Practicing Mindfulness

an exploration of mindfulness for small groups with teachings from Emanuel Swedenborg

By Sasha Silverman
With everyone, the Lord is constantly flowing in by way of heaven.
Many of the concepts and teachings in this guide are drawn from the Bible and the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Throughout this book, as is customary in Swedenborgian studies, the numbers following the titles of the works of Emanuel Swedenborg refer to section numbers (uniform in all editions) rather than to page numbers. We have utilized a variety of translations of the Old and New Testaments and the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg for this workbook. For more about Swedenborg, please see page 2.

The New Church is a new Christianity. Among its teachings are the following:

- God is infinite love and infinite wisdom.
- The Bible has a deeper meaning, which relates to a person’s spiritual development.
- God does not judge or condemn anyone. Heaven and hell are realities we experience in this life, based on our choices to either be kind to others or to hurt them. Eternal life is a continuation of the heavenly or hellish state in which we feel most at home.
- Every religion has some essential moral teachings like the Ten Commandments, and everyone who lives according to those essential moral teachings can experience heaven.

www.newchurchjourney.org
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SMALL GROUP MEETING FORMAT (60-90 MINUTES):

1) Opening Prayer/Silence — Start each group with a prayer and/or 1-3 minutes of silence/noticing breath (5 minutes)

2) Check-in — After the prayer, give each group member a chance to share something about their week or something about how they are doing. (About 1-2 minutes each, for a total of 10-15 minutes)

3) Presentation of the week’s theme with readings and quotes — Read the intro in workbook aloud with the group.* Then, if time permits, read the section of quotes that follows the introduction. Give the group members a chance to respond to the quotes. (15 minutes).

4) Meditation or mindfulness exercise — Read the meditation or mindfulness exercise provided in this workbook, or use your own. (20-25 minutes)

5) Closing comments — Give group members a chance to respond to the mindfulness exercise. Then go around the room, giving each person the opportunity to make any closing comments. (10-15 minutes)

6) Prayer requests, and a closing prayer — Ask anyone if they have anything they would like the group to pray about. Then have either the leader or a group member close the meeting with a prayer, acknowledging the prayer requests. (5 minutes)

* consider asking group members if they would like to be in charge of a particular week, to either lead the group from the workbook or bring their own reading or video or presentation idea.

Mindfulness Journal
Before you start, consider picking up a blank notebook or journal. This will be a way to record your thoughts related to the readings, group activities and weekly practices.
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SWEDENBORG AND MINDFULNESS

Who is Emanuel Swedenborg?
Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was a brilliant scientist and theologian who devoted the latter half of his life to sharing what has come to be called a "new Christianity." His many books, with their teachings about love, wisdom and human potential, are all centered on themes of kindness and understanding brought into action.

Swedenborg's approach to mindfulness
Swedenborg's teachings have much to contribute to what has now become mainstream mindfulness thinking. In fact, the famous Buddhist philosopher, D.T Suzuki, called Swedenborg the "Buddha of the North." For example, one of the essentials of Buddhism is to "pluck the arrow of desire." This involves letting go of ego-driven attachments. The result is a state of peace, and possibly, enlightenment. About the quieting down of burning desires and misconceptions Swedenborg writes:

None but those who have experienced a state of peace can appreciate the nature of the peaceful tranquility that the outer self enjoys when there is an end to struggle, or to the disquiet of burning desires and misconceptions. This state is so joyful that it surpasses all our notions of joy. It is not simply an end to our struggles but a vibrancy welling up from deep-seated peace. - Secrets of Heaven 92

In addition, just as current mindfulness traditions seek to find the connection in all living things, Swedenborg wrote about how divine love and wisdom permeate all things bringing everything towards a state of unity.

In this program, you will see quotes from the following works of Emanuel Swedenborg:

- Secrets of Heaven
- Divine Providence
- Heaven and Hell
- Divine Love and Wisdom
- True Christianity
- Apocalypse Explained
Those who receive and have faith are continually mindful of the Lord, even when they are thinking or speaking of other things, and also when they are engaged in public, private, or domestic duties, although they are not aware that they are then mindful of the Lord; for the remembrance of the Lord by those who are in faith reigns universally with them.

- Secrets of Heaven 5130
WEEK ONE

Mindfulness
What is it all about?
Introduction:

Right now, your heart is beating. Your chest is taking in and releasing breath. Same with all the billions of other beings living on this planet. We are so lucky to be alive, and to experience yet another day on earth. Of course, it’s easy to overlook these common, yet tremendous miracles because life always offers challenges. Sometimes we go into overdrive trying to fix our problems so that life can be "good again." Then, if the problems don’t go away, we get stressed, anxious, or depressed.

This is where mindfulness comes in. It’s the practice of slowing down, taking a break, and being present to what is, right now. It’s wrapping ourselves and our surroundings in love and acceptance, acknowledging our current reality. When we can come to that peaceful state, our minds open to a more expansive way of thinking. We might remember that along with the challenges and hardship, (and often even within them) there is also beauty and goodness. We might remember that we are in the presence of a loving God. We might even remember our shared humanity and our connection with all living things. It is here, in the state of mindfulness, that new perspectives on our problems often naturally and easily arise.

In this small group program, we will practice being mindful. This course is a simple introduction. We do not expect that all of us will sit for hours, learning the virtues of deep silence and non-reactivity. But we will get a taste, at least, of mindful practice. Hopefully, the path to a mindful state will become more and more familiar so that we can return to it at any time to "touch base" with that internal state of love.

Each week, we will explore one of the following aspects of mindfulness: attention, purpose, the present moment, and lovingkindness. This first week is an introduction to those four topics.
You will keep in perfect peace
those whose minds are steadfast,
because they trust in you.
—Isaiah 26:3

**Definition:** Bringing complete, loving attention to the experience of the moment. (*This is one of many ways to define mindfulness. How would you define it?*)

**Benefits:**
- To recognize and gain control over my habitual reactions
- To be in the moment and awake to what is happening now
- To become more relaxed and happy
- To be in a state where I can better love and serve others
- To feel the presence of the Lord in my life, right now
- To see situations more clearly and therefore help relieve suffering
- To tap into my creativity
- To practice letting go of self-absorption in order to act from love and charity
- To achieve balance in my relationships
- To identify seeds of anger, deceit, resentment, and committing not to water those seeds
- Other?

**Group Discussion:** What is something you hope to achieve through practicing mindfulness or meditation?

**Application**

Choose one of the above "benefits" (or one of your own) to keep in mind as a goal throughout the program. You might write, "I am practicing mindfulness in order to. . . ." and then fill in the end of the sentence. Post this goal somewhere you will see it often.
QUOTES ABOUT MINDFULNESS

Read some or all of the following quotes as a group and have people offer their responses (discussion question suggestions are provided). If you are short on time, you can skip to the meditation on the following page, using these quotes for independent reading at a later time.

Mindfulness is like lifting up to a higher way of seeing

We all have times where we feel scattered, confused, or just plain lost. At those times, pausing, closing our eyes, breathing, and lifting our thinking to a higher plane can bring us to a fundamentally different awareness and clarity:

When we are raised up to more internal levels we pass from the dull light on the level of the senses to a quite gentle light. At the same time we are removed from the inflow of what is disgraceful or foul and are brought closer to what is just and fair, because we are brought closer to the angels present with us, thus closer to the light of heaven...

When the mind is removed from the sensory level, it comes into inner light and at the same time into a state filled with peace and into a kind of heavenly bliss... We can be raised to even more internal levels; and the further we go, the clearer is the light that we come into. At length we are raised up into the light of heaven, a light that is nothing else than wisdom and intelligence from the Lord. – Secrets of Heaven 6313

When you begin to touch your heart or let your heart be touched, you begin to discover that it’s bottomless, that it doesn’t have any resolution, that this heart is huge, vast and limitless. You begin to discover how much warmth and gentleness is there as well as how much space. - Pema Chodron, Buddhist teacher and author

Mindfulness leads to a desire to serve

Far from “navel-gazing” or narrow self-indulgence, the essence of mindfulness is all about developing a clear mind, and clear conscience. It’s about the kind of self-awareness that leads us to care about our effect on others and to want to be useful.
Hidden deep with the desires of every angel's heart there is a kind of current that draws his or her mind to do something. In that activity, the mind finds its peace and satisfaction. This peace and satisfaction then condition the mind to be receptive to the love of being useful that flows in from the Lord. . . . - *True Christianity* 735:6

We need enlightenment, not just individually, but collectively to save the planet. We need to awaken ourselves. We need to practice mindfulness if we want to have a future, if we want to save ourselves and the planet. - *Thich Nhat Hahn, Buddhist teacher and author*

Mindfulness is about love and loving life. When you cultivate this love, it gives you clarity and compassion for life, and your actions happen in accordance with that. - *Jon Kabat-Zinn, mindfulness teacher*

**Mind and Body Connection**

The following quote expresses the connection between our minds and our breathing. Just by paying attention to our breath, we can get a sense of our mental state - whether it's anxious or calm. Then we can change our breath to bring about the state that we want.

> We cannot think at all without the concurrence and support of the breath of our lungs. So quiet thought is accompanied by quiet breathing, deep thought by deep breathing. We hold and release our breath, we suppress or intensify our breathing, in response to our thinking—in response, then, to the inflow of some feeling related to what we love, breathing slowly, rapidly, eagerly, gently or intently. – *Divine Love and Wisdom* 382

Our spirit is in our body, in its whole and in every part of it. - *Secrets of Heaven* 4659

When you practice mindful breathing . . . the peace and the harmony will penetrate into the body, and the body will profit. - *Thich Nhat Hahn*

**Discussion Questions:**

1) **What stood out to you in these readings, and why?**

2) **Describe a time recently when you were feeling anxious. What helped you come to a state of peace?**
MEDITATIONS

Choose one of the following two mediations to do with your group.

**Meditation 1: Stretching**

Consider having one person lead the stretches, so that all people can do them together as a group. You might do the stretch ten times, one for each of the ten beatitudes or one for each of the Ten Commandments.

**Directions:**

1) Have someone read the quote below, possibly to peaceful music:

*Praise the Lord, all you servants of the Lord who minister by night in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion, he who is the Maker of heaven and earth.* (Psalm 134:2)

2) Repeat this once more, reading slowly.

3) Ask group members to stand and slowly reach their arms up, and hold the stretch for a few seconds before dropping their arms. Say, "As you reach up, look up, and imagine the Lord's love pouring down into your outstretched arms. Then drop your arms and relax, looking back down. Breathe in as you raise your arms, and breathe out as you relax them. Let's do this 9 more times."

4) Afterward, discuss how this stretching meditation felt.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1) How did this stretching meditation feel?

2) What is the connection between you emotions and your body position? Does changing your body position affect how you feel?

3) Stretching is great for us physically. How might it be good for us spiritually? What does stretching symbolize to you?
Meditation 2: Breathing

The following is a simple 5-minute breathing meditation.

**Directions:**

1) Choose a quiet place and sit in a comfortable position. Set a timer with a pleasant ring tone (or use a bell). You can use this to signal both the start and the end of the meditation.

2) Try to keep your back straight so you don't get sleepy. It helps to imagine someone gently pushing between your shoulder blades to help you sit comfortably upright.

3) Keep your eyes closed (or gently gaze at something ahead of you), put on a slight smile, and pay attention to your breathing.

4) Breathe through your nose if possible, feeling the breath as it comes in and goes out. Focus on this sensation as closely as you can. At first, you might even feel anxious or restless, and it might seem that the meditation is making your thoughts race. The truth is that your thoughts were already busy - you are just noticing them.

5) As the thoughts arise, notice them, and then gently re-focus on the breath. Continue doing this for the full 5 minutes, or longer if those in the group choose to do so.

6) When the timer rings, slowly begin to feel the chair under you and listen to the sounds around you. Then open your eyes, take another deep breath, and smile.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1) How did this breathing meditation feel?

2) What is the connection between your emotions and your breath? Does noticing your breath affect how you feel?

3) Breathing is essential for us physically. How might it be good for us spiritually? What does breathing symbolize to you?
INDEPENDENT READING

The following article is for personal study. Read between meeting sessions.

ADAPTED FROM A TED TALK CALLED "IT JUST TAKES 10 MINUTES" BY ANDY PUDDICOMBE

When I was about 20, a number of things happened in my life in quite quick succession that flipped my life upside down. All of a sudden I was inundated with thoughts, inundated with difficult emotions that I didn’t know how to cope with. Every time I sort of pushed one down, another one would just sort of pop back up again. It was a really very stressful time. My own way of dealing with it was to become a monk. So I quit my degree, I headed off to the Himalayas, I became a monk, and I started studying meditation.

People often ask me what I learned from that time. I would say it gave me a greater appreciation, an understanding for the present moment. By that I mean not being lost in thought, not being distracted, not being overwhelmed by difficult emotions, but instead learning how to be in the here and now, how to be mindful, how to be present.

That’s hard because we live in an incredibly busy world. The pace of life is often frantic, our minds are always busy, and we’re always doing something.

Just to take a moment to think, when did you last take any time to do nothing? Just 10 minutes, undisturbed? No emailing, texting, no Internet, no TV, no chatting, no eating, no reading, not even sitting there reminiscing about the past or planning for the future? Simply doing nothing? My thinking is, you probably have to go a long way back.

The result of all this mental activity, without a break, is that we get stressed. The mind whizzes away like a washing machine going round and round, lots of difficult, confusing emotions, and we don’t really know how to deal with that. And the sad fact is that we are so distracted that we’re no longer present in the world in which we live. We miss out on the things that are most important to us, and the crazy thing is that everybody just assumes, “Well, that’s the way life is, so we’ve just kind of got to get on with it.” That’s really not how it has to be.

But we need to know how to be mindful. We need an exercise, a
framework. That's essentially what meditation is. It's familiarizing ourselves with the present moment. Now most people assume that meditation is all about stopping thoughts, getting rid of emotion and somehow controlling the mind, but actually it's quite different from that. It's more about stepping back, seeing the thought clearly, witnessing it coming and going, emotions coming and going without judgment, but with a relaxed, focused mind. We're looking for a balance, a focused relaxation where we can allow thoughts to come and go without all the usual involvement.

Meditation offers the opportunity, the potential to step back and to get a different perspective, to see that things aren't always as they appear. We can't change every little thing that happens to us in life, but we can change the way that we experience it. That's the potential of meditation, of mindfulness. You don't have to burn any incense, and you definitely don't have to sit on the floor. All you need to do is to take 10 minutes out a day to step back, to familiarize yourself with the present moment so that you get to experience a greater sense of focus, calm and clarity in your life.

**Application**

Look up! As you're walking from one place to another, especially if you're outside, look up. If it's nighttime, look up at the moon and stars. Let this be a reminder of what it is to lift our minds to higher things.

Lifting up the eyes is an outer act that corresponds to elevation of the mind (an internal act), consequently to perception; and therefore "seeing" corresponds to attention. - Secrets of Heaven 4339

To practice mindfulness is to look deeply to understand and feel the moment, experiencing the now.

To practice mindfulness is to be truly awake and conscious to reality.

To practice mindfulness is see how we are connected to existence.

- Chris Glenn, American mindfulness practitioner
The present moment is filled with joy and happiness. If you are attentive, you will see it.

- Thich Nhat Hahn
WEEK TWO

Paying Attention

What do I notice?
Listen and hear my voice; pay attention and hear what I say.

- Isaiah 28:23

Then the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, “Speak Lord, for your servant hears.”

- 1 Samuel 3:10

**Introduction**

Today, with just a few clicks or taps on a screen, we have capability to learn about just about anything we want to. We have access to the teachings of so many of the world’s greatest teachers and scholars. We can find out what’s happening on the other side of the world within minutes, or even seconds. With such incredibly easy access to information, it becomes even more important to ask ourselves, "Where will I put my attention?" Mindfulness can help us focus our attention in a worthwhile place.

One way to ensure that our attention is going to a worthwhile place is to put love first. Because when we focus on loving thoughts, we open ourselves up to all other good things.

Love is what is receptive of every heavenly quality - that is, of peace, intelligence, wisdom and happiness. Love is receptive of everything that is in harmony with it. It longs for such things, it seeks them out, it absorbs them spontaneously because it has the constant purpose of uniting itself with them and being enriched by them.

- Heaven and Hell 18

When we truly believe in something, it affects everything we do. For example, if we believe in treating others well, then we will pay attention to anything that helps us bring more compassion to the world. No matter what our job is, or what small tasks we're doing, everything we do and
say will be affected by that belief. When this kind of faith is in the forefront in our minds, we are, as Emanuel Swedenborg phrased it, being "mindful of the Lord." He writes:

Those who receive and have faith are continually mindful of the Lord, even when they are thinking or speaking of other things, and also when they are doing their public, private, or domestic duties, although they are not aware that they are then mindful of the Lord; . . . . They do not think ill of the neighbor, and they have justice and equity in everything of their thought, speech, and action; for that which reigns universally flows into particulars and guides and governs them.

- *Secrets of Heaven* 5130

### Application

This week we will practice paying attention. We will notice the kinds of things that draw our attention, remembering that we give power to wherever we put our attention.

We often fail to realize how what we focus on comes to control our thoughts, our actions, and indeed, our very lives.

- *Kare Anderson, anthropologist*

Attention is the holy grail. Everything that you’re conscious of, everything you let in, everything you remember and you forget, depends on it.

-- *Dr. David Strayer, professor*
**QUOTES ABOUT PAYING ATTENTION**

Read some or all of the following quotes as a group and have people offer their responses (discussion question suggestions are provided). If you are short on time, you can skip to the meditation on the following page, using these quotes for independent reading at a later time.

**Bringing our attention upward**

Whenever we start feeling pulled in too many directions, and we start to lose focus, it can help to stop, breathe, and maybe even stretch. Just the physical effort of stretching can remind us of our priorities. Mindfulness is like stretching our hands up to heaven, and remembering our spiritual center:

"Stretch out your hand towards heaven" means drawing attention to heaven, which then comes nearer. . . for an outstretched hand is used to draw attention to something and point it out.

And since, when our attention is drawn to heaven and it is pointed out to us, we also turn our gaze and thought in that direction, its coming nearer is also meant; for in the spiritual world things are brought nearer by focusing thought on them. - *Secrets of Heaven 7568*

When the mind is elevated, attention is awakened.

- *Apocalypse Explained 263*

**God is awareness itself**

God is aware of, sees, and knows everything down to the least detail that happens in keeping with the divine design because it is a universal design that encompasses the smallest individual designs. (Individual things taken collectively are called universal, just as particular instances are collectively called something common or general.)

The universal design with all its individual designs is a masterwork so well connected together into one thing that you cannot touch or affect one part without something of a sensation flowing back to the others. Every created thing in this world has something comparable to this quality of the divine design in the universe. - *True Christianity 60*
Paying Attention to loved ones

Kare Anderson is a cultural anthropologist. She was hired by Disney World to notice and record to what young children paid most attention to. She found that it wasn't the rides, or the characters or the cotton candy. It was their parents’ cell phones. She writes,

Those kids clearly understood what held their parents’ attention — and they wanted it too. Cell phones were enticing action centers of their world as they observed it. When parents were using their phones, they were not paying complete attention to their children. . . . Giving undivided attention is the first and most basic ingredient in any relationship. It is impossible to communicate, much less bond, with someone who can’t or won’t focus on you. . . . Paying attention may be an individual effort, but it’s also a kind of social cement that holds groups together and helps them feel part of something greater than themselves. It’s not always easy, but you can improve with practice — and find yourself becoming more flexible, more open to new ideas, and better able to resonate with others. Inevitably that leads to a richer, more meaningful life.

Attention is vitality. It connects you with others. It makes you eager. Stay eager. - Susan Sontag

Questions for Discussion:
1) How do cell phones affect your attention to others? How often do you touch/look at your cell phone each day? How often do you touch/look at your loved ones? How can we show our loved ones that they are a priority?

2) What do you think Sontag means by her assertion that "attention is vitality"?

3) If mindfulness is all about training your own mind, how does that practice help you pay more attention to others?

4) Think about an activity that you like to do. Describe it to a partner with as much detail as you can - what you see, feel, smell, hear, or taste. You might describe very simple things like washing the dishes or going for a walk.
Meditation 1: Making Space

Read the following aloud with your group:

It’s easier to pay attention to the flowers on your table if there are no dirty dishes or junk mail competing for attention. Similarly, it’s easier to pay attention to the goodness within and around us when we let go of unnecessary, repetitive thoughts and worries.

In order to create that clear, mental space, let’s take some time to notice the stuff we no longer need. What unnecessary things are taking up space in your drawers, in your purse in your desk, under your bed, in your closet or basement? What resentments or old patterns of thinking are you holding on to - that are taking up space in your mind and heart?

We will now do a brief meditation.

Meditation

Breathe steadily and imagine you are carrying a very heavy backpack full of things you don’t even need. So heavy that it is hard for you to move.

Breathe slowly and with each out-breath, drop your shoulders and imagine that you are letting that heavy backpack slide down off your shoulders, out of your hands, and onto the floor beside you. Keep breathing slowly, feeling the relief of the weight lifted off of you.

Take another deep breath, and see yourself walking on with a lighter step.

Afterward, discuss.
Meditation 2: Attention to feelings

Read the following aloud with your group:

When talking about those who suffered in Nazi concentration camps, author Viktor Frankl spoke about the courage of those who let themselves cry:

But there was no need to be ashamed of tears, for tears bore witness that a man had the greatest of courage, the courage to suffer.

Strong feelings like anger or sadness can be overwhelming. Instead of trying to suppress those feelings, or trying to make them right or wrong, we can pay attention to them, the way a loving parent might hold a crying child.

This approach gives us a chance to integrate our feelings into our life in a meaningful way. Let’s try this now.

Close your eyes and try to remember the last time you felt very hurt, angry or disappointed.

Pause

Notice how your body feels now remembering this incident. Do you feel something in the pit of your stomach? In your chest? In your hands? Is your heart beating harder? Are you holding your breath?

Breathe into those sensations for a minute. Feel them.

When you are ready, gently thank your body for its message, and then take a deep breath.

Know that you can do this same cleansing anytime you feel upset. You can pause, breathe into those feelings, and be with them until they have given you their message.

You can open your eyes.

Afterward, discuss.
ATTENTION IS LOVE, BY ALISON BONDS SHAPIRO

Published on July 11, 2010 by Alison Bonds Shapiro, M.B.A. in Healing Into Possibility

Attention is the key to so many things related to our lives. We have to pay attention to walk across the street. We know our relationships are more satisfying if we actually pay attention to one another. Our business affairs require our attention. All of this seems somehow self-evident. We know that attention is important, but we may not know that attention has direct biological results.

As my friend Rick Hanson says in his beautiful book Buddha’s Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love and Wisdom, “attention shapes the brain.” What we pay attention to is literally what we will build in our brain tissue. Our neurons wire in response to what we focus upon.

We may think we understand the art of paying attention but many times, unfortunately, we mistake attention for judgment. We think about attention as a "critical" function. Attention is not critical. Judgment is. Attention is neutral. We begin to pay attention to something and then we start to judge it, evaluate it, categorize it and, yes, generally "criticize" it. But judging, while certainly useful, is not attention. Judging involves an underlying assumption that our purpose is ultimately to categorize and take action. We judge something to be done with it. The rush to being done with something does not increase our capacity to pay attention to it.

When we judge something we generally assess whether or not we need to "fix" it, reject it or enhance it, and move on. In other words, we are motivated to change it in some way. Whatever it is right now is generally not OK or not enough and has to be altered. If our intention is to fix or change or reject something our capacity to pay attention to it is actually minimized. We will see only as much as we think we need to see to take action. What if there is more to learn?

Attention is noticing and being with something without trying to change it. Attention takes the time to fully explore, to discover whatever there is to know about something, to watch as things
change by themselves without our trying to ‘fix” anything. Attention is patient and attention is kind. No rush. No burden. No criticism.

Healing an injury requires the practice of paying attention, of being with something fully, of focusing upon it over and over again without pushing it away or trying to change it. It is in paying attention that we will discover the tiny threads of healing and transformation that are developing moment to moment. It is attention, not judgement, that will help our brains rewire.

So how do we let go of judgment and simply pay attention? How do we practice being with whatever is happening and learning from it? My teacher, Frank Ostaseski, founder of the Metta Institute, teaches the art of paying attention. Frank’s work is and has been for many years with people who are dying. He works at the forefront of what we find difficult to pay attention to.

Frank teaches: "Welcome Everything; Push Away Nothing". That might sound odd at first. Why would we "welcome" something unpleasant? The word "welcome" confronts us, asking us to look without judgment and criticism, to invite ourselves to be open to whatever comes, to simply pay attention.

This is not about seeking difficulty. Before my brain injury I was not in the least interested in being unable to dress myself. It’s not something I sought. But once I was injured I had a choice, I could "welcome" the assistance of the people who helped me dress or I could judge my inability to dress and the people helping me and thus push away the information it brought. But what would I have learned about the way to put clothes on post injury if I had?

The more I paid attention, without pushing away or judging what was happening, the more I learned about how my body moved and what I could do to help myself. The more I paid attention the more my brain began to rewire the movements necessary to continue to help myself. It really is that fundamental. Attention is the key.

Paying attention is ultimately an act of loving kindness towards ourselves. If we love a child, we pay attention to her. We watch this child thrive as we give her our attention. We know this works. In this way we are not different from the child. We too will thrive with attention and as adults, we have the capacity to give that attention to ourselves. Let’s practice simply paying attention, not rushing to judgment. Let’s practice "Welcome Everything; Push Away Nothing."
The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson
Being Purposeful

How can I engage this moment with intention?
Introduction

Yogi Berra once said, "If you don’t know where you’re going, you’re going to end up someplace else." One of the wonderful things about mindfulness and meditation is that it gives us a chance to check back in with our inner roadmap. It gives us a chance to ask ourselves, "Where am I? Where am I going? Where do I want to be? Do my choices reflect this goal?" Basically, purposeful living involves asking the big "Why?" Once we have an answer to this question, we are motivated in a new way.

Emanuel Swedenborg calls this intrinsic motivation our "ruling love." He explains that each one of us has something that drives us, that motivates us. Something we love to do, and we want to do:

Our purpose is what we love above all else. We focus on it in each and every thing we do. It exists in our will like a hidden current in a river that moves and carries things along, even when we are doing something else, because it is what motivates us. It is the factor that people look for and identify in others; then they use it either to influence the others or to cooperate with them.

Our nature is completely shaped by the dominant force in our lives. It is our will, our self, and our nature. It is the underlying reality of our life. It cannot be changed after we die, because it is our true self.

- True Christianity 399

Clearly, our goals are really important. Because what we aim at is the essence of our whole life:

The Lord regards nothing in us but our goal. No matter what thoughts we have thought or deeds we have done in all their countless permutations, as long as our purpose is good, these things are all good. When our purpose is bad, on the other hand, those things are all bad. Our final goal is what prevails in every single thing we think or do....
When you do what you love, the seemingly impossible becomes simply challenging, the laborious becomes purposeful resistance, the difficult loses its edge and is trampled by your progress.
- Steve Maraboli, Life, the Truth, and Being Free

Whatever we aim at is our actual life. The aim brings everything we think and do to life, since (again) it embraces everything we think or do. So the nature of our goal determines what our life is like. A goal, or purpose, is nothing but love, because the only thing we can adopt as a purpose is something we love. Even those who think one way and act another still have something they love as their goal. Within the pretense or deceit itself lies the goal, which is self-love or materialism, and this is the joy of their life. Accordingly, as anyone can see, the nature of our life reflects the nature of our love. - Secrets of Heaven 1317

Your soul mission is your reason for being, your life purpose. It's your calling in life--who you feel called to be, what you feel called to do. Mission is an energy that flows through you--a drive, voice, or passion that you cannot ignore. It's what you know in your heart you must live if you are to experience inner peace and harmony. - Alan Seale

**Application**

Practice asking yourself each day, “What can I bring to this situation? How can my presence make this situation better?” That’s purposeful living.
QUOTES ABOUT PURPOSE

Read some or all of the following quotes as a group and have people offer their responses (discussion question suggestions are provided). If you are short on time, you can skip to the meditation on the following page, using these quotes for independent reading at a later time.

Finding purpose helps us through suffering

The following quotes from Viktor Frankl, a survivor of the prison camps in Nazi Germany, remind us that having a sense of purpose can bring us through even the greatest suffering. It can give us strength in even the hardest conditions.

He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how. - Viktor Frankl

There is nothing in the world, I venture to say, that so effectively helps one to survive even the worst conditions, as the knowledge that there is a meaning in one’s life. - Viktor Frankl

This quote from Revelation also reminds us of the importance of purpose in helping us through inevitable suffering:

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. - Revelation 2:10

Chasing pleasure and success does not make us happy; we find happiness and purpose through service

The following quotes from Viktor Frankl remind us that happiness, success and meaning can’t be pursued; they ensue from a life of service.

• Pleasure is, and must remain, a side-effect or by-product, and is destroyed and spoiled to the degree to which it is made a goal in itself.

• Don’t aim at success — the more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like
happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side-effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person other than oneself.

- The more one forgets himself — by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love — the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself.

**Let Go, and Let God**

We might imagine that having a sense of purpose means that we have to fight hard to make things turn out the way we envision them. In fact, the opposite may be true. When we hold a sense of purpose in our hearts, and we do our best, we can take the pressure off ourselves to get certain results. We can just appreciate whatever unfolds, knowing that God is taking care of all the rest.

The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent. - *Exodus 14:14*

Cease striving and know that I am God. - *Psalms 46:10*

Happiness must happen, and the same holds for success: you have to let it happen by not caring about it. I want you to listen to what your conscience commands you to do and go on to carry it out to the best of your knowledge. Then you will live to see that in the long run — in the long run, I say — success will follow you precisely because you had forgotten to think of it. - *Viktor Frankl*

**Discussion Questions:**

1) Describe a time where you felt you needed to "let God and let God."

2) Describe a time when you were trying to make "having fun" the goal. Alternately, describe a time when "fun" happened unexpectedly, while you were simply doing something useful.
Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

-John 18: 37, 38
MEDITATIONS

Do the following meditation with your group.

**Meditation: Purpose and Acceptance**

Close your eyes and envision something that you're hoping for. Longing for. It might be related to strengthening a relationship. It might be a desire to apply a teaching from scripture to your life. It might be an opportunity to share your talents with the world. It might be resolution to a problem at work. Or it might simply be an image of a peaceful, orderly home.

Breathe deeply and imagine that it is all coming true. Spend time exploring how you feel, and what you can see, hear, smell and touch in this vision.

Breathe slowly and hold out your hands with your palms upward. Acknowledge that you are open to receiving this in your life. Also acknowledge that what arrives in your hands may be very different from this picture you have envisioned. And although it may not be exactly like you expected, you will still be okay.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1) How did this meditation feel?

2) Is anyone willing to share what they envisioned?

3) Why do you think it's important to have a sense of purpose in life?

4) Is it possible to be both purposeful and accepting? How can we be purposeful without being controlling?
There are two ways to live your life. One is as if nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.

Albert Einstein
Being Present
How can I be here, now?
Introduction

Sometimes the present moment is wonderful, and easy to savor. Other times, though, we might feel a sense of suffering in the moment. Maybe we're agitated, angry, hungry, impatient, bitter, overwhelmed, or embarrassed. Whatever the unpleasant sensation, we want to escape the moment. We're either resentful of the past, or living in assumptions about the future. What if instead of trying to escape the moment, we went more deeply into it? By doing so, we allow ourselves to discover the beauty and lesson and purpose of the moment, even within the suffering. This practice can help us overcome anxiety.

In the following quote, Swedenborg explains how this is true for the state of angels:

"The present with them includes past and future together. Consequently they have no anxiety about things of the future, nor do they ever have any idea of death, but only of life. And so their whole present includes within it the Lord's Eternity and Infinity. - Secrets of Heaven 1382"

Although few of us claim to be angels, most of us can identify with that state of being so in the present moment, so joyfully consumed in what we're doing, that time and space don't even seem to exist. It's a total acceptance of what is, with no desire to change things. Of course, when we're anxious or bored, the opposite is true. Time seems to take forever!

When any of us enters a state of love or heavenly affection we enter an angelic state; that is to say, it is as though time does not exist, provided that that affection holds no urge for change. That urge is a bodily affection; and insofar as anyone is subject to it time exists for us, but insofar as we are not subject to it, time does not exist. This is reflected somewhat in the delights and glad feelings that go with affection or love. When we experience these we are not conscious of time, since
If you are depressed, you are living in the past.
If you are anxious, you are living in the future.
If you are at peace, you are living in the present.
– Lao Tzu

we are living within the inner self during such experiences. By means of the affection that is an attribute of genuine love, we are drawn away from bodily and worldly interests, for our minds are lifted up toward heaven, and so we are drawn away from things that belong to time. Indeed it is reflecting on those things which are not the objects of our affection or love, and soon things that are tedious, that gives rise to an apparent sense of time. - Secrets of Heaven 3827

Conjecture about what is to come, and the remembrance of the past, are what take away every pleasantness and joy from life. From this come anxieties, cares, worries. - Spiritual Experiences 2190

So how is it possible to make sure we have what we need for the future without worrying about it? And how can we hold onto good memories, and learn from our mistakes, without dwelling in the past?

This week we will explore the answer to these questions, as we practice being in the present moment.

Application: Practice being present. When someone is speaking to you, for example, practice listening with more than just your ears. Listen with all of you; listen with your whole heart.
QUOTES ABOUT BEING PRESENT

Read some or all of the following quotes as a group and have people offer their responses. If you are short on time, you can skip to the meditation on the following page, using these quotes for independent reading at a later time.

With God, there is no such thing as the future

With God that which is yet to come to pass and that which already is are one and the same; indeed to Him the whole of eternity is here and now. - Secrets of Heaven 2788

With the Lord, and consequently in the angelic heaven, the future and the present are one and the same, for what is future is already present, or what is to take place has taken place. - Secrets of Heaven 730:5

Angels only think about "what is"

For a person cannot have one shred of thought, not even the least shred, that is not in some way temporal and spatial in origin, whereas angels' thought has no such origin at all. Instead their thought has its origin in timeless state, in which the being and the manifestation of things is the only consideration. - Secrets of Heaven 3404

This moment is enough

I have spoken to angels about the memory of things of the past and about consequent anxiety concerning things of the future, and I have been informed that the more interior and perfect angels are the less do they care about things of the past or think about those of the future, and that this is also the origin of their happiness. They have said that the Lord provides them every moment with what to think, accompanied by blessing and happiness, and that this being so they have no cares and no worries. This also is what is meant in the internal sense by the manna being received 'day by day' from heaven, and by the 'daily [provision] of bread' in the Lord's Prayer, as well as by the statement that they must not worry about what they are to eat and
drink, or what clothes they are to put on. But although angels have no care about things of the past and are not worried about those of the future they nevertheless have a most perfect recollection of things of the past and a most perfect insight into those of the future, because their entire present includes both the past and future within it. Thus they possess a more perfect memory than can possibly be imagined or put into words. - *Secrets of Heaven* 2493

Anytime we drop our judgments about a moment and give full attention, that moment is experienced as enough, just as it is. There is no thought or need to be elsewhere. Lack is in the thought, not in the present. There are no obstacles in the way of our being open and awake to this moment right now. There are no obstacles in the way of this moment being whole and complete. When we don’t let thoughts define us or this moment, then the completeness of this moment is evident. - Ken Walkama, American Dharma teacher

**Discussion Questions:**

1) Describe a time you felt deeply present in the moment.

2) Describe a moment recently where you were struggling to be present.

3) Have you ever felt that someone else was really present with you? How did you know?
The present moment is filled with joy and happiness. If you are attentive, you will see it.

- Thich Nhat Hahn

There is only now. And look! How rich we are in it.

- Vanna Bonta
MEDITATIONS

Choose one of the following meditations to do with your group.

Meditation Options

1) Meditate for 5 minutes on the phrase, "I am already here."

OR

2) Do a "body scan" meditation. Close your eyes, and send grateful thoughts to each part of your body, one part at a time. Starting at your toes, move your attention all the way up through your chest, down your arms, up to your head, and even to the muscles in your face. Notice any discomfort, pain or tension, and imagine a warm cloth being laid on those parts to help them relax and let go.

OR

3) Meditate for 5 minutes on the following teaching from the Word: Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:37).

Follow-up Questions:

1) What came up for you during this meditation?

2) Did you have any points during the meditation where you wanted to give up? What makes is hard to stay present?

3) Is it possible to enjoy good memories, or to prepare for the future if we're trying to be present in the moment? How?

4) What is a time when you felt totally present?
INDEPENDENT READING

The following article is for personal study. Read between meeting sessions.

Some of us tend to “overanalyze” our situations. We get lost in our heads, and forget to be present. The following ideas, taken and adapted from a booklet by Ken Walkama, a senior Dharma teacher in Boston, MA (see newtonzen.org/Meditation Booklet by Ken Walkama.pdf), can help you practice rejoicing in what is, right now.

10 WAYS TO BE IN THE PRESENT

- Wake yourself up now and then throughout the day. Step outside your thoughts and the role you are playing. Just be aware of what is around you. Breathe.
- In the “gaps” of your day, between meetings or activities, spend the time being mindful just walking, just sitting, etc.
- When you think about something, continue to have some of your attention on your breathing. This allows you to keep one foot in the present.
- During times of stress or when you are feeling preoccupied or disconnected, come back to your breath. Let this moment in; let thoughts recede.
- Practice taking time just to watch your thoughts rather than being swept away by them.
- At least once a day sit down and take a few minutes to settle into your body, being aware of the tensions that may have built up. Scan through your body, noticing whatever sensations arise. Remember yourself. Bring all of your parts back together by the simple act of paying attention to them.
- At least once a day sit down and take a few minutes to notice without commenting, what thoughts and worries you have been carrying around. Start by being aware of your breathing and then just notice what thoughts and concerns arise. Acknowledge each one without getting caught up in trying to solve or fix it. When you give
each one room to be, you are taking stock of your concerns rather than escaping or ignoring them.

- Choose some daily activity during which you will regularly practice being mindful, like washing the dishes, walking from your car to your office, brushing your teeth, etc. Pay attention to each movement and sensation, not letting the mind wander off.

- When you wake up in the morning, allow yourself to just be aware of your body, your breathing and the room around you. Don’t be so quick to reassemble your identity. You are more than your thoughts. Start the day with your awareness expanded beyond your thoughts.

- Turn to the present, not to your thoughts, to find your way.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

- Psalm 118:24
It is the essence of Love to love others outside of oneself, to desire to be one with them, and to bless them.

-True Christianity 43
Kindness and Unity

What do I appreciate about others?
Preparation: If you plan on doing the Holy Supper (see page 44) with your group, bring some bread and wine (or juice/water).

Introduction
Kindness is the state in which we feel compassion, we release unwarranted judgment, and we recognize our unity with all creation.

In 2013, the author George Saunders made a speech to the graduating class at Syracuse University. After speaking about the things in his life that he did not regret, such as terrible jobs and unfortunate circumstances, he told a story from his past where he and his classmates had not been kind to one particular girl. Reflecting back on this experience, George said, "What I regret most in my life are failures of kindness. Those moments when another human being was there, in front of me, suffering, and I responded . . . sensibly. Reservedly. Mildly."

Saunders went on to offer some reasons why we might not be as kind as we should: We believe that we are central to the universe, and that our personal story is the most interesting story. We think that we're separate from the universe. Lastly, we think that we won't ever die. He said, "These things cause us to prioritize our own needs over the needs of others, even though what we really want, in our hearts, is to be less selfish, more aware of what's actually happening in the present moment, more open, and more loving."

Emanuel Swedenborg also spoke about how self-centered thinking shuts us off from heavenly love:

Those who, during their lifetime, thought about and desired within themselves nothing but that which was selfish and worldly shut off from themselves every path or influx from heaven; for self-love and love of the world are the opposite of heavenly love. - Secrets of Heaven 4948
A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

—John 13:35

So how do we learn to make kindness a priority? How do we learn to see others' lives as equally precious as our own?

One way to start is by simply wishing good things for others. The following quotes remind us of this basic principle:

Goodwill is by definition a love for usefulness of all kinds. Goodwill wants to do what is good for our neighbor, and goodness is the same as usefulness. . . . - True Christianity 394

To feel the joy of another as joy in oneself, that is loving. - Divine Love and Wisdom 47

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. - Matthew 25:40

How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these. - George Washington Carver

The salvation of man is through love and in love. – Viktor Frankl

**Application:** Keep kindness in your heart and in your mind. When confronting a challenging situation, for example, remind yourself, "It's better to be kind than to convince others that I'm right." Another example would be to reach out to connect with someone you've been meaning to talk to.
QUOTES ABOUT KINDNESS AND UNITY

We are all connected through loving one God

Although it seems that we are independent people, the truth is that we are receivers of one life that flows in to each of our various physical receptacles. In fact, it can even be said that there's really no such thing as "self."

Life seems to be within us exactly as though it belonged to us, as though it were ours, but this is only the way it seems in order that we may be receivers. . . . The source of our thinking is not in ourselves but in others, whose source is again not in themselves. . . . Everything we think and intend is flowing into us, and . . . . everything we say and do is flowing in as well, albeit indirectly. . . . Since this is our actual state, what is our "self"? Our "self" is not really one or another kind of receiver, since it is nothing but the quality of its own receptivity. It is not some aspect of life that is actually ours. When we say "the self," no one hears anything but a being that lives on its own and therefore thinks and intends on its own. Yet it follows from what has just been said that there is no such self in us and that there cannot be. - Divine Providence 308

God is the Self, from whom all things are, and to whom all things are related that they might exist. - True Christianity 21

People who acknowledge one God in their belief and worship one God in their heart are in the communion of saints on earth and the communion of angels in the heavens. Each of these groups or communions is called a partnership, and is a partnership, because there is one God among its people, and they are in the one God. - True Christianity 15
We are made up of thousands of others. Every one who has ever done a kind deed for us, or spoken one word of encouragement to us, has entered into the make-up of our character and of our thoughts, as well as our success. - George Matthew Adams, American author

Drop the negativity that your mind has created about the situation that serves no purpose whatsoever except to strengthen the false sense of self. - Ekhart Tolle

Don’t think you are fixed, unchanging. You are forever flowing, shifting, interconnected with the whole cosmos. Free yourself from clinging to the idea that you are separate and have to fight against the world to keep your identity intact. - Elizabeth J Harris, Buddhist teacher

Discussion Questions:

1) Describe a time in this past week when you felt affection for someone.

2) Describe a time you received compassion and acceptance from another.

3) Which of the following feels most/least natural to you? Being tender with the young; being compassionate with the aged; being sympathetic with the striving; being tolerant of the weak and the strong
Meditation 1: Holy Supper

Bring some bread and wine (or juice/water) to share with the group. Pass the bread and the drink as someone reads the following aloud:

“Then Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.”(Luke 22:19-20)

In this passage, Jesus said "Do this in remembrance of me." Today as we pass this bread around, let us remember Jesus' words. As we taste the bread, we know the energy it gives us. We know we are worthy to receive divine goodness into our souls. We remember that we have all that we need to incorporate God's love into our life. As we swallow the bread, we can accept the commitment to practice a mindful life of following the commandments. We take the cup, hearing the promise of a new covenant with us all, the Divine Truth that we are given freely. The drink is refreshing and enlivening. We swallow and feel the power filling us with the Holy Spirit, aware and awake.

Consider saying the following prayer either silently as you take the holy supper, or together as a group:

I am awake to my connection to the Lord. I am awake to the joy that comes when I live by the commandments. I am awake to the Lord’s forgiveness. I am awake loving all of his creation and his children. I am thankful to be fed in my body and my soul.
Meditation 2: Loving-kindness

This will be a silent meditation. Close your eyes, and breathe deeply. Now picture each person in your group, one at a time. As you picture each person, reflect on their positive qualities and wrap that person with love.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1) What came up for you during this meditation?

2) What are some positive qualities that you thought of that you see in others?

3) Do you think it's easier to see the faults in others, or their good qualities? What about in yourself? Why might this be?

4) What is a time when you felt totally connected with those around you?
INDEPENDENT READING

The following article is for personal study.

"Hatred cannot coexist with loving-kindness, and dissipates if supplanted with thoughts based on loving-kindness." - from the Dhammapuda

What is loving-kindness?

Loving-kindness is a meditation practice used to learn to love others as ourselves, and feel their joy as our own joy. According to the Australian Buddhist monk Ven Pannyavaro, loving-kindness has the goal of "sweetening and changing old habituated negative patterns of mind."

The following description is adapted from Panyavaro's explanation of loving-kindness, and how it produces these four qualities of love:

- Friendliness
- Compassion
- Appreciative Joy
- Engaged equanimity

These four qualities naturally flow from the first to the last. First, we meditate on the quality of 'friendliness' - a warmth that reaches out and embraces others. This naturally overflows into compassion, as we empathize with other people's difficulties. (This is not pity, which lacks empathy.) Then empathy leads to an appreciation of other people's good qualities. Instead of feeling jealous of others, we are happy that they are happy. Finally we progress to "engaged equanimity'. This is not a sense of being removed and aloof, but instead it is full of all the three above qualities, just raised up to a broader scale. It is a feeling of spreading your love out and holding all people equally in that loving, open heart, hands open to all.

How do we do it?

We start with a loving acceptance of ourself. If we feel a resistance to this, then we know that feelings of unworthiness are present. This is common, and only means that we have some work ahead of us. As we begin to send ourself messages of love, we will begin to dispel feelings of self-doubt. As we begin to accept the love we are sending ourselves, we prepare ourselves to send the loving-kindness out to others. These people might include a respected, beloved person, such as a spiritual teacher, a close family member or friend, a neutral person
(somebody we know, but have no special feelings towards,) and finally to someone we are currently having difficulty with.

Starting with ourselves, then systematically sending loving-kindness from person to person in that order can break down the divisions within our own mind and open us up to a more inclusive kind of love.

**Loving-kindness Meditation**

Picture yourself (or the person you are sending love to) feeling joyful. Reflect on good things you see in that person. As soon as the positive feeling arise, switch from the visualization or the reflection and go right to the feeling. Keep your mind on the feeling. If you lose the feeling, you can go back to the visualisation to bring back or strengthen the feeling.

Eventually, you may come to a state of mind that involves naturally radiating feelings of universal love. This means that the practice has come to real maturity. We can then take our good vibes out and keep radiating them wherever we go, with a friendly attitude and openness toward everybody we interact with.

What flows in from the Lord is the goodness of heavenly love, thus of love towards the neighbor. Within this love the Lord is present, for the Lord loves the entire human race.

- Secrets of Heaven 6495

**Sending you love and gratitude**

You’ve reached the end of the Mindfulness program. Thank you for joining! We hope that you had a positive experience. Please send us your comments so that we can continue to provide programs that encourage and support you on your path.

Complete the evaluation at the back of this workbook or find us online at [www.newchurchjourney.org](http://www.newchurchjourney.org)
Appendix
APPENDIX A

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
    Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
    Thy will be done,
As in heaven, so upon the earth.
Give us this day, our daily bread.
    And forgive us our debts
As we also forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
    But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
    And the glory, forever.
Amen.

—Matthew 6:9-13 ASV
APPENDIX B

Participating in a Small Group

If you would like to do this program with a small group, consider using the expanded version for leaders (at www.newchurchjourney.org). For each meeting, bring your workbook and a Bible. Come a few minutes early so that you have time for fellowship with others in your group before beginning the meeting.

Small Group Guidelines

The following guidelines help create a safe, supportive environment:

1. We do not give unsolicited advice.
2. We do not interrupt.
3. We speak only for ourselves.
4. We share; we do not preach.
5. We have the option to pass.
6. We do not use names when sharing.
7. We keep confidentiality.
8. We seek to stay within time limits so everyone has a chance to speak.

Time Frame

With your group, decide the time frame for your weekly meetings. We suggest 60 - 90 minutes. If your church is participating in this program, set your time frame so that your first meeting follows the first worship service. That way, you will have had an introduction to the material before covering it in the group.

In this 7-week program, the 7th meeting will provide a chance to report on the 6th week’s task, and will provide an opportunity for closure.

Bring your talents!

Think about what you enjoy whether it’s baking, singing, researching, acting, or anything else. Work with your small group leader to find ways your talent might enhance the group experience.
## APPENDIX C

### Mindfulness Practice Cards

Use these cards as reminders of the spiritual work you are focusing on each week.

Cut the appropriate card out each week, and put it on your mirror, computer, dashboard, kitchen sink, or anywhere you will see it often.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1</th>
<th>Practice Mindfulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I look up, and I breathe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 2</th>
<th>Pay Attention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My attention is my vitality. I will use it wisely.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 3</th>
<th>Be Purposeful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am aware of my thoughts and actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 4</th>
<th>Be Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is nothing other than this moment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WEEK 5

Loving-kindness and unity
I am connected to all life
APPENDIX D

Works Cited

Books:


*Other translations of *Secrets of Heaven* were also used in this workbook, under the name Arcana Celestia, translated by Potts and Elliott. See references below:


Online:

Goodreads [Internet file]. Retrieved from www.goodreads.com/quotes


Your feedback is appreciated and will be most helpful in developing future programs. All evaluations are confidential and anonymous. You will not be contacted unless you request it.

Take the evaluation online at www.newchurchjourney.org.

Alternatively, you can complete the form included here, tear it out and then return it in any of these ways: give it to your leader; send it by fax: 267-502-4912; mail it to New Church Journey  P.O. Box 743 Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

If you feel inspired to tell us more, we'd love to hear more from you!

Send us your comments over email: campaignteam@newchurch.org

   Thank you for taking the time to complete the evaluation!

EVALUATION FORM

DATE ___________________________ YOUR LOCATION ___________________________

Name __________________________

Email ___________________________

Phone number ____________________

YOUR AGE

☐ Under 18        ☐ 18-35

☐ 36-60        ☐ Over 60

HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THIS PROGRAM?

__________________________________________________________________________

(over)
HOW DID YOU PARTICIPATE?

☐ Online ☐ Independently ☐ With a group

☐ Other (please specify): ________________________________

ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE

Is this your first experience with the New Church? If so, how has it been for you?

What did you find to be the strengths of this program?

How could this program be improved?

What types of programs would you like to see in the future?

Would you like to be contacted to share your story? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you like to donate to support future programs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please go to www.newchurchjourney.org and click on "donate." Be sure to mention "Journey" in the comments. Thank you!