

Sharing with God

Most of us have a favorite environment where we find peacefulness: perhaps a lakeshore at sunset, a park, or the roof of an apartment building under a full moon. Such a setting may help us sense the presence of God. Jesus prayed on mountaintops and in lonely desert spots. Our imagination can carry us to our favorite places, no matter how drab our real environment is. In this exercise you are invited to choose a favorite setting and then imagine yourself there with God.

Before you begin, identify an environment that you like, an actual place you have been that makes you feel peaceful or reflective. Perhaps you have even prayed there before. Then close your eyes and take a moment to focus your attention with relaxation exercises and deep breathing. . . .

When you are focused, begin to imagine yourself in the place you have chosen. Use as many of your senses as you can to make the place real to you. Try to see all the details of the place with your mind's eye; smell the aromas that fill the air; hear all the sounds, including those that might not immediately be identified; feel the air touching your skin. Totally immerse yourself in the place. . . .

When you feel yourself at rest, speak to God from your heart. You may find it helpful to imagine Jesus present, or you may want to speak only to God, or you may want to imagine the presence of the Holy Spirit. Do what feels most natural and comfortable to you. . . .

After you have shared your thoughts and feelings with God, try to imagine God responding to you. God's response may not be in words; it may simply be in God's presence around you as you rest, with everything in your environment speaking to you of God.

(This resource is adapted from *Catechetical Sessions on Christian Prayer*, by Mary Shrader and Laurie Delgatto, in the Total Catechesis series [Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2004]. Copyright © 2004 by Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved.)

