BREATHING UNDER WATER: WE JOURNEY TOGETHER

Steps 12: Living the Story Forward

KEY IDEA: Healing becomes mission

In this final week focusing on Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps, we claim the truth that healing is never meant to stop with us. Grace moves outward. We recognize that what has been mended in us becomes healing for the world. Love becomes witness and we serve others as people shaped by grace.

Below are ideas and questions to consider in your journal, with friends and/or family.

1. Throughout the Bible, it's made clear that actions speak louder than words and we must serve others. Matthew 10:8 says, "What was given to you freely, you must give away freely." Father Richard Rohr notes that spiritual gifts increase in value with use, whereas physical gifts decrease in value with usage. What spiritual gifts do you possess that you can share with another person? What's one way you might prioritize serving others?

2. God offers us freedom. How does God's gift of "free will" help you appreciate the experiences in your life, both the good and the bad? How do you think that the breath mantra: "God meet us where we are; and lead us to wholeness," relate to ideas of free will?

3. In the Hebrew Bible, it is commonly believed that there is only one sin – idolatry, or making a god of something that is not God. What do you think about more than anything else? How might this be perceived as a god? How do you address issues of idolatry in your life?



Issues of addiction and transformation often are accompanied by suffering and pain. Is there a time in your life when suffering brought you closer to God? How do you feel about God sharing your suffering? How is God present with you in difficult experiences? How might you share God's presence with others who are experiencing tough times?



When we seek to put our faith into action, it's sometimes hard to find a first step. Think about one area of social justice or compassion that stirs your spirit. What change or difference are you seeking to make in the world? This week, focus on doing for one person what you wish you could do for everybody. Follow your acts of service by sharing it with others in the congregation.

FROM AGE TO AGE: Sharing Intergenerationally

Asking children why we help others can build a sense of empathy and compassion. Talk with them about what things or actions they think can make someone feel truly cared for. Build upon that, drawing in ideas about faith. When introducing the idea of service and mission to children, it's often useful to start at things they're good at and then explore how they might use these skills and talents to help other people.

Nothing introduces the idea of service better than serving. As a family, choose one or two things or issues you care deeply about and come up with one idea to put that passion into action.



As we end this study of *Breathing Under Water*, explore together what the following quote from Lao Tzu means and how it can impact the ways we choose to live: "Watch your thoughts, they become your words; watch your words, they become your actions; watch your actions, they become your habits; watch your habits, they become your character; watch your character, it becomes your destiny."



WRITE A BENEDICTION

Think back over the past nine weeks and our exploration of "Breathing Underwater." Consider the idea that "You can breathe and even breathe under water, because the breath of God is everywhere." Then write a personal benediction or blessing that reflects some of the thoughts from your experiences.

At Faith UMC this week, for example, we prayed, "Go now, rooted in grace and shaped by truth. Carry hope gently. Practice mercy boldly. Trust that what God has begun within you will continue to grow." What words of blessings are on your heart that you can carry into the week ahead?

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