

SING A NEW SONG

How to Read a Hymn

A hymn is a combination of a text and a tune.
A hymnal is a collection of hymns. While hymns and hymnals change over time, these songs help connect the people of God through music.

Not all hymns are found in hymnals. Hymns may be memorized, on a screen, led by a song leader ...

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

We Praise You, O God

TEXT MATTERS

Who is singing? Is this a personal hymn—I, me, mine—or a collective hymn—we, us, ours?

Where is God? Is God the one being addressed? Is God the subject? Is God the speaker?

Where is Scripture? Is the hymn a paraphrase of a biblical passage? A retelling of a story from Scripture? An answer to a question from the Bible?

What is repeated? What ideas, phrases, or images are repeated throughout the song?

CM (8.6.8.6) common meter What is the meter? This is the poetic rhythm of the hymn, the number and pattern of syllables per line.

Was it translated? Were the words originally written in a different language? What changes might have been made when the text was translated?

Have the words changed over time? Reading through a hymn, do you see words that seem outdated? Can you think of a new way to express the same sentiment? Do the words reflect the church and what we believe?

MUSIC MATTERS

Tune: All hymn tunes have a unique name, traditionally written in capital letters.

Melody and Harmony: Some tunes are written with a melody only so that the congregation sings in unison. Others are written to be sung in parts and will include harmony.

Key: Tunes may be written in major or minor keys. Some hymns will even change keys! The key can change the way the hymn sounds.

Repetition: There might be patterns or parts of the song that repeat. Each verse of the hymn might not begin or end in the same way.

Time: The time signature tells how many beats per measure.

Accompaniment: Some hymns are written to be accompanied by a particular instrument or designed to be sung without an instrument. Do you notice instructions for instruments (such as guitar chords) included in the music?

TUNE AND TEXT

Texts and tunes that we now sing together were not always written at the same time. In fact, some texts and tunes were and still are written many decades (or centuries) apart. Many texts can be sung to a different tune. Be on the lookout for notes that provide an alternate tune for the text.

KINGDOM 8787 (alternate tune: STUTTGART)

CONTEXT MATTERS

- Where were the text and the tune created?
- When were the text and the tune written?
- History: Was the tune or the text written as a hymn? Or was the tune originally a popular folk tune or from secular music? Was the text originally a prayer or poem? Were the tune and text written together?
- Community or Tradition: Does the text or tune come from a particular religious community or cultural tradition?
- Story or Purpose: Is there a story behind the hymn? Was the hymn written for a certain occasion or to teach a particular doctrine?

USE

- Season or Sacrament: Is this hymn used to celebrate a particular sacrament or season of the church?
- Part of Worship: Is this hymn used in a particular part of worship?

STYLES AND KINDS OF HYMNS

Plainsong or Chant: These hymns, originally sung by medieval religious communities, have speech-like rhythms emphasizing the words being sung. Examples: "Of the Father's Love Begotten," "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Psalter: Many hymns are interpretations of the Psalms, and collections of these hymns are called Psalters. Some are close paraphrases, while others are more loosely based on a psalm. Examples: "All People That on Earth Do Dwell," "The King of Love My Shepherd Is"

Service Music: These short pieces of music are sung responses connected with particular acts of worship. Examples: Doxology, Gloria Patri

Taizé: From the Taizé Community in France, these short hymns repeat one or two lines of Scripture or sacred text and are often designed to accommodate several different languages. Examples: "Live in Charity (Ubi caritas)," "Come and Fill Our Hearts"

Shape Note or Sacred Harp: This is a particular musical style that grew out of New England and Appalachia. These hymns were originally sung without accompaniment. Examples: "What Wonderful Love Is This," "How Firm a Foundation"

Spiritual: From the Black church, spirituals were first sung under slavery and include coded language. While many of the original authors are unnamed, the songs have been a source of strength and identity for the Black community and a foundation for modern gospel music. Examples: "Guide My Feet," "There Is a Balm in Gilead"

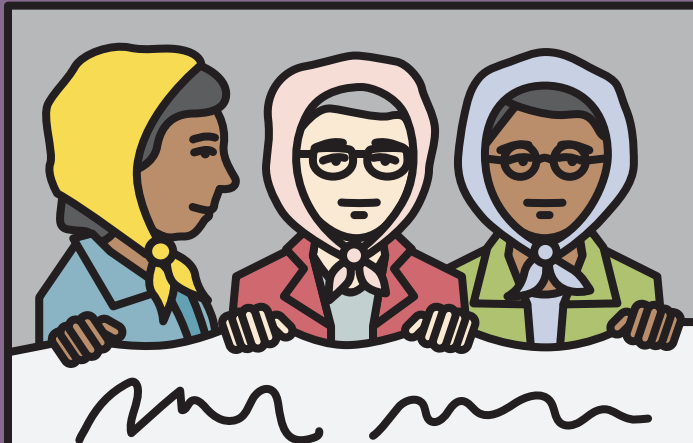
Praise and Worship: These are more contemporary songs, written for worship and personal devotion, often with a strong emphasis on individual faith. Examples: "Shine, Jesus, Shine," "You Are Holy (Prince of Peace)"

Many classical hymns from England, France, and Germany were composed among churches of the Protestant Reformation. Examples: "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"; "O Sacred Head Now Wounded"

"Global" Songs: North American Christians have come to know and love many hymns and songs from other parts of the globe, such as Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Examples: "Ososo," "Siyahamba," "Una espiga"

New Texts and Tunes: Poets and composers are still writing new hymns all the time, responding to fresh insights and emerging concerns. Examples: "Womb of Life and Source of Being," "Touch the Earth Lightly"

Acting in Community



Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, 1977–
Grandmothers (abuelas) formed an organization that found stolen and illegally adopted children.

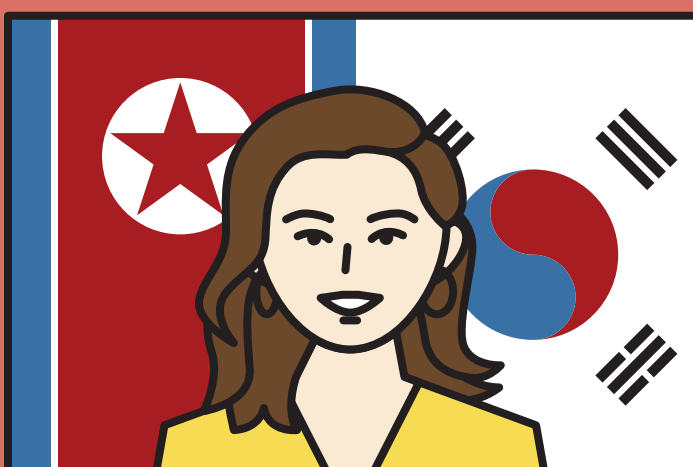


Philadelphia Mural Arts Project, 1986–
This is a public art program that believes art ignites change.

Speaking Up



Chico Mendes, 1944–1988
He was a Brazilian activist and environmentalist working to protect the Amazon and its people.



Christine Ahn, 1973–
She is the founder of Women Cross DMZ, which mobilizes women globally for peace in Korea.

LE CHAMBON-SUR-LIGNON

← 0K85 →



Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, circa 1942
This community protected Jewish people during World War II.



Jeannette Pickering Rankin, 1880–1973
She was the first woman elected to Congress and a vocal advocate for peace.



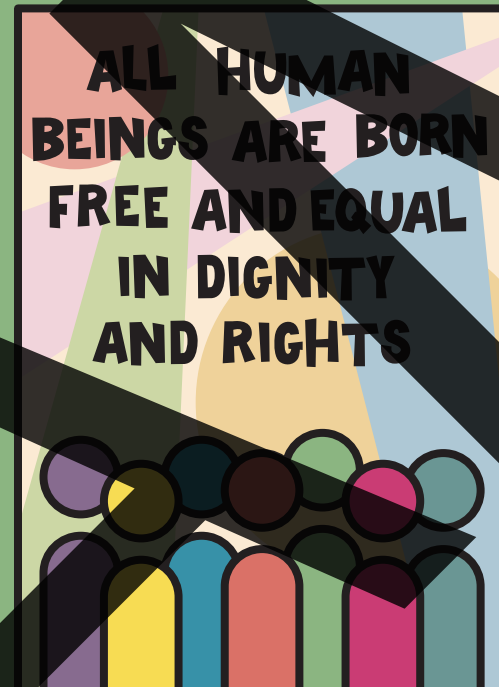
Dr. Victor Pineda, 1978–
He is a disability rights activist founding World Enabled and working to increase accessibility around the world.



Bernice Johnson Reagon, 1942–
She used music to unite people in the civil rights movement and founded the a cappella singing group Sweet Honey in the Rock.



Wangari Maathai, 1940–2011
She was a Kenyan environmental activist replanting forests across Kenya and across Africa, and she was the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.



Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
This document adopted by the United Nations established a common language around human life promoting freedom, justice, and peace in the world.

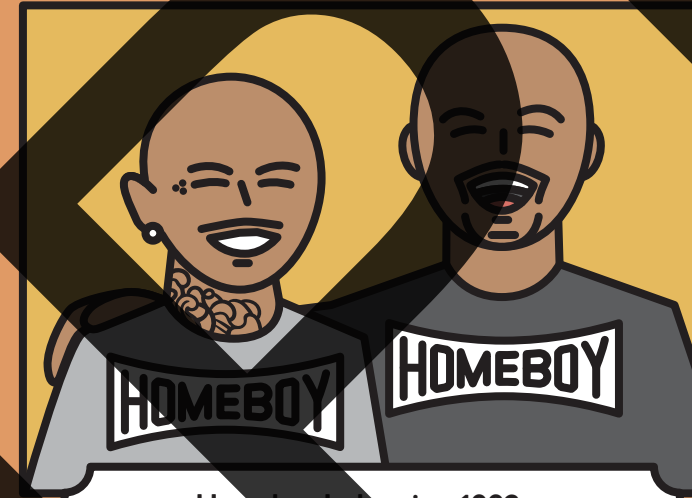


César Chávez, Dolores Huerta, and Gilbert Padilla (United Farm Workers), 1962–
This union was formed to seek equitable and just conditions and pay for farm workers.

Ending Violence



Peace Pilgrim, 1908–1981
She advocated for peace by walking across the United States.



Homeboy Industries, 1992–
This is the largest gang rehabilitation program in the world.



FREEDOM SCHOOL

Mississippi Freedom Schools, 1964
At least forty-one freedom schools were established to ensure education for Black children in Mississippi during the 1964 Freedom Summer.



Leymah Gbowee, 1972–
She is a Liberian peace activist who led a women's nonviolent peace movement that helped end a civil war.

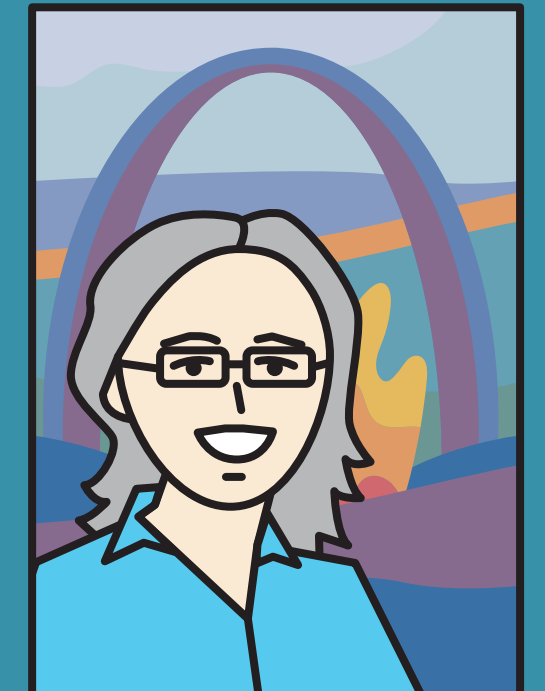


Ralph Bunche, 1904–1971
He was the first Black American and person of African descent to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.



Wendell Berry, 1934–
He is a writer, poet, and farmer, advocating against all forms of violence and destruction—of land, communities, and human beings.

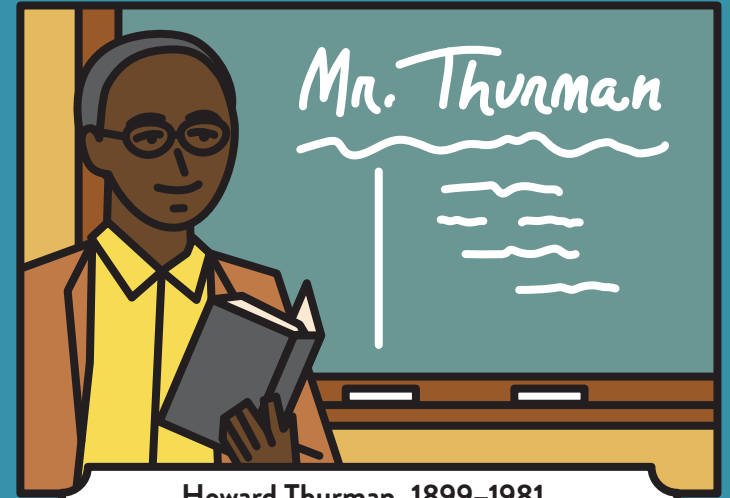
Finding Peace within and Sharing It



Rose Berger, 1963–
As a poet, community activist, and senior editor at *Sojourners*, she works for peace and social justice.



Brother Roger, 1915–2005
He was the founder of the Taizé Community in France, a place of pilgrimage, prayer, and community.



Howard Thurman, 1899–1981
He was a theologian, educator, and civil rights activist whose philosophy of radical nonviolence shaped a generation of activists.

Showing a New Way

MAKE PEACE
Blessed Are the Peacemakers

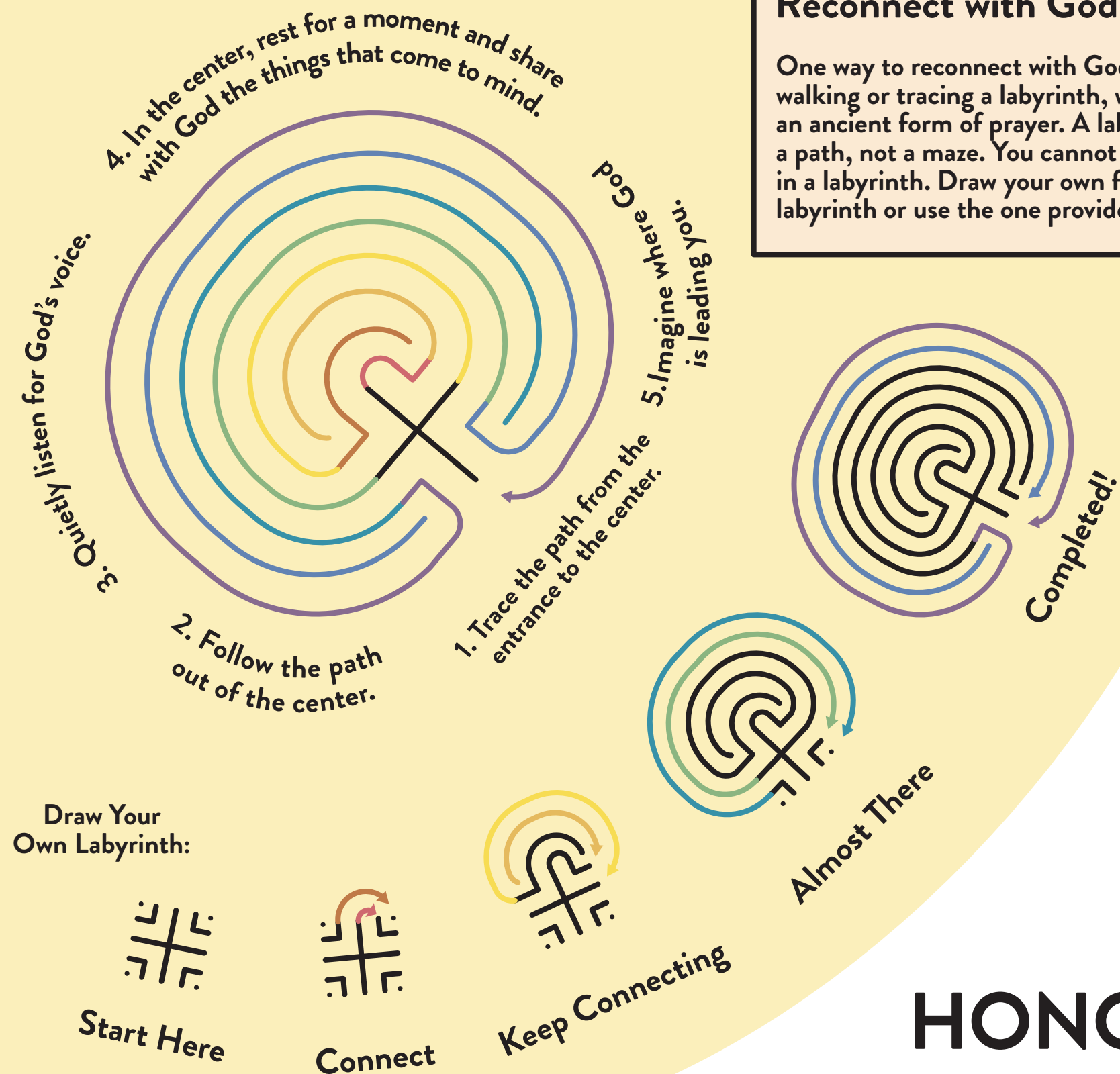
You

PRACTICE GENEROSITY



Reconnect with God

One way to reconnect with God is by walking or tracing a labyrinth, which is an ancient form of prayer. A labyrinth is a path, not a maze. You cannot get lost in a labyrinth. Draw your own finger labyrinth or use the one provided.



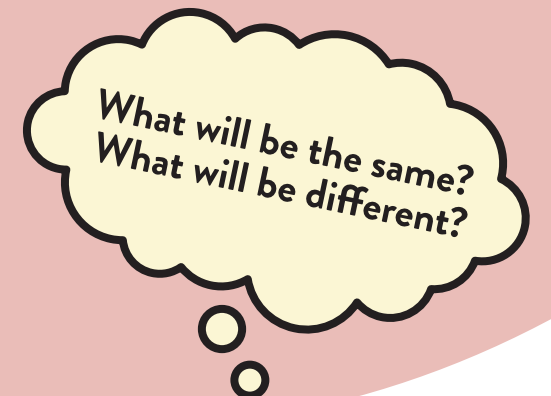
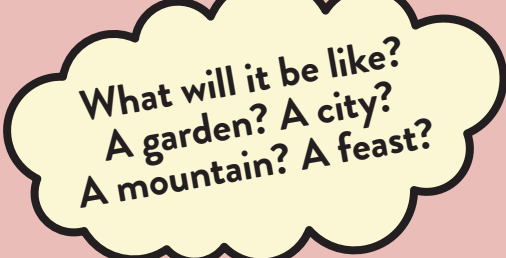
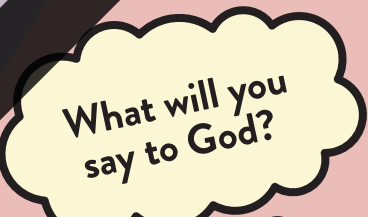
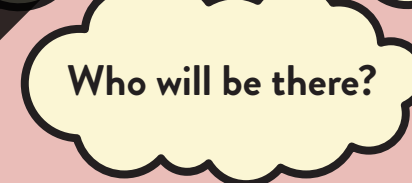
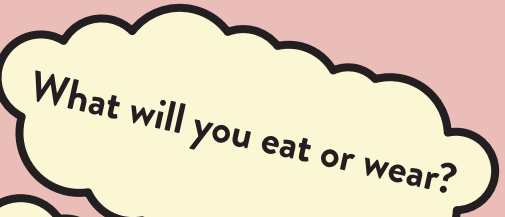
Rejoice!

On your own or with others, create a psalm of praise using your senses. Listen to your body as you choose the things that bring you joy, inspire awe, or remind you of God's goodness.



Imagine God's Reign

Close your eyes for a minute and consider God's reign using the questions to guide you. When you open your eyes, imagine your vision in the picture frame and describe what you envisioned with others.



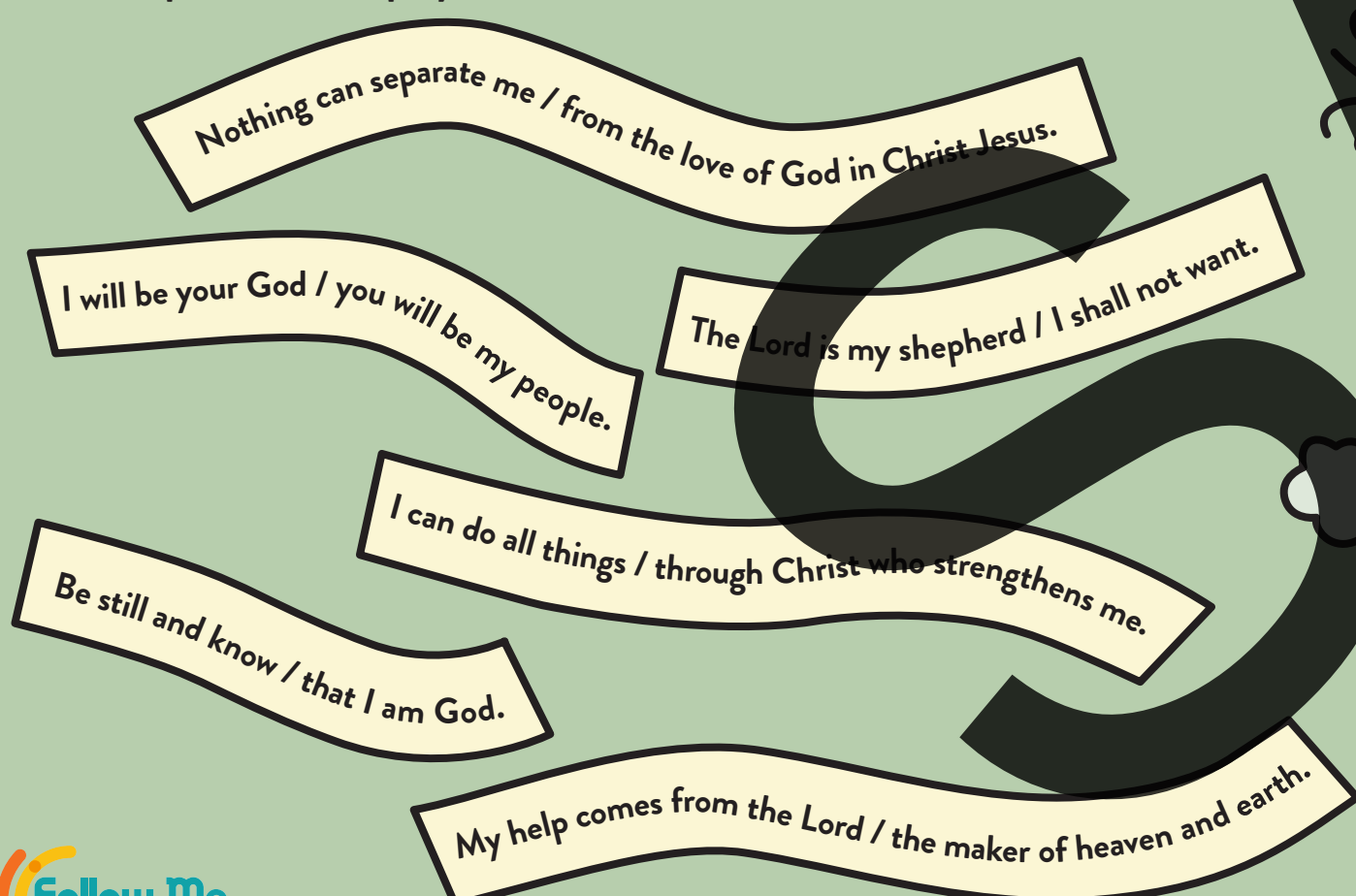
HONOR SABBATH

Sabbath Sampler:
Try different ways to practice Sabbath.

Rest in God's Promises

Breath prayers come in many forms. Follow the steps for this type of breath prayer using Scripture as a focus.

Step 1: Choose a prayer.



Step 2: Inhale and take a deep breath in, silently repeating the first part of the prayer.

Step 3: Hold your breath for three seconds.

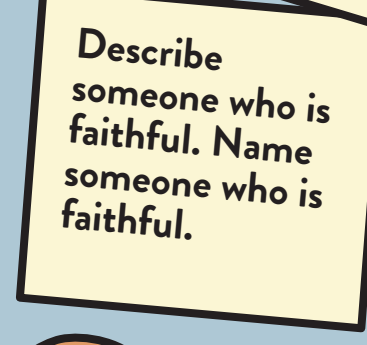
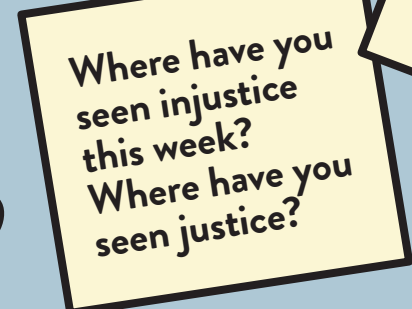
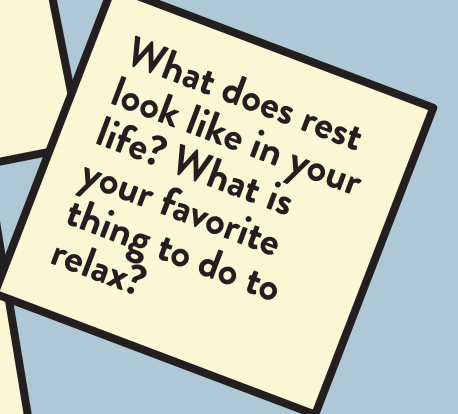
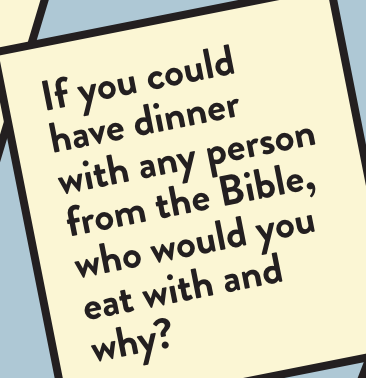
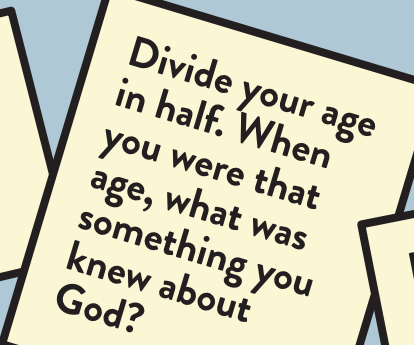
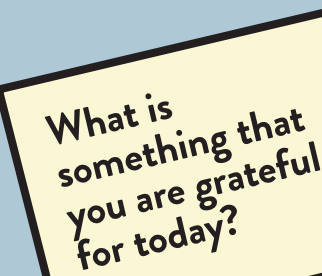
Step 4: Exhale and let your breath out slowly, silently repeating the second part of the prayer.

Step 5: Rest for at least three seconds.

Step 6: Repeat. Continue until the slow breathing feels natural and the words feel familiar.

Reconnect in Faith

Find a person close by, choose one of the questions or prompts, and share a quick update with each other.



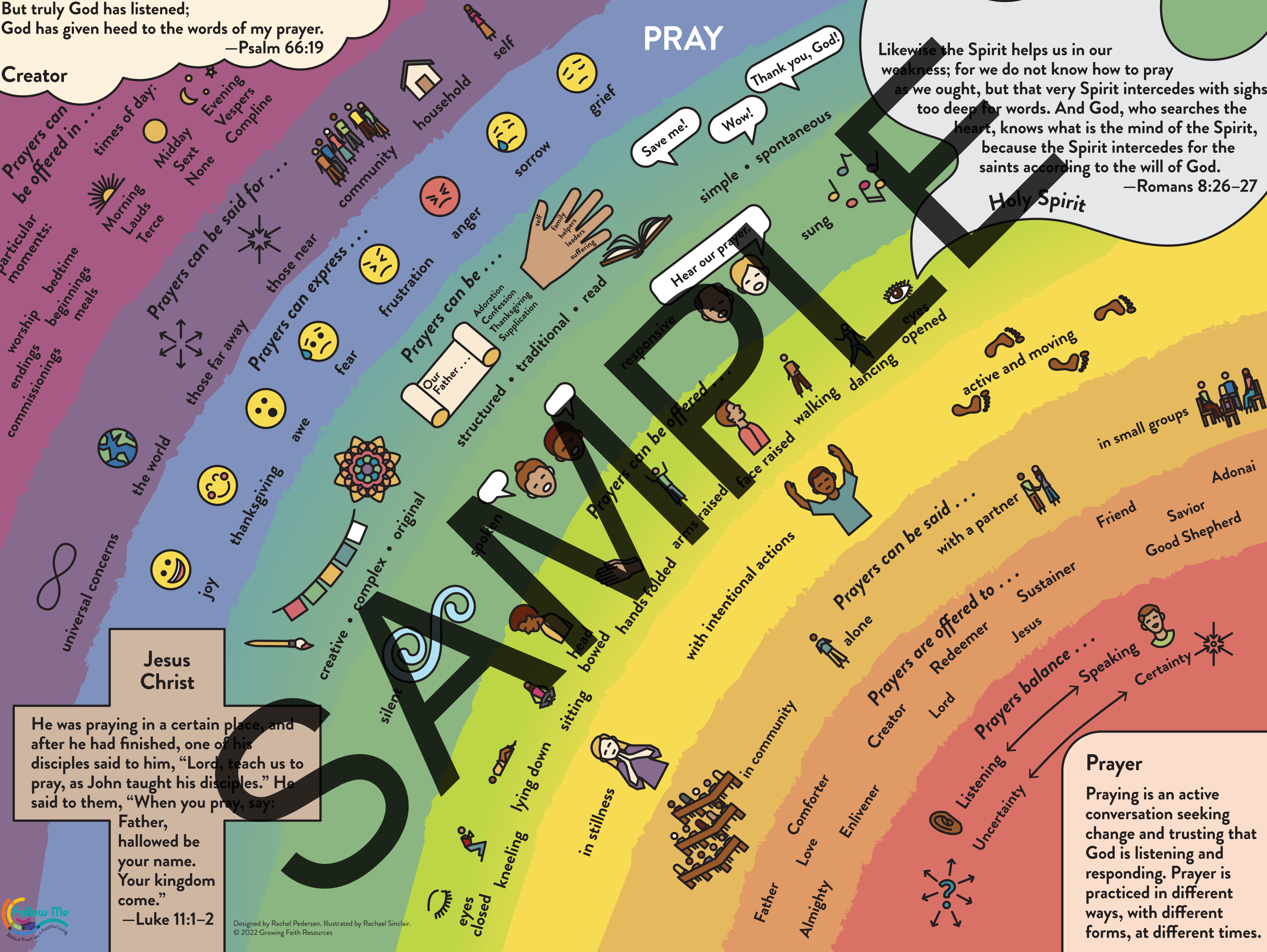
But truly God has listened;
God has given heed to the words of my prayer.
—Psalm 66:19

Creator

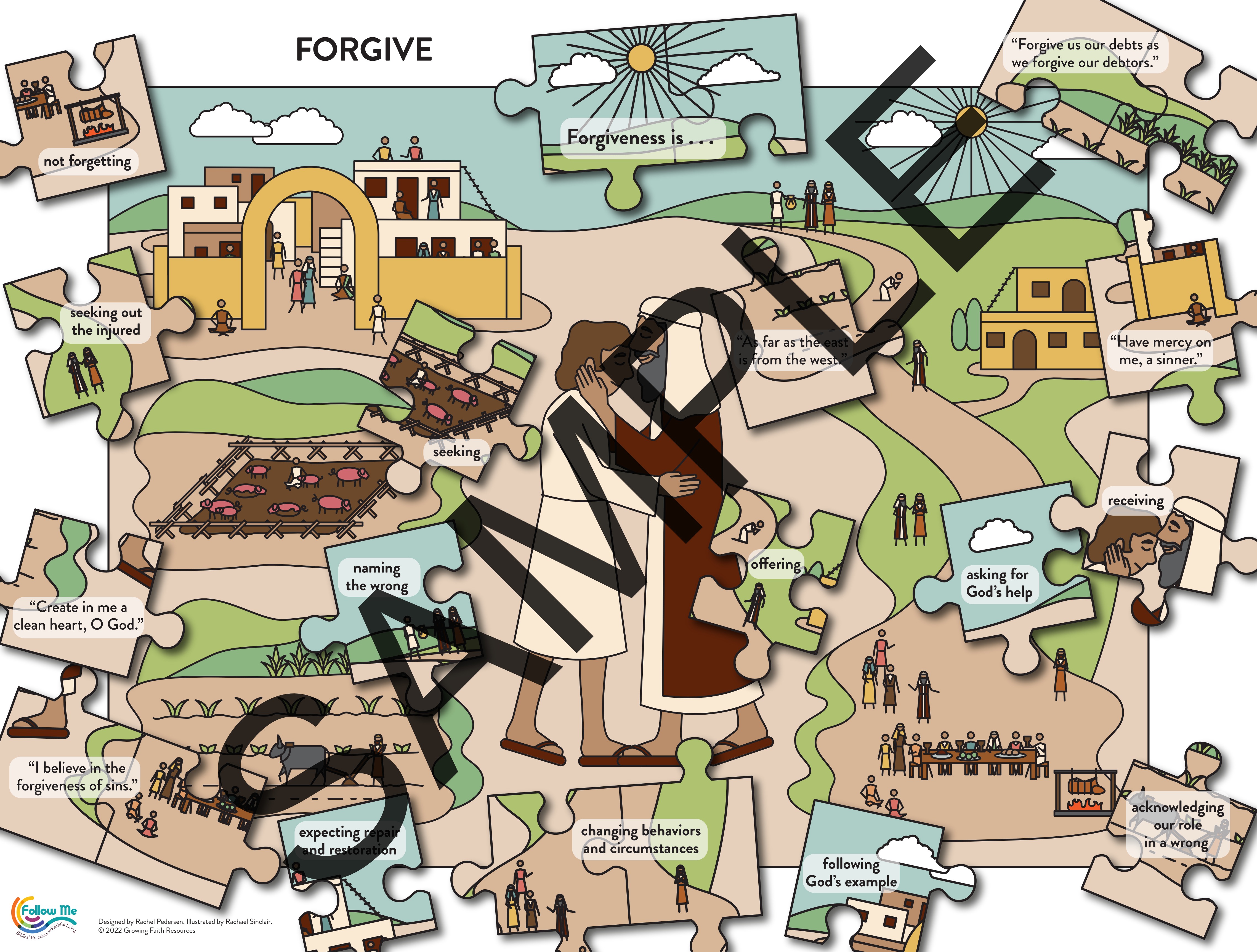
PRAY

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
—Romans 8:26–27

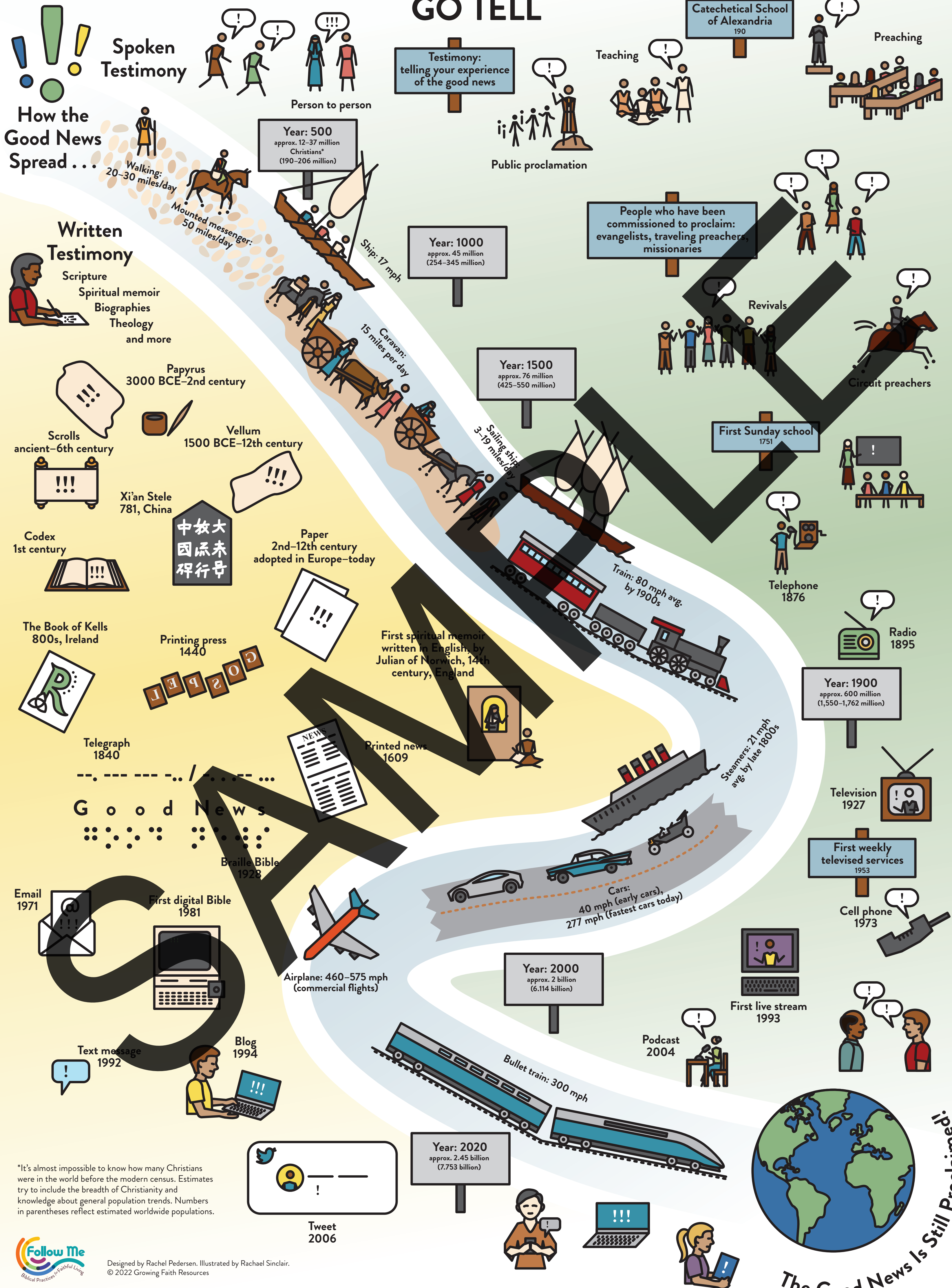
Holy Spirit



FORGIVE



GO TELL



*It's almost impossible to know how many Christians were in the world before the modern census. Estimates try to include the breadth of Christianity and knowledge about general population trends. Numbers in parentheses reflect estimated worldwide populations.

DO JUSTICE

JUSTICE BEGINS IN AND WITH GOD

Righteousness and justice are
the foundation of your throne;
steadfast love and faithfulness
go before you.

—Psalm 89:14

JUSTICE SUSTAINS AND ESTABLISHES A WAY OF BEING

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

—Isaiah 9:7b

Listen to me, my people,
and give heed to me, my nation,
for a teaching will go out from me,
and my justice for a light to the peoples.

—Isaiah 51:4–5

He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth.

—Isaiah 42:4a

JUSTICE OVERCOMES

JUSTICE TRANSFORMS THE STATUS QUO (or the world as we know it)

... learn to do good;
seek justice,
rescue the oppressed,
defend the orphan,
plead for the widow.

—Isaiah 1:17

WE SEEK JUSTICE

... and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice,
and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

—Micah 6:8b

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst
for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

—Matthew 5:6

But as for you, return to your God,
hold fast to love and justice,
and wait continually for your God.

—Hosea 12:6

JUSTICE RENEWS AND RESTORES

For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their [reward],
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

—Isaiah 61:8

*You will find the words *righteousness* and *justice* used interchangeably in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Greek word for *righteousness* (*dikaïosynē*) was often used to translate the Hebrew words for *justice* (*mishpat* or *tzedeq*) in these texts.

LOVE GOD, NEIGHBOR, AND ENEMY

