

STAGE ONE: SESSION ONE

The Path Exercise

Instructions

This exercise is intended to help participants start reflecting on their current position in their personal journeys. It also creates an opportunity for the group to share and discuss where they find themselves as they begin *The Journey* process.

What facilitators will need ahead of time:

- 40 individual images of paths. Print these off in color on cardstock and cut them into individual pictures. You will find the images in a PDF format on our [Leaders+ page](#) under *Pathway Specific Tools > The Journey*.



Leaders+
Pathway Specific Tools > The Journey



They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

Genesis 3:8–9

For those with ears to hear, God's question to Adam and Eve continues to resound among us, drawing us out of "the trees." Amidst our everyday hurry and flurry, the Spirit addresses us—Where are you? It is our honest engagement with this question that so often opens the way in our hearts to recognize and respond to God's personal invitation and loving provision.

We each need safe places that help us discover and converse about where we find ourselves in the world. Our prayer is that your *Journey* group will become, in time, one such place.

During your group time, your facilitator will guide you into "The Path Exercise" that will help you begin to explore where you find yourself currently on your journey.

After reading *The Path Exercise* invitation on page 14 (above), guide the participants into the exercise:

Imagine a path — there are so many kinds of paths in different environments. Some are smooth and easy, allowing for a relaxed stroll through lovely surroundings. Others are rocky and rugged, challenging us with difficult terrain that may even feel threatening. And between these extremes, there are countless other types of paths. Our own faith journeys mirror these varied paths as well.

To explore this idea, we're going to do a simple activity called ***The Path Exercise***.

On the tables, you'll find a variety of colored photos, each depicting different kinds of paths. In a moment, I invite everyone to quietly walk to a table, select an image that *simply* grabs your attention — no need to overthink or analyze it. Just choose the one that resonates most with you right now.

Once you've picked your image, please quietly take it back to your seat. After everyone has chosen, I'll share some questions with you. I invite you to journal your responses to these questions, reflecting on your chosen path image and where you might be on your journey.

Feel free to take your time and enjoy the process.

Here are some questions to journal with. Take your time reading these out loud, allowing space for the participants to respond to each question before moving on to the next question:

- How would you describe the physical nature of your path?
 - Is it winding or straight?
 - Is it difficult or easy?
- What do you feel looking at the path?
- Where are you in the picture?
- Where is God in the picture?
- Where is the path leading?
- How might the image reflect where you are on your spiritual journey?
- From the thoughts and feelings that have arisen within you, do you sense an invitation from God? If so, describe the invitation...
- As we close, take a moment to express to God anything you'd like him to know about how you experienced this reflective exercise.

Adapted from Pam McCauley, "Reflecting on the Path Ahead" in Christine Valters Painter and Betsey Beckman, *Awakening the Creative Spirit: Bringing the Arts to Spiritual Direction* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2010), 147.

Break into groups of 3 and discuss:

1. What initially caught your attention with the picture?
2. What surfaced as you reflected upon it?
3. How is it depicting or expressing where you find yourself on the journey?



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