

Experiential:

Go out into nature and look again at what beauty the Lord creates which is beyond our understanding. Look at an ant, a flower or a tree. Really look at these things seeing how they fit into the bigger pattern and yet are true to their Creator and reflect an aspect of his nature. Look as a child does prefer Look as if through a child's eyes (or look with your small children/grandchildren) and wonder at being made by this creative energy and design.

Meditation:

Seeing the Lord looking at you (taken from Anthony de Mello, *Sadhana, a way to God*; origin St Teresa of Avila).

Prepare a quiet space for yourself, sit comfortably, and take three deep breaths letting out any tension with the outward breath.

Imagine you see the Lord standing before you he is looking at you Notice him looking at you, lovingly and humbly. Notice the love in his look notice the humility just allow yourself to be loved.

Personal reflection:

We often fall into the trap of thinking that we need to earn our place in heaven, but this is a fallacy. There is no need for you to work towards this. It is about allowing the Lord to work this creation within you. The closer we come to the Lord the more he can realise the inherent potential within us; he unfolds it for us. The only things to stop this are the blocks we put in the way - pride, fear, lack of trust Turn to the Lord and be open to what is to be 'birthed' through you - ask for him to show you what is blocking his love and wisdom flowing into you at this moment in time. Say to yourself 'I am open to what God needs to create in me at this moment'.

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Five Essentials - Aspects of Loving - a focus for the Church
1st Essential : Part 1 - Being loved as God's child
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Being loved as God's child



'I made you. You are mine. I love you.'
Isaiah 43:1,4

'I drew you with cords of love.'
Hosea 11:4

'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.'
Matthew 23:37

These words based on the Bible speak of God's great love for each one of us individually but also for all his children, no matter what culture, background or belief. He creates all and loves all unceasingly.

This booklet is an invitation to engage with and explore what it means for you to be God's child, to be loved as God's child. And as we are all different, there are a variety of ways for you to choose from in this booklet. Perhaps you will find your own way to connect with your heavenly Father - the way that speaks to you now. So choose what draws you. There is no right or wrong way that brings us back to remembering the constant and unconditional love of our God.

Pause - go back to the verses from the Bible; choose one and say the words to yourself silently, allowing them to settle in your mind. Repeat as many times as you wish, holding them in your thought and allowing any reflections to come into your mind.

When we say the Lord's Prayer it begins with the words "Our Father in heaven". I wonder whether we take in the meaning of this phrase, 'Our Father', because it implies each one of us is God's child. It's one thing to say the words, even to think about them; but to let the essence or meaning within the words sink into our hearts and life is yet another. For this is a deeper knowing of what it is to be God's child.

Each of us has his or her beginning in God's energy and Being which is pure love. The Bible starts with the words "In the beginning". God always is and has Being in himself - but we all have a beginning.



We begin in God's creative love; we are conceived and brought into being by our heavenly Father. He has a dream or vision of a unique individual whom he wishes to love and be loved by. He has a yearning to bring forth you and me so that he may bless us with all that he can give - joy, peace, and all that is good and blissful. This is the essence of creative love.

Perhaps we can get an insight into this when we 'birth' something new; a new idea, project, vision, a new human being. Because God includes us as co-creators, we are part of this birthing process in being creative on all levels.

Reflect for a moment on holding a new baby for the first time and experiencing the miracle of a new life or perhaps you can relate to the excitement of envisioning a new project, at work, in the garden In the moment of holding this newness in your mind what do you feel?

In our 'vision' of a new creation perhaps we see the perfection of what could be realised. We can get a glimpse of what it must be like for God as our loving Father who dreams or envisions what each of us might be.

We are all stamped with the hallmark of our Creator. If we believe we are created by God as beloved children then it must be possible for us to reflect his beauty of spirit, courage and service in our living. This is our heavenly heritage that is never shut off from us; our Father holds it out to us in every moment of our lives, whoever we are and whatever mistakes we have made in the past.

He has called us by name - we are his and he loves us.

The following are ideas of different ways you can explore and experience being loved as God's child.



Bible focus:

Isaiah 43: 1-7 or Hosea 11: 1-4

Choose one of these to focus on - (or do both separately; it's up to you) and read the complete passage.

Maybe something jumps out at you; it may be a phrase or a word. Allow this to turn over in your mind, reflect and meditate on it. What does it say to you in your life at this time, in the circumstances of your life? Be open to the Lord to connect with you as your ever-loving Father.

Teaching focus:

"All things are full of God, and all take their portion from that fullness."

"The Lord flows into every human being with all his Divine love, and all his Divine wisdom, and so with all his Divine life."

Genesis 2:7 speaks of this, where it says that Adam (who symbolises humankind) was created an image of God, that God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and that thus Adam became a living being. This is true not only in humans but in all creation, for we are told, "The Lord is present everywhere, and where God is present, he is there with his whole essence." *Way of Wisdom, Meditations on Love and Service*, Swedenborg (ed. by Grant Schnarr & Erik Buss).

Name - *I have called you by name:*

- a name means the essence of a thing, its quality. Calling someone by his/her name symbolises knowing or foreseeing the person's nature. When the Lord is said to call us by name it means that he knows what we are like. He knows everyone. No one knows anyone's name in heaven, but each knows what the other is like.

paraphrased from *Secrets of Heaven* 145