

STEP 1 NAME

→ What is the hurt that you are naming?

→ What is the burden that feels unbearable?

Name both your feelings and the cause.

John 11

some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life."

My eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of my people.
—Lamentations 3:48

Laments, recorded in psalms, songs, prayers, and actions, have helped the people of God speak honestly about pain and suffering while remembering the presence of God in all things. Laments may address the experience of individuals or communities. As you work through your own lament, use the words of Scripture to guide and inspire you.

STEP 2 Cry Out!

Shout to God! Use words if you need them. Lament invites the whole body to be present and to release the hurt, fear, anger, and pain that you are holding.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
LORD, HEAR MY VOICE!!!
—Psalm 130:1

A great number of the people followed Jesus, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him.
—Luke 23:27

Do NOT forsake ME, O Lord;
O my God, do NOT be far from ME;
make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation.
—Psalm 38:21-22

Jeremiah 31
¹⁵Thus says the LORD:
A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamentation and bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children;
she refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
—Psalm 22:1

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.
—Hebrews 4:15

And remember, I am with you ALWAYS, even to the end of the age!!!
—Matthew 28:20b

STEP 3 Remember!

We are not alone in our suffering. Laments pause to remember God's presence. As Christians, we remember Jesus' ministry that shares our suffering.

→ How does God's story and your story intersect in this moment?

He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.
—Isaiah 53:3

Romans 8

²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.
²⁶Likewise 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. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

2 Corinthians 4
⁷But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. ⁸We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.

STEP 4 Find Hope!

Laments often end with the community declaring the promises and faithfulness of God.

→ What promises of God's faithfulness speak to you?
→ If you cannot find the words, what text from Scripture can help you?
→ Who, such as a friend or loved one, can say them?

2 Corinthians 1

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, ⁴who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ.

Psalms 34

³O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.
⁴I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.
⁵Look to him, and be radiant, so your faces shall never be ashamed.
⁶This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD, and was saved from every trouble.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.
—Revelation 21:4

Do not fear, for I have redeemed YOU;
I have called YOU by name; YOU ARE MINE!!!
—Isaiah 43:1b


STEP 5 Amen—So be it!

Offering a final "Amen" reminds us that, once offered, a prayer is received by God.
→ What does your "Amen" sound and look like today?

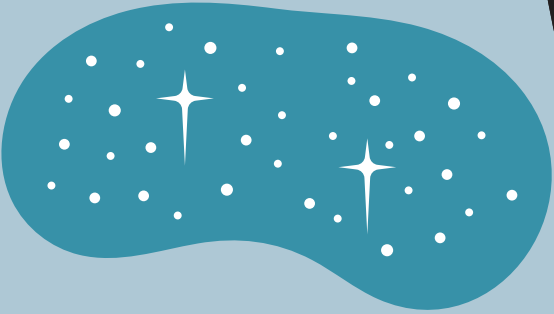
CELEBRATE COMMUNION

Communion REMEMBERS


God's Saving Work throughout History



10 Commandments




Abraham and Sarah




Noah




Covenant written on hearts




Jesus' Life, Death, and Resurrection




Birth




Ministry



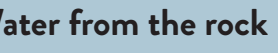
Death




Resurrection




How God Has Nourished Us



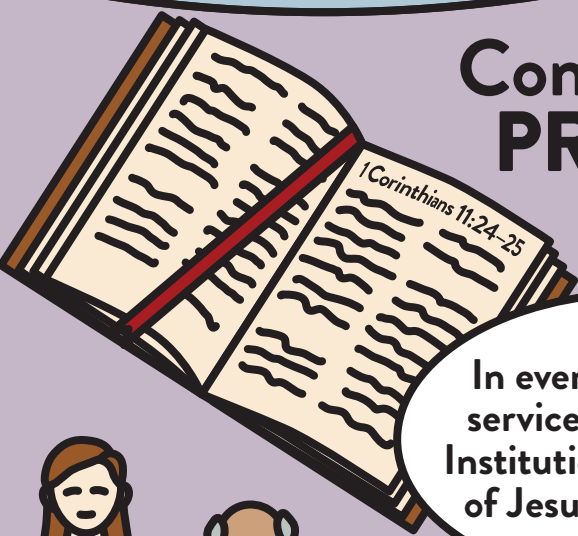
Water from the rock



Manna in the wilderness



Jesus feeds 5,000



In every communion service, the Words of Institution tell the story of Jesus' Last Supper.

We celebrate communion together. Many of the words and actions have stayed the same throughout time.

All Who Have Shared the Communion Meal throughout the Ages



Communion CONNECTS Us to God and One Another



Christians around the World



All Who Will Share the Feast



Communion ANTICIPATES the Day When All Are Fed and No One Is Hungry



When we connect God's promised future to the present, it is called prolepsis.



Communion Is ACTION



We Prepare

We Break Bread and Share the Cup

The moment when the bread is broken is called the fraction.

The Holy Spirit Transforms

When the Spirit is invited to transform the elements, it is called the epiclesis.



We Are Fed

We Are Lifted into God's Presence.



We Are Invited

We Serve Communion to Others



Common cup



Intinction



Passing the elements



Taking the elements to people



Sharing virtually

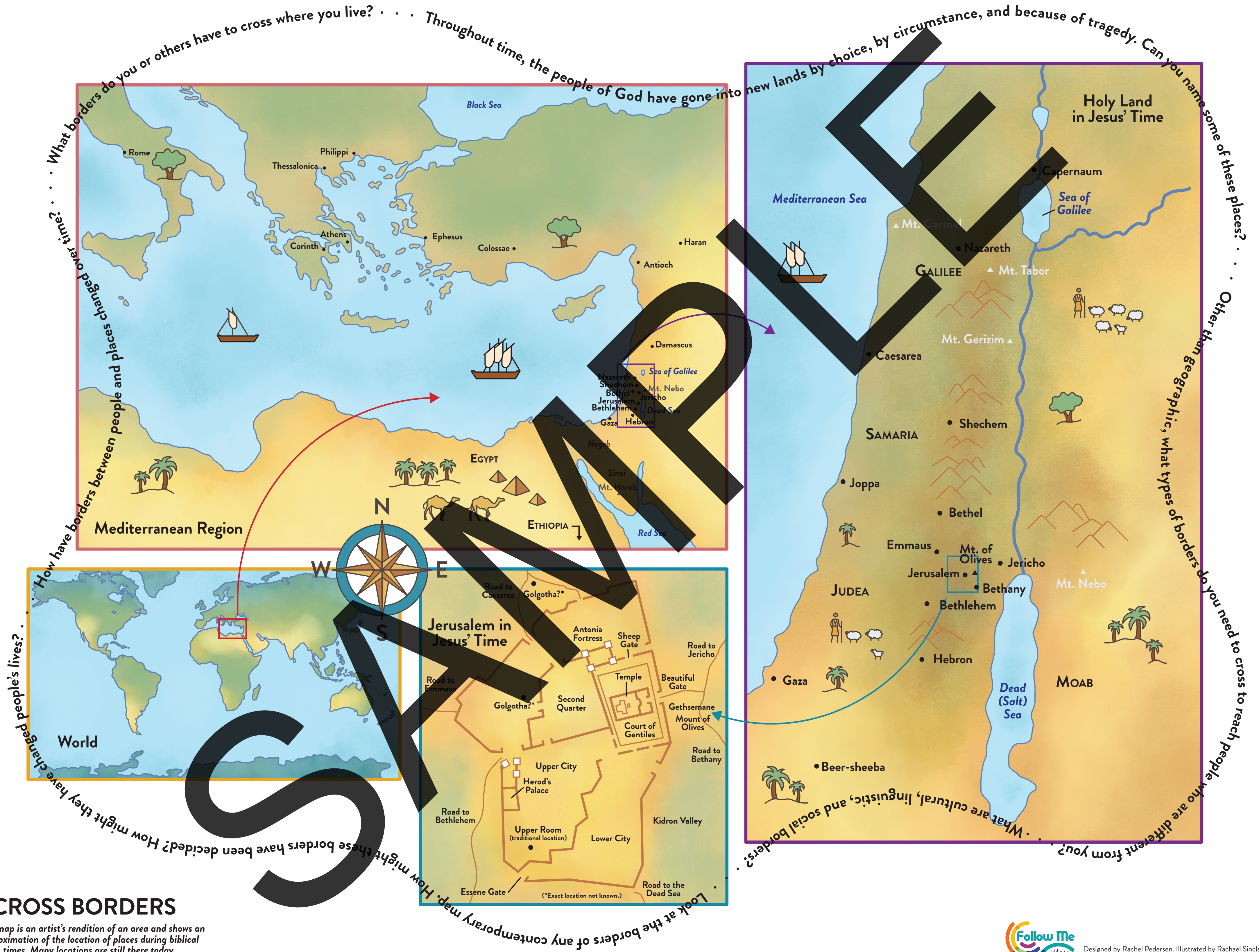
Communion Is a MYSTERY

There are many parts of communion we cannot explain, but we trust that God is at work beyond our understanding.



CROSS BORDERS

Each map is an artist's rendition of an area and shows an approximation of the location of places during biblical times. Many locations are still there today.





- + making sure new voices are heard
- + willing to change or be challenged
- + listening to another's story and experience

- + identifying others' gifts and talents
- + helping people see where God is calling them
- + choosing between options thoughtfully



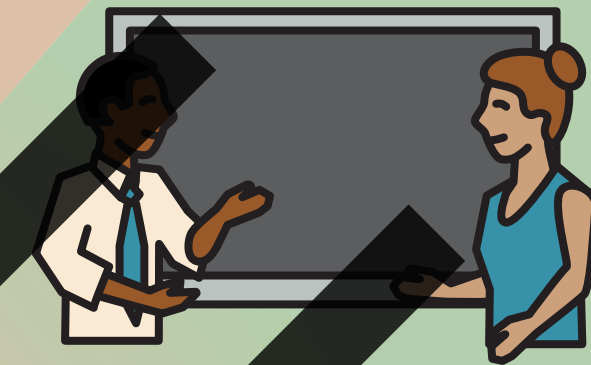
Ananias cared for Paul when he was blinded. He didn't fully understand what it meant to follow Jesus but was open to God's leading.

EXTENDING
like Ananias



Barnabas's name means "son of encouragement." He vouched for and apprenticed Saul (later Paul) and helped many new disciples as they learned how to follow Jesus.

ENCOURAGING
like Barnabas



Priscilla was a gifted teacher. She traveled and helped new Christians understand more about their faith and the beliefs they shared.

TEACHING
like Priscilla

- + sharing wisdom and knowledge
- + helping others find answers
- + learning from both their students and other great teachers



- + telling where they have seen God at work
- + listening as others share their story
- + helping others see where God is in their lives

WITNESSING
like Andrew

Andrew was one of the twelve disciples. He shared his personal experience with Jesus, inviting Simon and Philip to "come and see" too.

BUILDING COMMUNITY
like John

John was one of the twelve disciples and was called the Beloved Disciple. He helped to create a new community of disciples after Jesus' resurrection.



- + building connections between people
- + helping others find a place and a purpose
- + making sure no one is forgotten or ignored

INVITING
like Lydia

Lydia welcomed Paul and Silas into her home even though they were strangers. She made space for others to learn about Jesus.



- + making friends of strangers
- + creating space for others to get together
- + welcoming people as they are

CHALLENGING
like Paul

Paul wasn't afraid to speak the truth to others, calling people back to what it means to follow Jesus.



- + reminding others of what is most important
- + showing people God's way
- + speaking up when something is hurtful or wrong

TENDING
like Dorcas

Dorcas, also called Tabitha, was a church leader in Joppa. She made clothes for the poor and widowed and also trained others to do the same.



- + making sure someone has what they need
- + caring when someone is hurt
- + helping people build skills to care for others

ADVISING
like James

James was the brother of Jesus and leader of the church in Jerusalem.

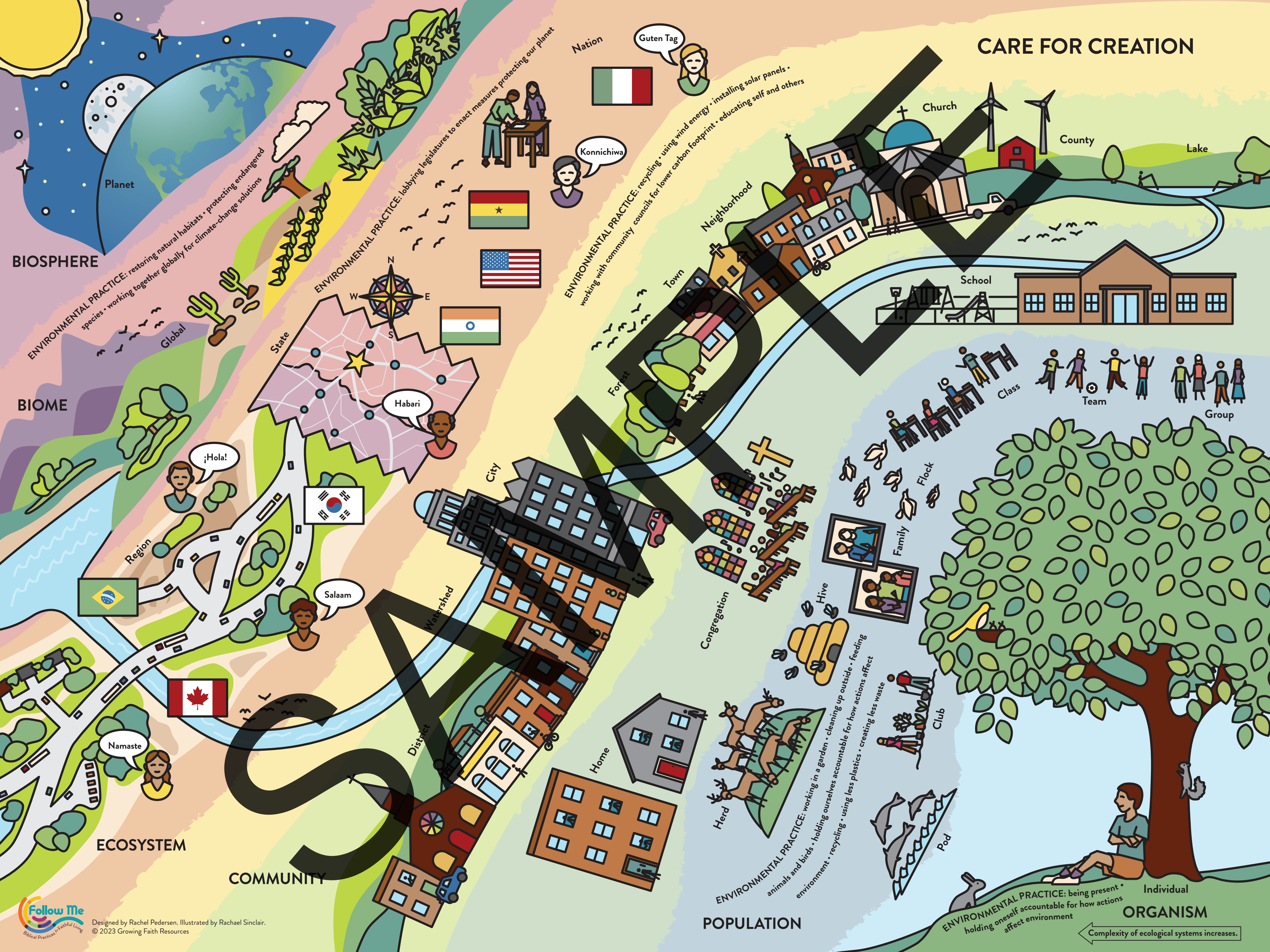


How are you a disciple to others?
How are others a disciple to you?

- + creating systems for new voices to be heard
- + helping people to problem solve
- + asking questions to help another reflect

MAKE DISCIPLES





CARE FOR CREATION

BIOSPHERE

BIOME

ECOSYSTEM

COMMUNITY


POPULATION

ORGANISM

Complexity of ecological systems increases.



מ ש פ ט

The logo for 'DO justice' features the word 'DO' in large, bold, blue capital letters, followed by 'justice' in a smaller, lowercase, multi-colored font. The letters are stylized with a slight 3D effect and a shadow. The background is a light blue gradient.

הַלְבַּח




WALK

The word "humbly" is written in a colorful, rounded, lowercase font. The letters are: 'h' (light green), 'u' (orange), 'm' (teal), 'b' (dark blue), 'l' (light green), and 'y' (red). The letters have a slight 3D effect with shadows.

W₄ I₁ T₁ H₄ Y₄ O₁ U₁ R₁ G₂ O₁ D₂

ה ס ך

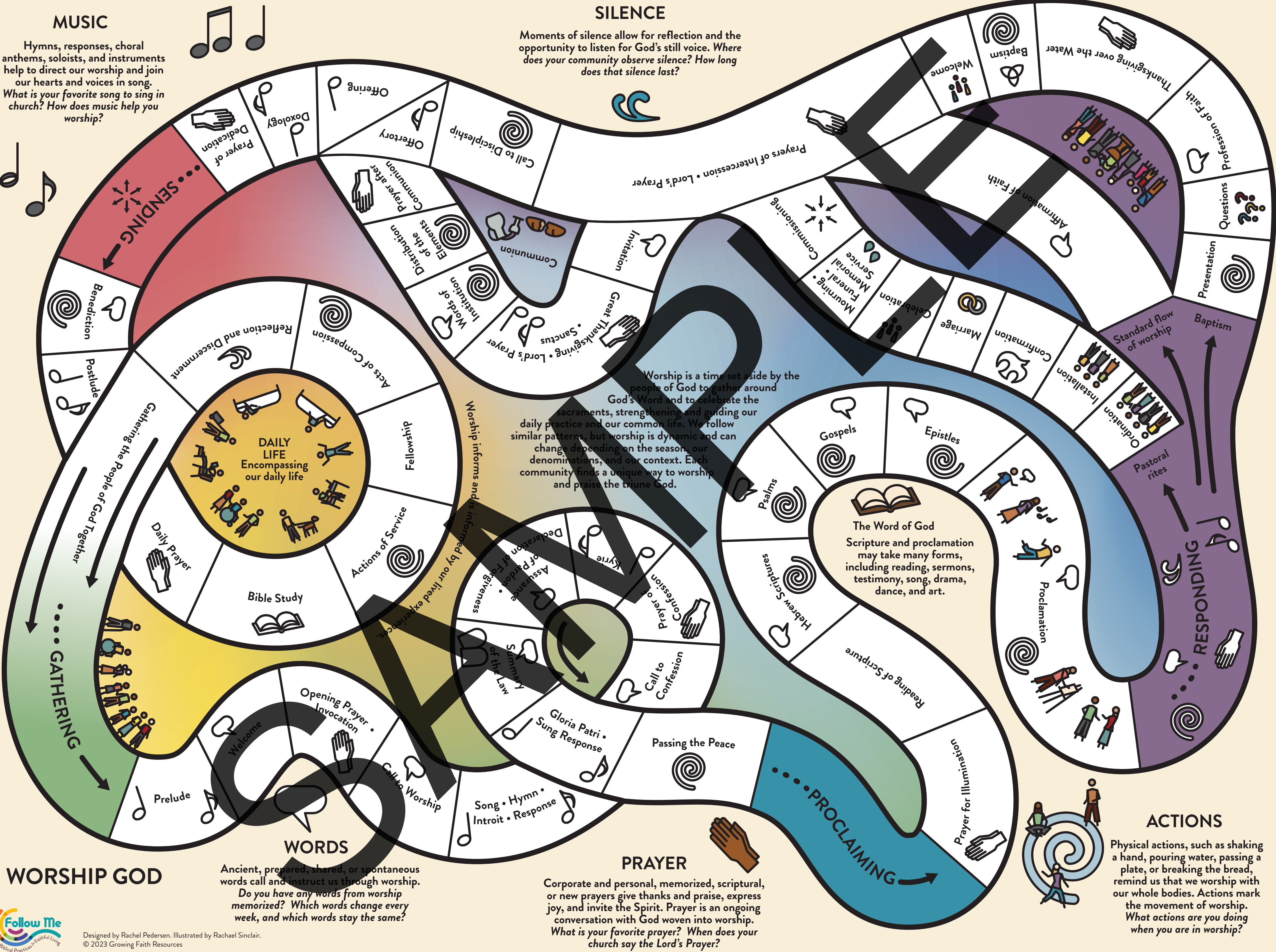
The logo for HESSED features the letters H, E, S, E, and D in various colors (yellow, red, purple, red, brown) inside white circles, with a thick black curved line passing through them.The logo for MicaH 6:8. It features the word "MicaH" in a sans-serif font, with each letter inside a colored circle: M (orange), i (green), c (red), a (blue), and h (green). To the right of "MicaH" is a colon ":" inside a purple circle, followed by the number "8" inside an orange circle.

MUSIC

Hymns, responses, choral anthems, soloists, and instruments help to direct our worship and join our hearts and voices in song. What is your favorite song to sing in church? How does music help you worship?

SILENCE

Moments of silence allow for reflection and the opportunity to listen for God's still voice. Where does your community observe silence? How long does that silence last?



WORSHIP GOD

Ancient, prepared, shared, or spontaneous words call and instruct us through worship. Do you have any words from worship memorized? Which words change every week, and which words stay the same?

PRAYER

Corporate and personal, memorized, scriptural, or new prayers give thanks and praise, express joy, and invite the Spirit. Prayer is an ongoing conversation with God woven into worship. What is your favorite prayer? When does your church say the Lord's Prayer?

ACTIONS

Physical actions, such as shaking a hand, pouring water, passing a plate, or breaking the bread, remind us that we worship with our whole bodies. Actions mark the movement of worship. What actions are you doing when you are in worship?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

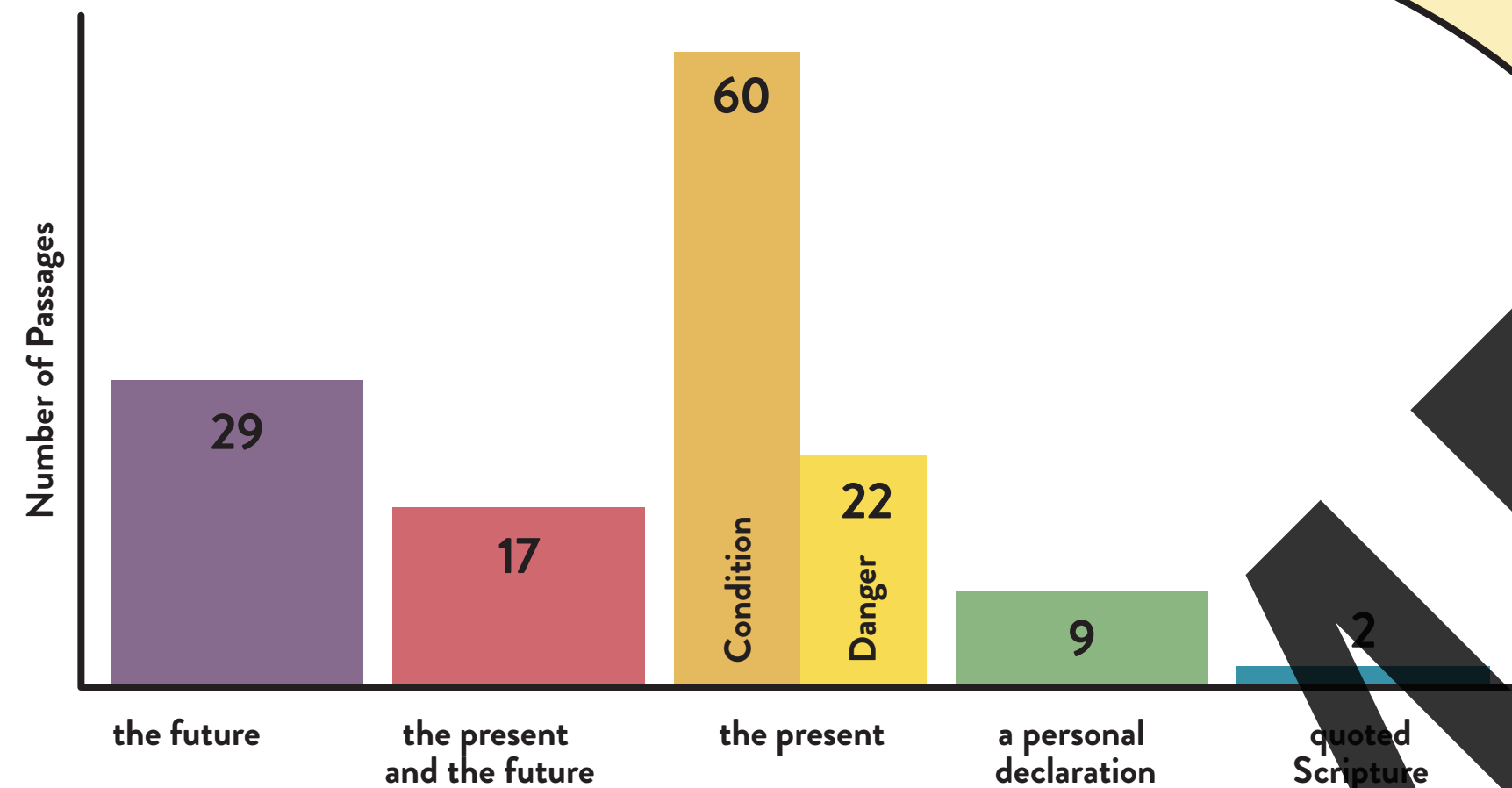
DO NOT FEAR

DO NOT FEAR

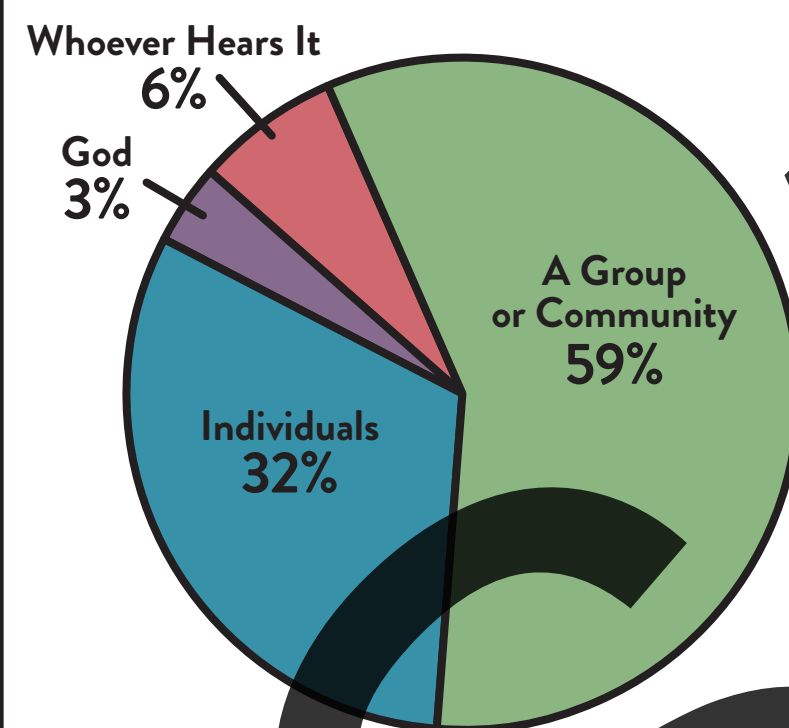
or be afraid, worried, or alarmed.

These words, or ones with the same intent, can be found in nearly 140 different places in the Bible. Who is speaking? What is being addressed? How is it said? Who is listening? How can we share these words today?

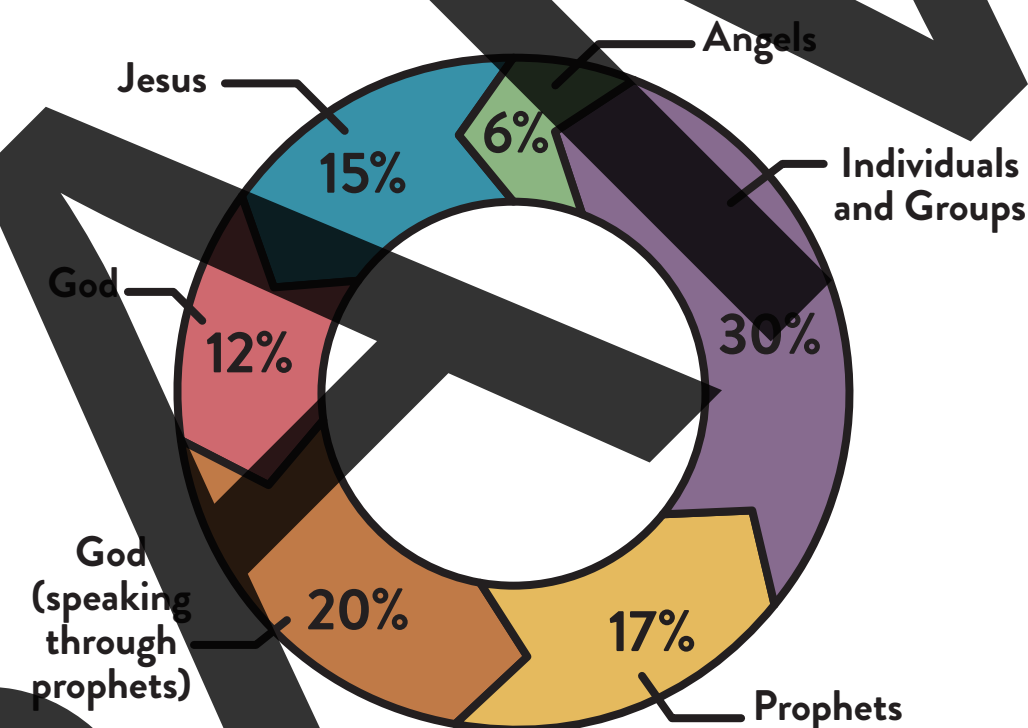
When fear is addressed, it may be about . . .



Who Is Listening?



Who Is Speaking?



73% of Hebrew Scripture passages include a form of the Hebrew word for "fear," *yare'* (יָרֵא).

76% of the New Testament verses include a form of the Greek word for "fear," *phobos* (φόβος).

How to Say It!

Most Common Sayings:

do not be afraid
do not fear
do not be afraid of
do not worry
have no fear
shall not/will not fear

Most Comprehensive Verse:

"Do not lose heart or be afraid or panic or be in dread of them."
—Deuteronomy 20:3b

Power Pair:

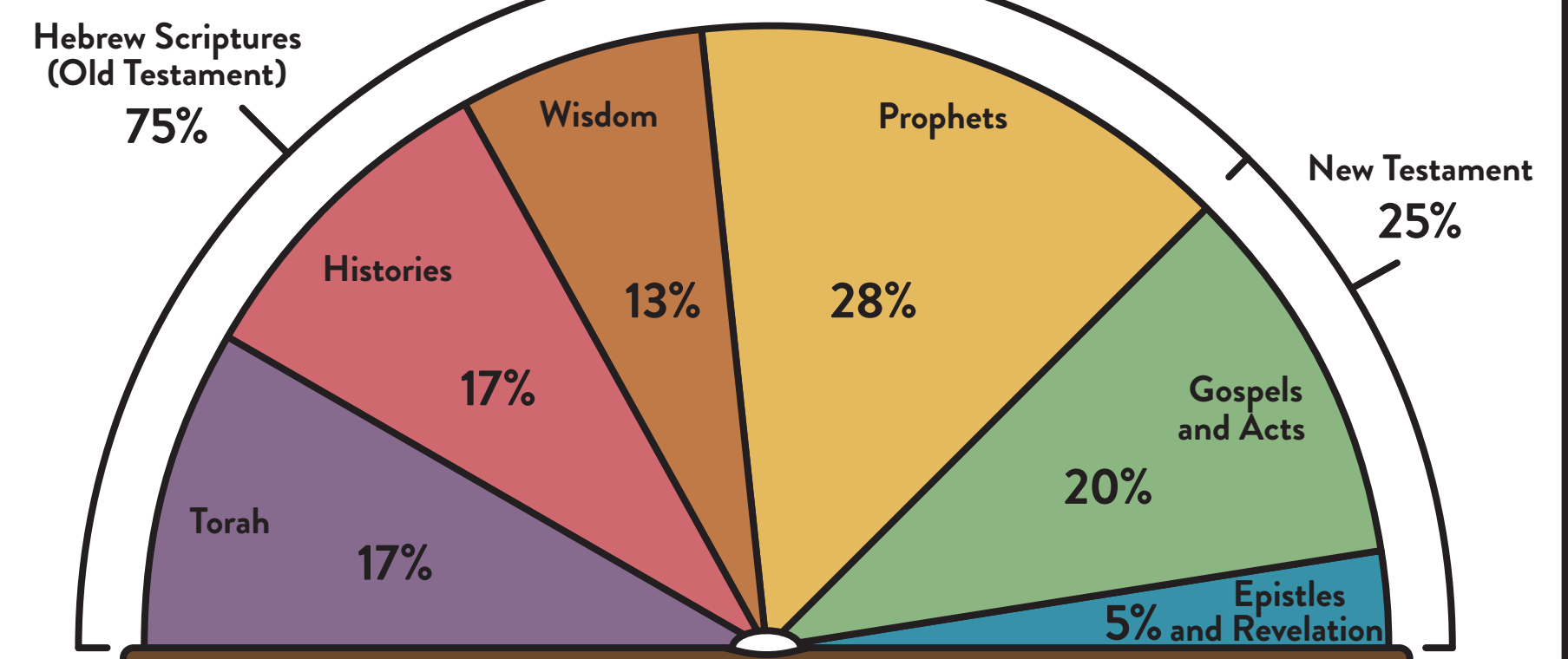
"Do not fear or be dismayed" occurs more than thirteen times in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Some Unique Ways to Say It:

do not be in dread
the cares of my heart
banish anxiety
do not be alarmed
do not be anxious
whom shall I fear



Where Can You Find These Passages?



13% of these passages are found in Isaiah! The most of any single book in the Bible.

Help with the Practical

We all have practical skills that we can share. Make a specific offer to help someone with the day-to-day details. Consider if you can help with food, transportation, child care, basic household activities, or something else.

Remember and Share Stories

When there is a death, offer your own memories about the deceased. Help to honor someone's memory and legacy through the stories you share.

Give Space

Sometimes people need space to process and to grieve on their own. Check in occasionally, but honor requests for personal time.

Acknowledge and Process Your Own Grief

Another person's grief can trigger your own. Be mindful in conversations when and if you share your own experience of grief. Take time to care for yourself while you are providing care for another.



Be Present

As you are able, show up! Grief can feel isolating. Being present can be powerful for the one grieving. Visit, take a walk, have coffee, call, attend a service.

Connect to Community Resources

Depending on what someone needs, share information about local grief or support groups, pastoral counseling services offered by a funeral home, and others who might be able to help.

You Are Not Alone!

God is present with you and with all who grieve. God accepts our anger, frustration, hurt, and even disbelief. Our personal faith, our church communities, and our practices can be powerful resources as we navigate a death, loss, and our own grief.

COMFORT THOSE WHO MOURN



Grief is unique for each person and is shaped by many different factors.

Reminders of Grief

Kinds of Death and Grief

Relationships

- Was something left unresolved?
- Is there a connection to a previous loss?
- How long was the relationship?
- Was there a connection to an important part of one's life or experience?
- Did they provide care for the deceased?
- Never assume that you know the extent or nature of someone's relationship.
- Was the deceased a parent or mentor? A child or sibling? A member of their family? Part of a chosen family?
- How does the death or loss change roles within the family or community?
- We experience disenfranchised grief when a loss cannot be acknowledged publicly or openly. This can prolong grief.

Reactions

relief peace comfort indifference surprise

Anticipatory Grieving begins before the death or loss occurs. There is an awareness that death or loss is imminent.

There is no right way to respond. Different people experience different reactions.

Traumatic A sudden death occurs, often without warning, that can be further complicated by ... violence • unknowns • larger world events

Movement of Grief

Grief is not a linear process. Grief can be re-triggered by external events or internal reflection. Early grief may need to be reprocessed at different ages. It can take time to find a safe and supportive community in which someone can process their grief.

Red Flags

While grief is disrupting, make sure that physical needs are being attended and key responsibilities are being met. Is the sorrow overwhelming? Is it leading to anxiety, depression, or insomnia? These are signs that professional help may be needed.

Resources

Our ability to grieve can be shaped by practical realities.



Money Plane tickets, funeral costs, lost wages, and legal fees can make grief expensive.



Time Caring for children, returning to work, and managing practical details can take away time from personal reflection.



Social Pressures Expectations by self and others are for you to return to normal quickly.

Adolescents

Process grief with peers. Think of death or loss as only adult reality. Perceive death as an abstract concept until experienced.



Adults

Process grief very differently depending on the situation and personal experiences.



Older Adults

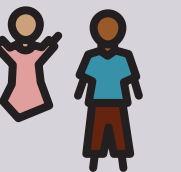
Remember earlier grief. Acknowledge their own mortality. Have grief compounded by changes in their community.



Age

Young Children

Respond to changes in routine and community.



Elementary-Age Children

Begin to understand that death or loss is permanent.

Need to understand the personal impacts of a death or loss—what changes for me?

Are often curious about the practical aspects of a death or loss—where does the body go or where will we live?



When talking with children about death or loss, remember: Use real words—not euphemisms like "loss" or "went away."

Answer the questions asked—children often ask "how" versus "why" questions.

Narrate your own emotions—explain how you are feeling.

Be ready to repeat—children process with you and may repeat stories, questions, and worries.