

A Stroll Down Memory Lane: Discovering God in Our Lives

Note for the Leader: *This exercise helps participants to uncover and discover the presence and action of God in their lives. The total process takes about an hour. These steps can be adapted to suit your group.*

1. Setting the stage:

You may need to mention to the participants in this exercise that they may know one another, but perhaps not as well as they assume. Invite participants to relax and enjoy this prayerful activity. Remind the group that the purpose of this activity is to help one another see God's presence and action in each other's life.

2. Leading the reflection:

The leader begins the exercise by saying:

I invite you to sit comfortably in your chair with both feet flat on the floor:

- Relax and take a few deep breaths. Breathe out the old air. Breathe in the new. Out with the old. In with the new.
- Now breathe normally, aware of the rhythm of your breathing.
- Quiet your mind so you are present and focused

I invite you to take a 15-minute "memory walk" of your life. Imagine your life as one, big photo album of memories. Your "memory walk" will be like flipping through the pages of your photo album:

- Open your photo album and begin paging through the memories that have been captured in these snapshots from your life
(PAUSE A FEW MOMENTS)
- Quietly recall the memories and emotions these photos bring to mind
(PAUSE A FEW MOMENTS)
- Consider the impact these memories have had on your life
(PAUSE A FEW MOMENTS)
- Think about how these experiences have influenced who you are today
(PAUSE A FEW MOMENTS)
- Reflect on how the various stages of your life have been recorded in these pictures

PAUSE TO ALLOW PARTICIPANTS TIME TO GATHER THEIR MEMORIES

At the end of the 15 minutes:

I invite you to gently review the imaginary "photos" you collected during your walk.

- Select two photos that are key to who you are as a person

- Select photos that you can share with one other person

3. Sharing your photos:

- Choose someone to share your photos
- Choose someone from the group that you really don't know, or hardly know, or wish to know better
- Meet with your partner in a quiet place
- ***Discern what to share:*** Remember to share only those things that feel safe and are OK to share with the group.

4. When you meet with your partner:

- One person begins by describing their photos for the first 15 minutes.
- Include in your description why the event in the photo is important and what impact the event has had on your life.
- The other person listens reverently to your story.
- He/she asks questions only for clarification. No advice giving!

Stick to the 15-minute time allotment. It's easy to lose track of the time!

- When the first person finishes, both pause for a moment of silent prayer and then bow reverentially to one another.
- Then the second person shares his/her significant photos.
- When both of you have finished your sharing, pause for a moment of silent prayer for each other

5. When the sharing is complete:

- Invite the group to take a short break before reassembling

4. When the group reassembles, the leader may:

- Read an appropriate Scripture reading or a selection from page one of *Go and Make Disciples* (USCC) concerning the power of stories of faith
- Invite the group to share any insights or nuggets of wisdom gained from this exercise.