

Getting to Know a Part of Your Inner World: A Guided Prayer Exercise

Based on a Christ-Centered Approach to Internal Family Systems

Start with a few deep breaths... lengthening each exhale...

As you stay with your breath... turn your attention toward your thoughts, emotions and physical sensations and consider if there is any part of you that is causing you any discomfort.

Take a moment to find this part. Consider that it is not the totality of who you are, but just one part... Welcome it... and see if you can get to know it better... what is it feeling?... Where do you sense this in your body?... Focus on it... Is there a thought or an image that comes to mind when you focus on it?... As you focus on it... see if you can cultivate curiosity and compassion toward this part. [PAUSE]

How do you feel toward that part? – If you feel anything other than curiosity or compassion, then notice those parts giving you the other feelings and ask them to step back behind a glass wall... You may notice that other parts of you are skeptical or critical... that's OK, those parts are welcome... Let them know that you'll be happy to get back to them after they've given you some space for this exercise. [PAUSE]

Reconnect with the original part on which you chose to focus... reconnect with its thoughts, feelings and sensations until you sense your wise Spirit-led Self extending compassion and curiosity toward this part... When you notice any of the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace,

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – then you know you are in Spirit-led Self and ready to minister to the original part you identified. [PAUSE]

Ask it how it feels toward you... if it's glad you're there, mad at you for letting other parts run over it, distrusting of you... notice how old it feels to you... what is an early memory of this feeling?... Honor whatever memory shows up, continuing to offer your curiosity and compassion... What are its fears? What is it afraid would happen if it didn't do its job?... [PAUSE]

Ask this part if it knows Jesus. Would you like to invite Jesus to be near?... What is it like for this part to be in Jesus' presence? [PAUSE] What would it like for Jesus to know?... Does it have any fears or concerns?... Can it tell those things to Him?... Would this part like to give those burdens over to Him?... Ask Jesus if he wants to say, do or give the part anything in response... Take this time to be with Jesus, remaining open, curious and compassionate to your experience... Take a few more deep breaths and receive from Jesus whatever He offers you...

Now ask this part of you what role it wants to play, now that it has connected with your Spirit-led self and has been in the presence of Jesus... What would it like to do now? Would it like to rest, or play, or perhaps encourage you or advise you with its new wisdom? You may want to give this part a medal of honor for how hard it was working and promote it now to its new role in your life. [Pause]

Whenever you are ready, welcome back all the parts that were stepping back or that you asked to go behind the glass wall... Did they see what happened? What roles do they want to play now? ... You may want to see them all sitting around a table... Imagine Jesus there as well... See if the parts can notice and appreciate one another... Extend your gratitude to each of the parts that showed up... and slowly turn your attention back to the present.

**Adapted and integrated with Christian spirituality by Kimberly Miller, LMFT, from the exercises found in *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model* by Richard Schwartz, Ph.D