

CHRISTIAN PRACTICES WITH CHILDREN
Session 5: Healing

Resources

Audience	This class is designed for parents of children ages 3- 11.
Setting	Sunday afternoon Lunch and Learn Series
Time Frame	Approximately 1 hour class, 12:15 – 1:30
Environment	Fellowship Hall, round tables, chairs, dry erase board, CD player, DVD player and TV.
Leader Preparation	Printout art, cover two tables with large white paper, bring markers, crayons, glue, scissors, construction paper in various colors, jars, flowers, socks, buttons, fabric markers, fabric glue, googly eyes, fabric scraps, small empty water bottles, rice, glitter, sequins, beans, ribbon, hot glue guns and glue sticks, and towels, <i>Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge</i> and <i>Miss Tizzy</i> , laptop, hymn words, instruction sheets, and butcher-block paper. Invite someone to play guitar.
Study Focus	Practicing Healing with Children

Invitation

There will be round tables set up for groups of eight. Printouts of each of these pieces of healing artwork will be spread out around the center of each table.

http://web.me.com/danielbonnell/Site_4/Painting_35.html
http://web.me.com/danielbonnell/Site_13/Pen_%26_Ink_59.html
<http://www.manchestergalleries.org/the-collections/search-the-collection/mcgweb/objects/common/webmedia.php?irn=200420>
<http://www.pitts.emory.edu/woodcuts/1712BibIA/00002472.jpg>
<http://www.artchive.com/artchive/m/masaccio/shadow.jpg>
<http://godspace.files.wordpress.com/2007/07/healing-of-lunatic-boy-john-reilly.jpg>

<http://www.sarahcollinsartwork.com/show-image/250502/Sarah-Collins/Healing---Revelation-22.jpg>

I will introduce Walt Whitman as the “healing poet.” Walt Whitman began visiting wounded soldiers as a “volunteer nurse” during the Civil War. “He developed an idiosyncratic style of informal personal nursing, writing down stories the patients told him, giving them small gifts, writing letters for them, holding them, comforting them, and kissing them. His purpose, he wrote, was ‘just to help cheer and change a little the monotony of their sickness and confinement,’ though he found that their effect on him was every bit as rewarding as his on them.”¹ Read the following poem from Walt Whitman and ask the participants at each table to consider the healing offerings illumined in each of the pieces of art found at their table.

**“A thousand perfect men and women appear,
Around each gathers a cluster of friends, and gay children and youths, with
offerings.”²**

- **What do the healing offerings look like to each artist? How are the healing offerings portrayed differently? How are they portrayed similarly? Is there any common thread that connects each piece of art? What?**

(15 minutes)

Prayer

Lord, we give thanks for the children in this place who teach us everyday to giggle from the gut, to cry when it hurts, to sing wherever and whenever, to run fast and climb high, to put all we’ve got into everything we do. We come before you this day as teachers and bankers, mothers and sisters, fathers and brothers, sons and daughters, friends and neighbors, planters and singers, bakers and dancers, storytellers and listeners, doctors and readers. Lord we have our healing offerings. Help us to know our healing offerings and to share our healing offerings. Help us to know our children’s healing offerings and guide them into sharing their healing offerings. Forgive us for the many times we and our children together have hoarded our healing offerings, ignored our healing offerings, squandered our healing offerings. Amen

¹ Price, Kenneth and Folsom, Ed. *Walt Whitman*. “The Beginning of the Civil War.” http://www.whitmanarchive.org/biography/walt_whitman/index.html . June 17, 2009.

² Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*. Philadelphia: David McKay, [c1900]; Bartleby.com, 1999. www.bartleby.com/142/. June 16, 2009.

Today we are discussing **Practicing Healing with Children**.

Encountering the Christian Practice of Healing with Dorothy C. Bass

Dorothy C. Bass writes in her book *Practicing our Faith* that, "The practice of healing is a central part of the reconciling activity of God in the world. Healing events are daily signs of the divine mercy that is surging through the world and guiding it toward its final perfection. This is true whether they take place by the sharing of chicken soup, the performance of delicate surgery, or the laying on of hands in a service of worship."³

- How does thinking about healing as offerings of chicken soup, laying on of hands, or surgery change or deepen your understanding of healing?

The Paradox of Healing

Illness, injury, and psychological distress dog virtually our every step. Serious illness brings us to where life and death meet. What do we mean by "healing"? Is it the same thing as being cured? What is the difference between a cure and wholeness?

For Christians, life and death meet at the cross. This mysterious paradox means that we may be hurting desperately, but we can simultaneously experience peace and strength. What testimonies have you heard in which illness brought someone closer to God and to loved ones, and feeling more alive than ever before? When have you seen some new kind of health come even when physical illness continues or even ends in death?⁴

(5 – 10 minutes)

Practicing Healing with Children

Break the large group into two smaller groups. Each group will participate in the activities at each table.

(20 – 30 minutes)

Table #1 Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge

The table will be covered in paper. In the center of the table a copy of the book *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* will be standing upright. There will be two large pieces of butcher-block paper and markers on the table. One adult will read aloud the story. The adults at this table will consider the following:

- List all the ways Wilfrid *heals* Miss Nancy.

³ Bass, Dorothy C. *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*. Jossey-Bass, 1998.

⁴ 2006 The Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith
http://www.practicingourfaith.com/prct_healing.html June 16, 2009.

- List all the ways families can practice *healing* together.

Instruction Sheet

Select one adult to read aloud *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*. On one piece of the butcher-block paper list all the ways Wilfrid *heals* Miss Nancy. On the other piece of butcher-block paper list all the ways families can practice *healing* together.

Table #2 *Miss Tizzy*

The table will be covered in paper. In the center of the table a copy of the book *Miss Tizzy* will be standing upright. There will be crayons, markers, various colors of construction paper, scissors, glue, jars, flowers, socks, buttons, fabric markers, fabric glue, googly eyes, fabric scraps, small empty water bottles, rice, glitter, sequins, beans, ribbon, hot glue guns, and towels.

Instruction Sheet

Select one adult to read aloud *Miss Tizzy*. Take turns making healing cards with the construction paper, markers, crayons, scissors, and glue. Take turns making healing floral arrangements using the jars and flowers. Take turns making healing puppets using the socks, buttons, fabric markers, fabric glue, googly eyes, fabric scraps. Take turns making healing musical instruments by filling the empty water bottles with rice, glitter, sequins, and beans. Hot glue strips of ribbons around the inside of the bottle cap. After the glue dries, place the cap back on the bottle, and shake, rattle, and sing a healing song. Take a towel, go outside, spread your towel out under a tree, sit down and consider the healing sights, healing sounds, healing smells, and healing feels of summer. Share your thoughts with a neighbor.

**Responding Out Of
(5 minutes)**

Come back together as one large group and ask:

- What did you discover about healing?
- How can you practice healing with children?
- How can stories, cards, flowers, puppets, musical instruments, and the sights, sounds, smells, and feels of God's creation heal?

Closing

Pass out hymnals and sing hymn #407 *When a Poor One*

Closing Prayer

Lord, we give thanks for the children in this place who teach us everyday to giggle from the gut, to cry when it hurts, to sing wherever and whenever, to run fast and climb high, to put all we've got into everything we do. We come before you this day as teachers and bankers, mothers and sisters, fathers and brothers, sons and daughters, friends and neighbors, planters and singers, bakers and dancers, storytellers and listeners, doctors and readers. Lord we have our healing offerings. Help us to know our healing offerings and to share our healing offerings. Help us to know our children's healing offerings and guide them into sharing their healing offerings. Forgive us for the many times we and our children together have hoarded our healing offerings, ignored our healing offerings, squandered our healing offerings. Amen

This series of lessons was prepared by Union-PSCE student Kim Lee, MACE, Fall 2009.