



Here are this week's suggestions to increase your spiritual health and thus hopefully your faith. Some of these suggestions are quite simple so that children can participate too. Some others may require a bit of help from you or another adult. Please continue to use these spiritual exercises as appropriate each day.

Our overall theme is

*PEACE*

This week, we will use seven candles. Light one candle each day until all seven are lit. These candles are to represent some of the components of peace. A family activity could be labelling each candle. The candles could be tapers, or any other types of candle. They could be labelled with the Word for the Day.

1. You may sew or embroider the word on a piece of cloth and tie or place it at the base of the candle.
2. You may paint, write or color the word on a piece of paper and place it at the base of the candle.
3. You may take a photo of the word and place it at the base of the candle or on the side of the candle, depending on the type and size of the candle.
4. You may use a picture of something that symbolizes that component of peace to you. (Such as a bride and groom for **love** or an act of kindness.)
5. You may create your own way of labelling the candle for the word of the Day.

As a family begin each time of prayer with the Prayer Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi. It is reprinted on the next page for your convenience. Then focus on the word which is **bold-faced** in the text beside the Day such as **Love** for **Day 1**. That is the word to concentrate on for that day.

## ***A PRAYER ATTRIBUTED TO ST. FRANCIS***

*Lord, make us instruments of your **peace**.*

*Where there is hatred, let us sow **love**;*

*where there is injury, **pardon**;*

*where there is discord, **union**;*

*where there is doubt, **faith**;*

*where there is despair, **hope**;*

*where there is darkness, **light**;*

*where there is sadness, **joy**;*

*O, Divine Master –*

*Grant that we may not so much seek*

*to be consoled as to **console**;*

*to be understood as to **understand**;*

*to be loved as to **love**.*

*For it is in **giving**, that we receive;*

*it is in **pardoning** that we are pardoned;*

*and*

*it is in **dying** that we are **born to eternal life**.*

***Amen.***

# Day 1

Where there is hatred, let us sow **love**...

*Let me not so much seek to be loved as to **love**  
**Love your enemies***

*Matthew 5:44*

In 1994 there was a horrendous uprising between the Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda. A Pastor gathered as many of his people as he could into a Church believing that they would be safe. Instead he was hacked to death as his wife stood by helplessly watching. Then it was her turn to suffer the hacking. Miraculously, she survived. After the uprising was over and she had recovered sufficiently, she began taking food and clothing to the prisoners.

One day she recognized the man who had killed her husband. Eventually, he was released from prison. He had no place to go. So, she took him to live in her home. This was a purely platonic relationship and an act of **Christian love**.

1. Pray for your enemies.
2. If you or your child dislikes or “hates” someone pray that God’s **love** will surround that person or persons.
3. Help your children understand that this must be done because Jesus wanted us to do it.
4. Pray that God will help you understand your “enemies”’ feelings.

## Day 2

-where is injury, **pardon**; (that is, **forgiveness**)

*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.*

*Luke 23:34*

Whether or not the concept of forgiveness is hard for you to comprehend, sometimes you may want to read one of the several books entitled: *Amish Grace* or see the movie by the same name. It is the true story of how Charles Roberts entered an Amish school house and killed five young girls and injured five others before taking his own life.

Some of the Amish men went to the home of Mr. Robert's widow and told her that they forgave her husband.

Not only is it a story of tragedy, but one of faith and living out that faith.

1. Reflect on how difficult this must have been for the Amish Community to **forgive** the perpetrator.
2. Would you have been able to do forgive a similar act?
  - a. Why or why not?
3. Why do you think that Jesus asked that those putting Him to death be **forgiven**?
4. Pray that God will be with you in any situation in which you need to show **forgiveness**, that is, **pardon**.

## Day 3

-where there is discord, **union**;

*... Wise men and women listen to each others' counsel....*

*Proverbs 13:10b*

*...that they may be one*

*John 17:21*

In most families, not everything goes smoothly all the time. Sometimes it is because we fail to listen to each other and sometimes it is because we are being stubborn and want our own way and are not thinking of what might be best for the family, the church, the community, or whatever group we are a part of.

Reverend Eugene Peterson who wrote the Messenger version of the Bible offers the above version of Proverbs 13:10b. (Reverend Peterson was the Pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church which is close-by to us. He has authored many books and was very helpful to members of Good Shepherd at a time when Good Shepherd was without a pastor.)

While the second scripture was spoken to Christ's Disciples, and those who were to believe in the future, it is evident that He did not foster discord.

1. Reflect on a time when reconciliation or **union** was needed in your family.
2. If it is appropriate, share it with your family.
3. If it is something that still needs rectifying, **pray** about a way to do so.
4. Our government was shut down this past week because there was discord. In a short while, our nation faces the possibility of another shut down. **Pray** for our nation.
5. Pray for **Peace**.

## Day 4

-where there is doubt, **faith**;

*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.*

*John 20:29*

Gabrielle's brother Rodney was killed during the Vietnam War. Gabrielle began to wonder why this had happened and whether it was worth having **faith**. It was Fall, and the leaves were falling to the ground. Surely, they were dead, she reasoned. But she also knew that in the Spring, new ones would appear. This was an earthly sign of the promise of new life and her return to having **faith**.

1. Was Gabrielle's journey from doubt to **faith** similar to Thomas', Jesus' disciple?
2. Are there any earthly things which remind you of the promise of eternal life?
  - a. Share these with your family if appropriate.
3. **Pray** that your **faith** may increase.
4. **Pray** that God will take away any doubt that you may have.
5. Pray that you may be able to share your faith with others by what you say and do.

## Day 5

*-where there is despair, hope;*

*I know the plans that I have for you declares the Lord...  
to give you new **hope** and a future.*

*Jeremiah 29:11*

When someone is ill, especially if it is terminal, it is very difficult for them and those around them. It is important to realize that there is difference between cure and healing. Cure means that the illness no longer affects the person who was previously ill.

Healing may mean learning to live with the illness. It may also mean having **hope** that a new medical discovery may be made.

1. Pray for those who are ill, that God will ease their suffering and pain and give them **hope**.
2. Pray for their families and all who care for them.

## Day 6

-where there is darkness, **light**;

*Let your **light** shine before men, ...that they may glorify God who is in Heaven.*

*Matthew 5:16*

Each week after Church, Roberta visits her former boss who is in her early nineties and resides in a nursing home. Her former boss is extremely happy to see her. Roberta's former boss says, "You bring **light** into my otherwise dark world. I can not see well enough to read, do needlework or so many other things that I use to enjoy doing. My world is not just physically dark, but dark in every sense of the word."

Roberta also brings her former boss things that she enjoys eating. Roberta wrote her bosses Christmas cards, reads to her, answers her mail and, as often as feasible, takes her former boss out to eat at her favorite places. Other colleagues join them for the outing. Roberta's boss cannot walk and is confined to a wheelchair. Since her only surviving family member lives abroad, she is greatly appreciative of all that Roberta does for her. In case you wondered, Roberta does not have power of attorney. Her one surviving family member who lives abroad has that. She is visited by this relative two to three times a year for one to two weeks at a time. Roberta keeps in close touch with this relative as to physical health and other happenings. This is all voluntarily done.

1. **Pray** for those in nursing homes and those who work there.
2. **Pray** for those who volunteer.
3. **Pray** for those who, like Roberta, are not official volunteers but are a **light** to someone who resides in a nursing home.
4. **Pray** to determine if God could use you to volunteer in a nursing home or similar facility to be a **light** to someone so they can glorify God.

## Day 7

where there is sadness, **joy**...

May we not so much seek to be consoled as to console.

*...the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we may comfort those in need with the comfort with the comfort that we ourselves have received from God.*

*2 Corinthians 1:3-4*

*I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face so that our **joy** may be complete.*

*2 John 1:12*

When Helena's mother died, she was very sad. It was totally unexpected. She had planned on spending Christmas with Helena and her family. Corina, a member of the Church which Helena attended, visited her. Corina's mother had died the preceding year. Corina was able to understand what Helena was going through. When Helena descried how she felt, Corina was able to share that she had felt the same way. God led Corina to be able to console Helena and even to share with her in a helpful insightful what other feelings she might experience. Corina said that others had consoled her in a similar way and that she wasn't doing anything special.

Corina and Helena became good friends after this and have shared much **joy** in their lives for more than thirty years now. Prior to that they only knew that they belonged to the same church.

1. Reflect on how you can be a **joy** to those who are grieving.
2. **Pray** about what God is calling you to do.



Blessings,  
The LCGS Health Ministry Team

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