



How to Use *Horizons Magazine*

by Joyce MacKichan Walker

FOR A PERSONAL APPROACH TO A SOUND MIND AND BODY

Devotional, “Under the Apron: Communicating with God” by Carol Russell

- Identify a place in your home that “under the apron” might represent for you. Why does it qualify as a place that can “hide” you from interruptions and encourage your relationship with Christ? Carefully consider what such a place might mean and how it might best be used.
- Make a list of the things you are “busy” doing on a regular basis. Then put a check mark by all those that are more important to you than developing your relationship with Christ. What might your list tell you about your priorities?

“Proclaiming the Gifts of Holy Wounds” by Enuma Okoro

- When you examine your own body, what tales does it tell of your life passages?
- As you read each of the last three sections, reflect on how your body has proclaimed grace, healing and/or prayer and hospitality.
- Explore *Praying with Our Hands: 21 Practices of Embodied Prayer from the World’s Spiritual Traditions*, by Jon M. Sweeney (Wild Goose Publications of the Iona Community: Glasgow, Scotland: 2000). This book of reflections and photographs provides 21 simple ways of using our hands to speak to God.

“Giving Demons Their Due” by Karla Otroszko

- What “demons” have you encountered in your own life? In the lives of others you know?
- In what new ways do you think about demons because of Otroszko’s article?
- How might your new thinking change the way you perceive illness in others?

“From Brokenness to Wholeness” by Linda R. Crain

- After reading this article, go back and underline all the marks of an emotionally healthy individual that you can find. Then consider which ones describe you and which one you might decide to focus on as a way to better encounter and respond to stress.

“Eight Steps to a Sounder Mind” by Pat Gleich

- Tear out this page and tape it on your refrigerator door or on an oft-used mirror. At least once a day read one idea from it and plan to do one thing that day that illustrates the idea you read.
- Make copies of this page (add the appropriate credit to *Horizons* magazine: “This information originally appeared in the July/August 2008 issue of *Horizons*, published by Presbyterian Women. To learn more, visit www.pcusa.org/horizons.”), or make bookmarks with the eight ideas, and hand them out every time a friend or acquaintance complains about being forgetful or “losing their mind.”



IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY DISCUSSION ABOUT SOUND MIND AND BODY

Devotional, “Under the Apron: Communicating with God” by Carol Russell

- Susanna Wesley is one model for us. Name one person who is a model for you, what they model, and how it inspires your practice.
- Read aloud Luke 10:38–42. What are some of the things that worry and distract you? What do you think Jesus is pointing to in naming what Mary chose as “the better part”? Recognizing that the things that worry and distract us are always there for our attention, what might “the better part” be for you? How might you choose it on occasion to balance or replace some of the things that worry and distract you?
- Invite everyone to name one thing they hope for in their relationship with Christ. Then ask how you might help each other develop those things.

“Proclaiming the Gifts of Holy Wounds” by Enuma Okoro

- Invite your group to do the exercise described in the section “Body Talk.” After the stories are shared, talk together about how your insights might be gifts.
- Review the steps of “Holy Listening” listed by Okoro:
 - Cultivate a deeper curiosity about one’s body
 - Cultivate the patience and practice of listening to one’s body
 - Act on what you hear

Discuss ways to listen more carefully to one’s body, exploring her ideas as well of those of the group. What might responsive actions look like?

- Okoro claims our bodies can proclaim:
 - Grace—where our lack allows Christ to be present
 - Healing—where our touch bears to others the touch and healing of Christ, and
 - Prayer and hospitality—where our daily rituals, prayers and actions offer hospitality to God’s indwelling spirit and to one another.

Invite remembrances of times one’s body proclaimed grace, healing or prayer and hospitality for oneself, or to another. Ask, “What might these stories suggest to us about what God might proclaim through us?”

- Read aloud the last two paragraphs where Okoro talks about the sacrament of Holy Communion as a communal bodily prayer. Invite reflections on this understanding of communion by asking what new dimensions this understanding might add to our experience of communion.

“Giving Demons Their Due” by Karla Otroszko

- Invite participants to describe their picture/idea of demons.
- Ask, “What picture of demons does Otroszko present?”
- “The idea then developed that demons could invade human bodies and personalities and cause mental illness, physical disease, or other specific problems such as deafness or blindness. Some even believed that demons could take control of nature and cause natural calamities and disasters. Such ideology is clearly reflected in the synoptic Gospels of the [New Testament], where Jesus is known as one who characteristically exorcises demons.” How does this definition compare with yours and with Otroszko’s?
- Otroszko says, “...[I]t is separation from God that is the ultimate result of demonic activ-

ities. . . . Regardless of the source, restoration is still in order.” What might you characterize as “demonic activities”? What might restoration look like in any of those situations? How do you imagine God is involved in the restoration? Where does Otroszko suggest we look for healing? What do you imagine you find there? How are we in a position to provide healing as part of the church of Jesus Christ?

- “Our primary focus should . . . be on following Christ’s example as we seek to restore the suffering to the faith community, and thereby discover that we have indeed gained authority over those powers that seek to separate us from Our Lord and the church.” What healing ministries does your church engage in? What more might they, and we, do?

“From Brokenness to Wholeness” by Linda R. Crain

- As a group, make a list of major negative stressors that can happen to us personally. Then list reactions common to these stressors.
- Make a list of major negative stressors that affect us even though they do not originate with us personally. List common reactions to these stressors.
- According to Crain, emotionally healthy individuals:
 - Live consciously, deliberately and realistically
 - Are open to the recommendations of others and actively seek additional information or differing points of view
 - Can socialize, express themselves and feel comfortable in diverse groups
 - Face fears and seek rational solutions to challenges
 - Tend to be physically healthy
 - Are lifelong learners
 - Are able and willing to take responsibility for the outcome of their lives
 - Speak from their own convictions

Briefly discuss what participants think Crain means by each of these. Then ask them to privately put a check mark by the ones they believe apply to them. Ask, what do you believe your strengths are? Then ask them to select one from the list they believe they need to personally develop. Ask them to make pairs and tell their one thing to their partner. Then invite them to talk together about two things: how they might work on their one identified thing and how they might help their partner work on their one thing, or at least how they might best help hold their partner accountable for working on their one thing.

- If you are a group that knows and trusts one another and is able to share deeply, read aloud Luke 8:43–48. As Crain suggests in her article, use the story as an entrée into identifying personal issues and discussing them in a confidential and supportive manner. Name resources available in your church.

“Eight Steps to a Sounder Mind” by Pat Gleich

- On 3"x5" cards, make two sets of the eight steps, titles only, one step per card. Shuffle the cards and place them face down in a 4-by-4-card grid pattern. Play memory with the cards, taking turns turning over a pair of cards looking for a match. Whenever a match is found, the finder must offer one suggestion of a way to practice that step, or a personal story related to it that can be funny, practical or simply anecdotal. Those cards remain out of the grid and play continues until all matches are made.

¹ HarperCollins Bible Dictionary, Paul J. Achtemeier, Editor, HarperCollins Publishers, 1996, page 236.