



A Way to Worship

Stilling is a way to find a meditative inner life: a way to explore aspects of your personal and spiritual awareness.

The opportunities here are taken from a very successful school book for children in class to be calm and approach their learning with a deeper and more reasoned understanding. The exercises are used in the busy classroom; often at the start of the school day, to set the atmosphere for productive learning. The guided imagery and fantasies can be enjoyed by everyone however, which is why we are offering them to you to follow during Lent - and beyond. We hope that you will enjoy the exercises and benefit from them.

Many people are unaware of their "inner life" or have been conditioned to suppress it by the influence of rationalism and materialism, "Stilling" exercises offer a key to awareness of this 'inner life' and an experiential means of discovering that this is an 'O.K.' area of consciousness. It is a dynamic and creative area which cannot be measured and dissected; it • can only be enjoyed and wondered at; for, like the butterfly, when it flies free, it delights and enchants; but when it's pinned down, it is dead!

The exercises require only a few minutes of your time and should ideally be shared with someone else, however, reading alone is fine too.

For all the exercises it is best that you sit comfortably and relax with as few distractions as possible. Some people find that silence is best whilst others prefer to have some quiet background music.

Titles

The River Bank

The Beach

The Woodland Pool

The Stream

Problem in a Puddle

The Tent

The River Bank

To begin....

focus your attention on the feeling of your breathing.... (Pause)

Next time you breathe in.—hold your breath for a few moments_

One, two, three, four, five....

Now slowly breathe out, and let your eyes close as you do....

You are sitting by the river of your breathing.... watching each breath as it flows by....

Feel how the air comes into you.... (Pause) and how it goes out....
(Pause)

Like the tide, your breath brings into you fresh, clean new life....
and carries away with it the waste products of pollution and
tension....

Feel how you become new and refreshed with each breath....
(Pause)

Your nose and mouth are like the harbour entrance....sensing the
tide flowing in and flowing out (Pause)

Stand on the harbour wall,— look down into the
waterr....and, for one /two/three minutes, feel the flow
of life as it passes in and out within you....

Now, slowly begin to take control of your body again....
Feel your toes moving inside your shoes.... Stretch your
fingers,...

Refresh your lungs by breathing a little more deeply,...

Gently move your head from side to side, and round in a
circle....

And when you feel ready, let your eyes open again to everything
around you.

The Beach

**Make sure that you are comfortable....
sitting in a well-balanced position with a straight back and both feet
on the floor....**

Gently let your eyes close,..,

**Take a full breath and hold it for a few seconds.... and then slowly let
it go, feeling yourself relax
as it does....**

**Notice how all stress and tension is flowing out of you every time
you breathe out....and how, with each breath, you become
more peaceful....**

**Now go inside yourself, so that you may see with your inner eye....
You are going away to a deserted beach.... You are the only
person there....
The day is warm.... there is very little wind, and the sun is
shining._**

**You are walking slowly down the beach to the sea shore....
and you can feel the warmth of the sun on your back....
the cooling breeze on your skin....
and the rough sand or pebbles under your bare feet....**

**You are now at the water's edge._
and you sit down on the smooth sand..., It's good to be here...,
and you feel peaceful and comfortable....**

**Look around you and notice all the details of the shore and your
surroundings,....
the sights and sounds that make this such a good place to be....**

**Now, with a finger; you write your name in the smooth sand by the
water's edge....
See how it looks....
Your name in the sand....**

**A little wave runs up the shore to where you are sitting and gently
flows over your name....
and as the water runs back....
you see your name dissolving into the sand.... and this makes you
feel good because this place has taken your name to its heart....**

**and you feel that you and this place have become one.—
You have the feeling of complete harmony with everything here....**

**You decide to stay here for a while....
enjoying the sights and sounds....
and feeling at one with everything around you.**

**Now it's time for you to leave—.
You get up from the sand...,
and begin to walk back up the beach away from the shore to the
place where you stood when you first arrived._
Look around you once again and notice all the sights and sounds
you have enjoyed....**

**Now its time to make your journey to come back.
For some of you, it will be a long journey,,,,,, for others, a short
one. You are making that journey now.... (Short pause)**

**Now, you are back in this room, sitting in this chair End the
exercise very slowly....
by beginning to take control of your body again.... Feel your feet
moving inside your shoes....
Sit a bit taller in your chair....
Breath a little more deeply to refresh your lungs.... and only when you
feel ready, let your eyes open again into the room.**

The Woodland Pool

Focus your attention on your sense of sight,...

Allow your eyes to focus naturally on something ahead of you._

and just notice for a few moments all the details that they are showing you....

colours, shapes, tines and patterns....

Now let your eyes close,,...and begin to become aware with your `inner' eye;...the eyes of your imagination,,...and see that you are walking alone on a woodland path....

It is a warm, sunny day with a gentle wind.... and this is a good place to be....

Shafts of sunlight are coming down among the trees....

Look around you....

What kind of path are you walking on ?

What do you notice on each side of the path ?...,,

Stop for a few moments...,

Listen to the sounds of the peaceful woodland all around....

Which sounds do you notice most clearly?....

Begin walking slowly again.—

Up ahead, you see a small clearing, in the middle of the clearing, there is a little pool of very still water._

Stand by the pool....

Notice the reflections mirrored in the water?,,,

Sit down and enjoy the warmth and quietness of this peaceful clearing.... (Pause)

Notice how you feel as you sit here?....

and what you like best about this place....

You see a small stone on the ground by your hand...,,

You pick it up and gently throw it into the middle of the pool

As it falls into the water, ripples go out, disturbing the surface and upsetting the reflections, right out to-the edge....

As you watch, the ripples begin to die down.... and the surface becomes calm again....

You decide to stay there for a few more moments,....watching the peaceful reflections and feeling the goodness of this place.

Now, it's time to go.—

You get up and slowly make your way back along the path,,, storing away clearly in your memory all its details, so that you will be able to come back here whenever you want.

Now, you are back in this room, sitting in this chair.

End the exercise very slowly._

Move your feet a little inside your shoes.... Sit a bit taller,—

Take one or two deeper breaths to refresh your lungs....

and only when you feel ready,,,

let your mind open again into the room.

The Stream

Get comfortable and relaxed....
and become aware of your breathing....
As you breathe out, let your eyes gently close,
so that you are able to see and hear more clearly
with the eyes and ears of your imagination....

You are walking by yourself In a beautiful countryside....
It's a lovely, sunny day with a gentle breeze to keep you cool...
and you are enjoying all the beauty of the scenery....
As you walk, you see up ahead a little stone bridge over a river._
You walk on to the middle of the bridge, and you can feel the warm
sun on your back as you look over into the water flowing by
underneath...

The water is moving very slowly.... It is very clear.
You can see the plants in the water swaying gently in the
movement of the river..
Around the pillar of the bridge just below you... you can see some
small fish lazily swimming in the current.

You notice a leaf floating on the surface of the water as it comes
under the bridge....
It is moving very slowly....You follow its progress on its way
downstream.
See how it turns and glides. See the direction it takes... notice the
details of the river bank it passes on its way downstream....

Your eyes can see now the course of the river as it makes its way
across the countryside....
Gently let your mind's eye follow it on its course.... enjoying the view
into the distance....

As the river disappears from your sight into the horizon, you bring
your eyes back again to the clear water just below you,...
and you decide, for a few more moments, to watch the gentle
movement of the plants and fish...
and the reflections of the sunlight on the surface...

Now it's time to make your return journey... You stand up and
stretch....and begin to walk away from the bridge to follow the
path which will bring you back to this room.... You may have a

short or a long way to travel, but you are now on the return journey..

Here you are again, finding your way back Into your body in this room....

Bring yourself out of the exercise gently and slowly in the way you find best.

Problem in a Puddle

Imagine that you are outside....

You are all alone...,

It has been raining, but now the sun has come out.

In front of you is a puddle....

In this puddle you can clearly see a worry or problem that you have at this moment....

Concentrate on the puddle....

How big is it?.... •

What shape is it?...,

What colour is it?....

As you stand looking at this puddle, you can feel the sun warming your back–.

You begin to see steam rising from your puddle.... Watch your puddle change shape and become smaller as the sun dries it up....

Gradually, you see your puddle and your problem disappears..

You feel totally at peace....

When you are ready, bring yourself back to this room slowly and gently in the way you find is best.

The Tent

Go, with the eyes and ears of your imagination, to a beautiful countryside....

It is a warm and sunny day.. and you are walking alone among gently rolling hills....

As you reach the top of one of the hills, you see that there's an enormous tent on the other side.,,, As you get nearer, you hear voices, and you realise that the tent is full of people....

It's noisy and crowded....an angry meeting is taking place....

Everyone seems to be arguing....

The tent is full of anger, hatred and conflict._

(Ending 1)

A wind begins to blow, it gets stronger and stronger and as it blows through the tent it begins to lift the people off the ground....

Everything and everyone is carried away into the distance and over the horizon....

The tent is now empty and clean, and only you are left behind.

The wind dies down and all becomes peaceful. You sit on the side of the hill in the warm: sunshine overlooking the beautiful countryside.

It's good to be alone and at peace. You decide to stay there for a while to enjoy the feeling of calm and goodness which is all around you.

Now it's time to leave so you get up and make your way back to this room.

End the exercise slowly in the way you find best

(Ending 2)

In twos and threes the people begin to leave...,, This meeting seems to be over but they are still arguing and angry as they make their way down the hill._

Gradually the tent becomes empty and the voices die down as they disappear into the distance....

You are left alone on this side of the hill....

Everything becomes peaceful....

the tent is empty and clean and quiet....

You sit down in the warm sunshine overlooking the beautiful countryside.

It's good to be alone and at peace and you decide to stay there for a while to enjoy the feeling of calm and goodness which is all around you...

Now its time to leave_

so you get up and male your way back to this room

End the exercise slowly in the way you find best