Jesus sitting in a chair beside you. There are many different ways you can begin to experience the peace and light; use whichever way that works best for you. You can always imagine yourself present in a story from Scripture. Imagine yourself being present at the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38) and now you're just being over-shadowed as Mary was. You're just being filled with the living water of the flame of love, filled with light.

When you can see or feel this light, or whenever you feel yourself in God's presence, then it's time to ask the Spirit to bring to your mind one person that He would like you to pray for. When that person comes to your mind and when in your imagination you can see that person, lay your hands on the person, just as they laid their hands on Julie. As you place your hands on that person imagine Jesus placing His hands on top of yours. Imagine all the life and power from Jesus, from the Light, flowing into your hands. No words. Just let the power and the love and the life of God come through your hands to the person you're bringing to that Light. When you can see that person filled with God's love in your imagination, you might want to go on to another person. You might have a line of them at the door of your heart that God wants you to bring into His wonderful peace. Take your time over each individual. Pray wordlessly. You don't need any words. Just pray relaxed, full of God's peace. This is a refreshing, wordless type of intercession. In your imagination, see that person filled with Light, letting the darkness go forth.

Remember to keep your heart deep in contact with the Light, with Jesus, the flame of Love, throughout your prayer. Let the fountain bubble over within you and wash you clean. Remain deeply in God's presence yourself. Let the person bask in that love that you are basking in, let them bask in that Light and Truth. If you lose contact with God's presence, return to the beginning of your prayer and return to God's presence. It's important to remain in God's presence or your intercession will not be prayer but just an exercise of remembering people. We want to actually bring them into the presence of God. Once we get in touch with God deep within us, we want to bridge the gap and get them in touch with Jesus. Always keep your own focus on the Lord.

After you've prayed for several people, you might want to rest a little bit yourself. Intercession is ministry and you also need to drink and receive yourself. You can just rest for awhile in Christ's presence, in the power of His Spirit. Then you can continue your intercession and lay hands on another person, particularly those that you love or those who are committed to your care. After you've prayed for these, you might just take another pause to drink in

Christ's love, His power, His light, His presence, and His love for you. Then you might continue on and pray for your enemies, laying your hands in blessing on each one of the persons who you dislike or maybe people who dislike you or have caused you any kind of hurt, for Jesus has truly made it our obligation to pray for our enemies. He encourages us, "Love your enemies, pray for your persecutors" (Mt 5:44). "Bless those who curse you and pray for those who maltreat you" (Lk 6:28). Just feel this love power of Jesus pass through your hands into their hearts. **No words.**

You might want to pray for the nations, whatever nation comes to your mind. You might want to pray for the Church and whatever segment of the Church you feel led to pray for. It's God's power moving. He has plenty of power. He won't run out. He has enough for everybody! Don't be afraid to let your mind go blank for awhile in this restful posture and allow the Spirit to suggest persons and causes to pray for. If a person comes to your mind, lay your hands gently upon them and let God's love minister directly to that person through you.

As you go into a deeper state of union with God, God will often reveal what is in His heart that He might want you to intercede about. If you run out of people or things to pray about, you might just remember yourself now. Charity begins at home! You can end your prayer session with the words of Jesus, "Ask and you shall receive" (Jn 16:24). "For the one who asks, receives" (Mt 7:8). So it's okay to also present your own needs. Maybe you need the deeper gift of faith to really believe that God will answer your prayers, to believe that He really loves you. Maybe you need the gift of forgiveness or a deeper gift of love. Maybe you need help to succeed in something you are doing. Imagine Him giving this gift to you. Just rest, allowing yourself to be loved, to be filled with Light yourself, and listen. God may have something He wants to say. Then when you feel ready, allow yourself to surface. This is the time to journal, to write and record any of the specific details or insights you have received through prayer. Thank God for all He's done and expect it to happen.

When God first taught me this type of prayer, I tried it on a priest I felt needed to really be loved by God. He wasn't the type of priest you could go up and say, "Father, you need prayer" or "I would like to pray with you. I feel that you're empty." But God was showing me a lot of things about this particular priest and there was a lot of emptiness. This was a very intelligent man who was very heady and his heart was kind of blocked off. I did this type of prayer for him every day for about 10 minutes, no words, and he never knew I was praying. He still doesn't know it to this day and that's all I did. When I was in the presence of God, and I knew I was in the presence of God, I'd just bring him there and God would just love him—just like spiritual sunbathing! The change that took place in this priest was phenomenal! He became ignited. He came alive. It was beautiful.

This is a simple, wordless, effortless, way to pray. It's like I'm being loved and I just want to share this love with others. This is only one way to intercede, and it's restful and it's powerful. This is a contemplative way to intercede. There are many other ways. We like this method because it's a very direct contact with God and it's very effective. You can use this same method when you are in adoration, in the presence of the Eucharist. You really don't have to tell Jesus anything. You can silently bring the people and concerns He has placed on your heart to Him, and He'll take it from there. Put them right into His love. He's there in that full Presence. It's so easy and restful. A whole hour can just fly by and you are refreshed and graces have been obtained for others. Have you ever worn yourself out in prayer? All the things we have to pray about! All the people we promised to pray for can be overwhelming, but we can hold them in our heart and connect them to God.

This is just another form of prayer. We don't have to figure out anything. It is so simple. We just allow God to touch others as He's touching us, and every time God touches a soul, things happen whether we can see it or not. God's graces and love are flowing. Every time He touches a soul, there's always something good that happens because God is good. It's so easy. It reminds me of the song, "Here I am Lord" by Dan Schutte, "I will hold Your people in my heart." We can bring His people into our heart where God is living within us. Whatever they're doing and wherever they are, that's God's concern – He'll touch them as they need to be touched. He'll love them as they need to be loved. He knows what they need. This method is so refreshing. God is praying the prayers He desires,

not listening to us ramble on with directions. As long as you've made the connection and are deep in God's presence, you can pray this way all throughout the day. Just let God love you, also.

This type of intercession is just like the friends of the paralytic (Mk 2:1-12). They carried that paralyzed man into His presence, but Jesus took it from there. That was their role—simply to bring their friend into Jesus' presence. Jesus did the rest. He forgave sin, healed the paralysis in the man, both on the inside and on the outside. Like the friends of the paralytic, that's all we do. We get them to Jesus, and even then, it's not really us doing anything. It is God who brings them to our minds. We might start with people we know and all of a sudden somebody can show up from out of our past, somebody we naturally wouldn't be thinking about or praying for. The Spirit who desires His love to be poured out will help bring souls into His love.

Our own personal relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is so important. It's essential. As God is loving you, then all you do is bring them into that Love, but if we don't know Him, we can't do this. It's like when I was a child. When I would meet somebody I really liked, I would want them to come home with me and meet my parents. I wanted my new friend to have this beautiful experience of coming into the presence of my parents. That's what we do when we love people—we want to bring them into the presence of God. We want to bring them along with us on this journey of love.

The amazing thing about this kind of prayer is that we constantly go back and forth between contemplative prayer and intercessory prayer. The contemplative prayer draws us into the presence of the Father, and then intercessory prayer takes over as we pray for whatever comes into our minds. Many people in contemplative prayer think that people or things coming to our minds during prayer are distractions, that they are being distracted from the whole purpose of their prayer and bothering this union with God, but they are not. As we come closer to the heart of God, we're picking up the burdens in His heart and the people He wants to love.

I remember when I first learned this. We were in Medjugorje for the first time. All these wonderful things were happening and I would see somebody and think, "That bald head over there, isn't that funny, but it reminds me of a man I used to work for years ago." I thought, "Hmm, distraction, get rid of it. I haven't thought of that man in years." Then pretty soon I would see somebody else, and think they reminded me of somebody I went to grade school with. These weren't distractions to my prayer, *this was to be my prayer*. God was showing me all these people and reminding me of someone else and leading me to pray a simple prayer for them, and to bring them right there with me into God's presence.

This can also be a wonderful way to pray during Mass. When these distractions start happening in our minds, we just bring them to Mass with us. Maybe something you saw on TV two weeks ago, there it is, it's being replayed right in your mind, right there in the middle of Mass. Maybe it didn't make any difference to you when you saw it, but now your heart is burning, "Oh, I never realized, Lord, they might have needed prayer." You can put them right in the chalice. It's such an easy way to pray. Using your imagination, place them right in the chalice and when the wine is consecrated, imagine them being washed, cleansed, and given new life in the blood of the Lamb. We bring these seeming "distractions" to Him, into His Divine presence, and He takes over. This can be a powerful way to intercede, which is led by God, and it can happen anytime at this deep level.

There are many ways to intercede for people. I have mentioned the "chair technique," the use of our imagination as we bring others into the healing Light of the Father, prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and "placing people in the chalice." These are a few of the many simple ways to pray. These are gifts that have been given to us through the Church. Very simple ways to pray that won't tire us. Whenever we intercede, we must remember the Lord is the One who is in charge. All the results and the timing are up to Him. Our part is to simply be vessels through which His love can flow to touch those who need His touch.

Don't be afraid to use your imagination in prayer. Allow that childlike gift to come forth and allow God to do all the work. Throughout the day allow these "distractions" to be a springboard for intercessory prayer, allowing you

to bring God's presence to others. In this way, intercessors can experience a touch of God while praying for others at any moment of their day. It becomes a lifestyle. (The next chapter will expand upon the use of images to allow the Lord to teach us how to pray.)

“They that hope upon the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar as with” Is 40:31

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	

Connect:

D13-G13	Z4-X6	N6-Q9	Q9-Q10	S14-Q12	S10-R11
V8-U8	U8-U7	U7-T7	Z2-Y3	F10-A12	R5-T4
Y4-V5	D13-H11	V7-T7	U8-T8	Q10-R11	Y5-V6
S10-T10	T10-T9	P8-Q8	Q8-R6	R6-R5	Q9-Q10
T4-V3	V3-Y2	Y2-Z1	V7-V6	Z3-Y4	Q8-R6
Q10-R11	R11-S10	S10-T10	T10-T9	P8-Q8	T9-S8
R6-R5	R5-T4	T4-V3	V3-Y2	O15-O12	Y2-Z1
S10-R9	R11-R12	R12-S13	S13-T14	T14-S14	X6-V7
S14-S15	S15-O15	R15-Q13	Q13-Q15	P13-P15	V3-Y2
O12-N11	N11-M12	M12-J12	L12-M11	L11-K12	Z1-Z4
L6-M7	M7-M8	M8-L9	H13-J12	J12-K11	I9-F10
A12-B13	B13-F11	B13-A13	A13-A14	A14-P13	L9-I9
D13-B14	B14-H11	D13-B14	C14-D13	D13-G12	
H9-I11	H12-G13	G13-F14	F14-F13	G13-H13	