

DIVINE INNOVATION

How is God making all things new?

A Duke Youth Academy and Faith & Leadership curriculum

Spiritual practices are an opportunity to go more deeply, embodying what the group discusses. These practices are designed for you to do throughout the week between group gatherings.

PRACTICE 1: ELLA

Ella uses her everyday experiences as inspiration for new, original recipes. For instance, she created the “Cole World” cookie after experiencing hip-hop artist J. Cole in concert. Its color recalls his golden complexion; its mintiness, the refreshing effect of his music.

Likewise, we can see and hear God in ordinary spaces and receive inspiration to counter the stagnation and limitation of our lives. Go on an adventure today: visit a park or a shared public area and observe the space. In your journal, respond to the following questions:

- What does it look like?
- What does it feel like?
- What does it sound like?
- What are the people around you doing?

Think about the places where you have experienced stagnation or limitation:

- Is there a creative connection between what you’ve observed today and the stagnation or limitation you’ve experienced?
- How might your observations prompt innovation in these places?
- How might you integrate your observations into how you respond to stagnation and limitation?
- Where do you see God in these places?

PRACTICE 2: JOSHUA

Is there a place in your community that is a memorial or a monument to someone who has played a major role in the life of the community? Choose such a place and make plans to visit by the end of the week. In your journal, respond to the following questions:

- For whom is this memorial named? Why was this memorial constructed (what is the story)?
- To what pain in the community did this person respond? What healing did he or she prompt?
- How is life different because of this person?
- Do you perceive this person’s presence in your community to be God’s presence? Why or why not?

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PRACTICE 3: JILLIAN

Ponder your personal experiences with harm and neglect from others and how God has divinely innovated you. What places in your community suffer from similar ills?

Go online and identify an organization in your community that addresses some form of maltreatment (a women's shelter, community center, hospital, school, community gardening initiative, etc.). Observe the institution's mission, services and practices.

What is one way the organization innovates in response to maltreatment or neglect? What is one way for you to support this work? Dare to support through volunteering time, resources or items of need.

PRACTICE 4: ANTHONY

Find and take a picture of something in your city that has been repurposed for active use. This may be a recycled item you've purchased, something you personally repurposed or something that was publicly repurposed. Post this image to any social media accounts you have, telling the story of the new creation and divine innovation.

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Resources

If you're interested in exploring the topic of divine innovation more deeply, we invite you to engage these resources.

BOOKS

["The Long Loneliness: The Autobiography of the Legendary Catholic Social Activist," by Dorothy Day](#)

["Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer," by Tracy Kidder](#)

["Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith," by Anne Lamott](#)

["Red Bird: Poems," by Mary Oliver](#)

["The Second Coming: A Novel," by Walker Percy](#)

["Black Gods of the Asphalt: Religion, Hip-Hop and Street Basketball," by Onaje X.O. Woodbine](#)

FILMS AND VIDEOS

["Babette's Feast"](#)

["Landfill Harmonic"](#)

"Phil Hansen: [The Art of the Imperfect](#)"

"Phil Hansen: [Embrace the Shake](#)"

WEB RESOURCES ON HARM

[Childhelp: Prevention and treatment of child abuse](#)

[FaithTrust Institute: Working together to end sexual and domestic violence](#)

[Help for Adult Victims of Child Abuse](#)

[National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)

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FAITH & LEADERSHIP

[Andy Crouch: Love and the risk of innovation](#)

[Claire Wimbush: Broken people walking toward wholeness](#)

[Deanna Thompson: How to live like we're dying](#)

[Dominique D. Gilliard: Reclaiming the power of lament](#)

['God answered our prayer': Three refugees share their stories](#)

[Perfect match](#)

[Telling today's resurrection stories](#)

[Welcome to the church of 'holy chaos'](#)

LIVING LIKE THEY BELIEVE

Divine innovation: How is God making all things new?

Divine Innovation in the face of limitation

JOHN 6:1-15 (NRSV)

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.'

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

LUKE 21:1-4 (NRSV)

He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.'