

INTER  ARSITY



WONDER
CONFERENCE
JUNE 4-6

Remember those times when you would lie back on the ground and look up at the clouds or the myriad of stars and ponder the mysteries of the universe...and WONDER...

Or maybe it's the smaller things, closer to earth...the sparkle in someone's eye, how something is made, a profound thought or conversation...

What inspires WONDER in you? What is making you stop in your tracks and ponder and WONDER?

In this season of isolation, uncertainty and limitation, let's set aside some time to take a breath, look up and out, and remember the amazement, expansiveness, possibility and wonder of God...

welcome to the

WONDER

CONFERENCE

We are SO glad you are here! We're excited to journey together as we engage God in Wonder this weekend.

What to expect

Our hope for this weekend is that we can spend some time reflecting on Scripture, spending time in nature, engaging in some offline spiritual exercises, and checking in with a small group. Here's what the weekend will look like:

PODCASTS

Each day there will be a podcast featuring some teaching and reflections about a few Scripture passages. You can find the podcasts here: ivcf.ca/wonder

Password: EngageWonder

You have the option of downloading them and taking them with you on a walk, or you can stream them from a device.

GATHERINGS

We wanted to limit screen time, so we will only have 2 altogether zoom calls. These will be at **7 pm EST** on **Friday** and **Sunday**. The link is on the website.

OFFLINE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

After you have some time to reflect on the podcasts, there are a few offline spiritual exercises you can engage in. Choose 1-2 per day and see how God meets you. The offline spiritual exercises can be found in this booklet.

SMALL GROUP CHECK-INS

Each evening, you'll have a chance to meet with a small group to share your thoughts and experiences as you engaged the podcasts and spiritual exercises. You'll receive a meeting link from your small group leader.

additional fun items

PADLET

You can share your photos, reflections, memes, worship songs, and whatever else on our Wonder Padlet. This is a way for you to connect with the larger group of participants. You can find a link to the padlet on the website.

CARE PACKAGES

If you're reading this, you'll have received your care package! Enjoy and feel free to share photos of you enjoying your packages on our padlet. Like each of you, each package is unique and different!

COLOURING PAGES

Included in this booklet are a few colouring pages made by Heidi Guan [@wintertea_art](https://www.instagram.com/wintertea_art) Feel free to enjoy them and colour as you feel led. Just be careful if you use markers, as it might bleed through the pages.



Offline spiritual exercises

Welcome to our offline spiritual exercises. These exercises are meant to guide you into some new or more intentional spiritual practices. Each day has a few options, choose which ones draw your attention. **For each one, you will need a pen/pencil and a notebook/journal.** Some activities are best done outside, some are best done inside. Any additional supplies or preparations are noted using icons.



best completed outdoors



document with photo or video



you may need some additional supplies



best completed indoors



you may get messy

friday

AWE AND WONDER WALK



Description: An intentional walk.

Timing: 15-30 min

Take a walk and deliberately notice inspiring sights. Pause, reflect, look closer. If you see an object, look closely, see how it's made or constructed. Take photos and notes, as you feel led.

AT THE START COLLAGE



Description: An image or word collage inspired by Genesis 2.

Timing: 1-2 hours

Take some time to look at Genesis 2, read in a few different translations. What are the words/phrases/images/themes that stand out? Look through magazines or online for images that reflect the themes and words of the text. Use these images to create a collage. If you aren't able to find the images, make a collage with words.

saturday

TEN MIRACLES BEFORE DINNER



Description: Some practical ways to rediscover the miracles of life that surround you.

Timing: 1-2 hours

Get out into nature. Go for a walk in your favourite park or forest, or a picnic at your favorite beach, fully prepared to savor the experience with all your senses—listening, looking, tasting, touching, and smelling what you encounter. Look around at the trees and their leaves. How many different shapes and colors do you see?

See the world differently. Look through the lens of your camera or phone. What new perspective does this bring to the scene?

Take notice of the small things. Pick up an unusually shaped rock or shell. What attracted you to this object? What does it remind you of? Hold it in your hand. Touch it against your skin. How does it feel? How is it different from other objects around you? Now find a quiet place to sit and contemplate your treasure. What does this small piece of creation tell you about God?

Seek out what gives you goose bumps. Now that your sense of awe has been stimulated, reflect back over your day. What else triggered a sense of awe in you? Was it an unexpected smile, a shared story, waves glistening on the sand? Try to make a list of at least ten “miracles” of awe and wonder that you experienced. How could you nurture more regular awareness of miracles like these?

Make space for silence. Sit quietly and take some deep breaths in and out. Close your eyes and remind yourself of the sights, sounds, fragrances, tastes, and textures of your day. Listen to God’s presence in the day and contemplate what God’s Spirit might say to you. Is there a prayer, song, drawing, or other response that comes to mind?

GRATITUDE SCAVENGER HUNT



Description: A few multi-sensory prompts to inspire a gratitude list

Timing: 1-2 hours

Use the following list to identify ten things you are grateful for:

- Name someone who makes your life better. What about them are you grateful for?
- What is something in nature that makes you smile? Take a photo or sketch it in your journal.
- Describe something that smells amazing. What comes to mind as you think of it? Write or draw the grateful memory it evokes.
- What is something that tastes good that you are grateful for? Write it in your journal, then take a taste break and sample it.
- What or who makes you want to laugh? What do you enjoy about that thing or person? How could you express your gratitude?
- Get a stack of Post-it Notes and walk around your house identifying what you are grateful for. Use a different colour for each gratitude you add and embellish your words with doodles or sketches.
- Think of something you used today that you normally take for granted but now are grateful for. Write it down, draw a picture, take a photo, or go out and use the item.
- What is one thing in your life you are grateful for that you would like to share with someone else? Write down what you plan to do to accomplish this.
- What is one thing you have done in your life that you are particularly proud of? Write it down and why you are grateful for this opportunity. Is there someone you want to share this thankfulness with?
- Write down one thing you have learned recently that you are particularly grateful for.
- Describe a challenging experience in your life that you are grateful for. Why? How could you represent this in your journal?

Once you finish your list there are several possible ways to use it.

- Find some magazines and photos. Cut out images that represent what you have written in your journal. Create a collage from the images.
- Write the key words from your gratitude list on small pieces of different colored paper, cut them into shapes, and create a word art piece.
- Write a prayer or psalm* of gratitude

*for resources on how to write a psalm, check out the padlet

FINGER LABYRINTH



Description: Engage a labyrinth by tracing around with your finger.
Timing: 30 min – 1 hour

Creating and walking finger labyrinths is a stimulating exercise. Personalize the labyrinth on the previous page. Colour it, decorate it with symbols or flowers, trickle glue around it, and then sprinkle sand on it to create a raised pattern, or write Bible verses around the pathway. This is a meditative exercise in itself and provides a perfect template for the following exercise.

Sit in a quiet place. Sit in a quiet place with your finger labyrinth in your lap. Take a few breaths in and out until you feel at peace in your soul.

Recite this prayer. Recite this prayer or a similar prayer of welcome and receptivity: "Walk with me, Lord, through all the twists and turns of life; walk with me when clouds obscure the way, when what seemed close is now so far away. Walk with me, Lord, until I trust in you; lead me to the centre of your love."

Form your question. Place a finger from your nondominant hand at the entrance to the labyrinth. Prayerfully ask a question you have struggled with this past year. Invite the Holy Spirit of God to guide and instruct you on your journey.

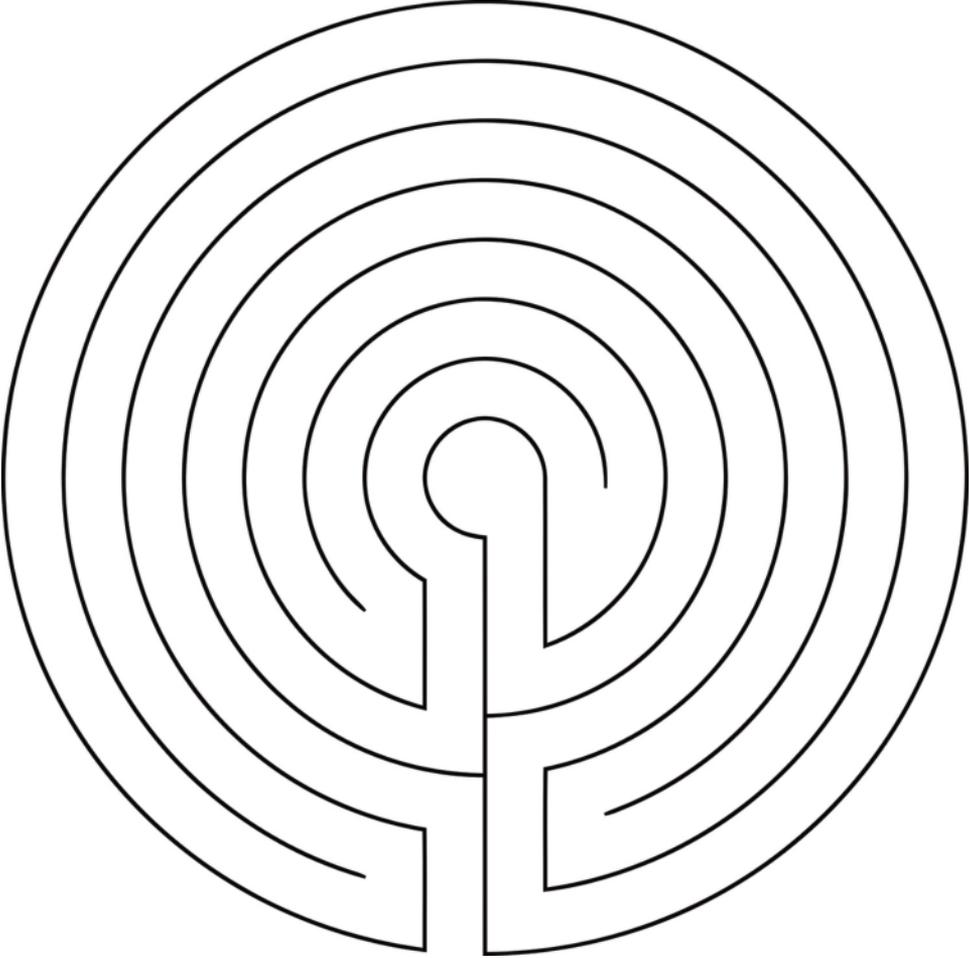
Trace the circuit with your finger. Stay open to whatever presents itself: feelings, sensations, memories, ideas. Pause at any time to breathe. Stay with a thought or memory or just relax into the labyrinth and the question stirring in your mind.

At the centre of the labyrinth, sense your connection to your own center and to God's centering presence. Acknowledge the Holy Spirit directing your thoughts and exploration. Relax, pray, sing. Repeat your question.

Trace your way out. Trace your way out, staying open to whatever comes to you. When your walk is done, sit quietly in the presence of God once more.

Trust your gut and the journey it takes you on. Believe in your creative impulses. Is there a solution to your question that surfaces? Write it down. How is God nudging you to respond? Write it down. Are there people you need to talk to? Make a plan to get in touch.

Finish with prayer. Offer a prayer of gratitude to God for the responses that have come to you and the power of the Holy Spirit to heal and change you.



IMAGINE THE SHALOM OF YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD



Description: An imagination activity inspired by scripture.

Timing: 30 min – 1 hour

“What would your neighbourhood look like if the kingdom of God came in its fullness?” Read about God’s shalom in Isaiah 65:18-25 and imagine a neighbourhood in which injustice, poverty, disease, and enmity are abolished. Visualize God’s new world in concrete and exciting ways. Write down what comes to mind or fill this page creatively expressing what you received with songs, poetry, collage, etc.

sunday

READ A CHILDREN'S STORY



Description: Read a story for children, and notice the ways God speaks and inspires you through this experience.

Timing: 1-2 hours

When was the last time you looked through a children's book for your own enjoyment and inspiration? When was the last time your inner child emerged to teach you?

Find a copy of your favorite children's book. If you don't have one at home, borrow from the local library (or look online). Sit in a quiet place, still your mind, and imagine you are five years old again and sitting in your parent's lap. Read through the story aloud; let it resonate in your soul. Examine the illustrations. Touch them, trace them with your finger as a child would. Watch for your inner response. Write down what you sense God saying to you. Look through the book again. What thoughts stir as you read the story? What images come to mind as you look at the pictures? Is there a song hidden in your heart in response? Does an image to draw emerge in your mind? What creativity does this exercise ignite within you, and how do you feel God is prompting you to respond? Perhaps you would like to rewrite the story in your own language or with yourself as the central figure. Write, draw, record, or create your response in whatever media you are inspired to use. Alternatively, if you have a drum, a singing bowl, or another rhythm instrument handy, pull that out and discover the sounds that are reminiscent of what stood out for you in the story. Or grab a set of children's LEGOs and build something.

LECTIO TIERRA



Description: Lectio tierra is an adaptation of lectio divina to nature. Like lectio divina, lectio tierra begins with reading scripture.

Timing: 15 min – 1 hour

Read today's scripture passage, then head into God's good creation with the deliberate intention of "reading" where God is present and what God is saying. "What might God use to catch my eye and draw me closer?" is a good beginning question. Anything that catches your attention provides fuel for reflection. You can discern its story, discover the intersections of that story with your own story, and sit in harmony with it. Stop, look, and listen, not forcing a revelation but waiting in the silence for God to nudge you in a definite direction. What story do I discern? How might it speak to me of God?



CREATE YOUR OWN SACRED PAUSE



Description: A guided reflection to help form a new spiritual practice.

Timing: 30 min – 1 hour

Press the pause button. Cultivating restful moments is a deliberate action. First, we need to notice and seek out the spaces that encourage rest. This might be a place in nature such as a waterfall or garden corner, or a special place at home such as a comfortable armchair, or even a local coffee shop, a park bench, or a space on our work desk where we invite God's presence. It can even be a relational space such as a cozy meal with friends or sitting with our kids on our laps. Noticing these places and visiting them regularly throughout the day is a wonderful way to experience breathing room for the soul.

Breathe deeply for a minute or two. Seek out one of these spaces. Sit comfortably with your feet firmly on the ground. Close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths slowly in and out. As you breathe in, be conscious of your breath passing in through your mouth or nose, filling your lungs with life-giving oxygen. Hold your breath for ten seconds, then slowly breathe out, allowing the toxins in your body to be expelled. Imagine the tension, anxieties, and pressure in your body flowing out as you do so. Come to rest, calm your mind, relax your body. Recite a breathing prayer and sit or stand quietly for a minute in the presence of God. Do this several times a day and it will improve not only your emotional health but your physical health too.

Notice the sensory experiences that allow your soul to breathe. As you sit in your space, what catches your attention? Looking at or holding an object, real or imagined, may enhance your ability to focus. Running our fingers over a treasured photograph, a pocket cross, even a pebble or seashell enables us to relax as it stirs memories of happy or meaningful times.

Notice the beauty of God's world. Look out the window or go outside for a few minutes and focus on a natural object. Look at it as if you are seeing it for the first time. It might be a cloud, a flower, or an insect. Examine the details. Imagine the energy of God flowing into its creation. Think about its purpose in the world. Thank God for its creation. (If you don't have a window to look out, carry a small natural object like a pebble in your pocket.)

Take a moment to appreciate what you are doing. Pause occasionally in the midst of your daily activity to appreciate your work. Sit at the computer and look at your hands and thank God for the dexterity that makes your work possible. Think of your brain and thank God for your intellect, which facilitates your exploration and understanding. Look at the words you have written and thank

God for language to express yourself with. Consider setting your phone to provide a reminder.

Recognize the actions that encourage rest and delight in God.

Moses took off his shoes when he realized he had entered a holy place, and without his sandals on it was obvious that he was there to stay awhile. What are ways you can continue to make space to incorporate this practice beyond this weekend?







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