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Project Zion Podcast

Katie Langston 0:16

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Karin Peter 1:00

Welcome to Common Grounds part of Project Zion Podcast where we discuss all things liturgical calendar. Now for a little refresher, the liturgical calendar takes us through the seasons and holy days of the Christian year, begins with Advent, and concludes with the last Sunday of Ordinary Time, which is called reign of Christ Sunday or in some cases, in some denominations, Christ the King Sunday. So today, we're starting a short series and common grounds where we're going to discuss the small group resource, sacred space. And you can find that resource on the world church website at sea of Christ org on the worship page, next to where you find worship outlines and sermon helps on that black bar across the page. Our guests for these discussions will be the folks who have been writing pieces of the Sacred Space lectionary series. And this is a resource that we use for small groups in, in and around the church. sacred space include several elements of group interaction and worship. There's discussion there's, it's designed for sitting around the table while you're having snacks. It includes prayer for peace and children's moments and some scripture exploration at other things as well. And we wanted to hear from our writers if participating in developing this resource based on the liturgical calendar has affected them in ways outside of writing. In other words, have they become more conscious of the seasons and holy days that we travel through in the Christian year, has the journey through the calendar impacted them and their discipleship? So today, we're visiting with Joelle Wight. Now Joelle has been on Project Zion before and we're really grateful that she agreed to come back for this short series to help.

As a full time minister with Community of Christ, she lives in Utah in the Salt Lake Valley. She is a former educator, and has a master's degree in social work. She has one of our more recent converts to being part of the writing team. So thank you for agreeing to join up in this team. And you do our thoughts for children. And I should, for clarity, share that for some time. You've also been writing children's lessons for what we used to call Sunday school when I was a kid, but I I'm not sure what we call it now maybe discipleship formation for children, but you write some of those children's lessons as well. So you're not new to writing resources for the church just new to writing for sacred space. So welcome Joelle.

Joelle Wight 3:51

Thank you. It's great to be here.

Karin Peter 3:53

So prior to working on sacred space, what has been your experience with the liturgical calendar, so did you grow up with it? Were you aware of it in your congregational life, etc, etc. How? How did you experience it?

Joelle Wight 4:09

Yeah, so prior to working on Sacred Space, I would say that my experience with the liturgical calendar was somewhat limited. The liturgical calendar was always functioning, at least for most of my life and the worship I was experiencing in my congregation, but I'm not sure that I was always consciously aware that that was happening. We observed Advent and Lent and Holy Week, but I didn't really ever understand that those observances were part of a larger calendar and we're, you know, specific things that denominations around the world were observing. However, the liturgical calendar, even though I wasn't consciously aware of it, it still had a role in shaping my discipleship. I think that following the cycle of the liturgical calendar helps me to follow the journey of Jesus and thus informs my discipleship

Karin Peter 5:00

So how has that begun to shape you now, as you become more aware of that in your discipleship, a little bit more about that?

Joelle Wight 5:08

Yeah. So I think that it's really important for us to make sure that we hit all of the different seasons and liturgical calendar. I think a lot of times it's easy to focus on the time when Jesus is active in ministry, and he's reaching out to groups and to marginalize people. And those are the stories that get us excited, and that we want to spend time with but I think that the liturgical calendar reminds us that that wasn't all that Jesus experience while he was here. And that's not all that informs the Christian experience. You know, the Hebrew Scriptures also inform our experience and Jesus's time of preparation before his ministry informs our experience. And Jesus's struggle through our what we now observe as Holy Week also informs that experience and so I think the liturgical the calendar really deepens my understanding of who Jesus was, and what Jesus's time looked like. And thus, you know, somebody who is trying to shape my discipleship to kind of match that, or to kind of reflect that understanding, I think that it's really important for me to be experiencing those things in a cyclical way every single year to constantly be reminded and re informed. So that's a good point Joelle is that we don't just go through the liturgical calendar once we repeat it every year, just like our secular calendar repeats every year, as an educator, you know that that kind of repetition helps kind of cement learning, if you will, as we go in and go through the calendar each year. And it's interesting that you say it like that, because in education, I think we'd call it spiral review. And so when you come back to something that's already been familiar, you're able to go deeper than you were before because it's already familiar to you. So you can add a little bit more knowledge or understanding around it.

Karin Peter 7:05

So in Community of Christ, we're real partial to the symbol of the spiral because of that symbol of the spire in the Temple in Independence. And so when I think of it like that, it, it reminds me

that yes, that's still what we're doing as we journey inward and outward in our discipleship. So it was last year when you agreed to write thoughts for children, and we very much appreciate that. First, can you tell us a little bit about what thoughts for children is?

Joelle Wight 7:40

So thoughts for children, I would say is kind of the children's focus point of worship. And that doesn't mean that children shouldn't be included or thought about throughout the rest of worship. But it's not really intentional time when we're talking one on one with the kids and we're making sure to use language that they understand and making sure to have visuals that go along with it just so that it's really kid friendly. So for me thoughts for children is being intentional with that effort and making sure that kids know that they're important enough and valued enough in our community, that we want to have conversations with them and that we want their input during worship.

Karin Peter 8:19

So how are thoughts children in the sacred space resource different than the kinds of things written for a larger congregational worship or for Sunday school kind of materials?

Joelle Wight 8:31

I think that there are multiple reasons why the thoughts for children in the Sacred Space resource are different from kind of the larger group stuff that we see. First of all, I think that you don't always get a children's focus moment. When you look at the large group resources. Sometimes the focus moments are intended for the entire congregation, or you know, they might be for the kids but but they're also for the larger group. And so they're not necessarily as intentionally kid focused as they could be.

In sacred space, regardless of whether or not you have children that come to your small group, you always have the option of having the thoughts for children, it's always tucked in at the end of that resource. So even if it's not something that you plan on having every single time, if a group of kids does show up to your small group at one point, you always have it on hand to pull out. So it's in the resource, whether or not you need it. Another reason that I think that the thoughts for children within Sacred Space is a little bit different than some of the other stuff that we get is because it is very much focused on the liturgical calendar. Sometimes the focus moments and larger group resources are more based on the theme of the worship service. And although that theme should kind of reference the liturgical calendar, or at least the scripture that's being used that Sunday, it's not always a very clear connection. And so these are very intentionally tied to the liturgical scripture that we have and the season that we're in.

Karin Peter 9:54

So it might have an explanation of Lent or an explanation of Trinity if it's Trinity Sunday, that kind of a thing?

Joelle Wight 10:03

Yes, definitely.

Karin Peter 10:05

All right, that's helpful. When you said a group of children might show up, we need to clarify for many of our listeners, sometime that group is one in a small group or house church or small congregation, or sometimes the It's a family with maybe two or three children, but one is a very young child and one is an older child. And so the thoughts for children in a small group resource need to be able to be adapted easily I think for for those contingencies, when that happens, a lot of our small congregations realize that that happens quite often. So tell us a little bit then since you've agreed to and you have been writing books for children. Tell us a bit about how children's ministry in general how you've experienced it or seen it offered in congregations you've attended and Community of Christ, and then maybe a little bit about how that's for children lives in the life of the church through the sacred space resource now.

Joelle Wight 11:07

So I actually think I'm going to start with the question about how it lives in the life of the church because I think that it's relevant to my experience now in congregations I attend now, but it also was true when I was younger. So, as you mentioned, Karin, thoughts for children as an element of the sacred space resource, and it provides intentional opportunity for worship facilitators to engage young people in worship. And it's a reflection of our commitment to have a place at the table for everyone born, young and old. And so in the life of the church, I think that that's really important right now. But it has also been really important throughout the life of the church, through objects, lessons, spiritual practices, and discussions, this resource seeks to provide space for kids to encounter God and think critically about what that relationship means in their life. And so to me when we talk about what it means for the current time in the church, or as part of the life of the church, it shows that we really value kids and that we want them to critically think about their relationship with God, and reflect on how that relationship is lived out. So I've experienced that throughout my life in a variety of ways in the congregations that I have attended, children's focus moments look different, and yet they are always included or they are always, you know, important in some way. So growing up, I was blessed with a congregation that really valued children and I have lots and lots of memories of children's ministry that shaped my relationship with God, as well as my understanding of what it means to be a disciple. I still have vivid memories of the science experiments Wendy Scafe would do right in the middle of a church service to show us an empty tomb out of a crescent roll on a marshmallow, or the lesson that she did, where she helped us prioritize things in our lives so that we you know, put the important things first by showing what it looked like when you couldn't fit all of the important things in this small space. And so those things really shaped who I am and who I choose to be as a disciple. And I'm really thankful for the way that children's ministry was included as I was growing up. Currently here in Utah, we have two small groups that meet twice a month. And so I get to see children's ministry a little bit differently in those groups. So as you mentioned, Karin, we don't always know how many kids are going to come, we don't know what ages they're going to be. And so children's ministry in these small groups looks different.

A lot of times what ends up happening is we have kind of like the adult discussion going on. And the kids are in the same room the same space as us. And so we try to have an activity again, where they're able to critically think about God and their relationship with God, still happening in the same room, but that they're able to do kind of independently. At the same time, if we have you know, lots and lots of kids show up one Sunday we do have the thoughts for children resource that we can just pull. And we can include that as part of worship. So again, it looks a little different depending on who we have, and how many people we have.

These groups do frequently use the sacred Space Resource though and, and are able to pull from thoughts for children. So I have the small groups that I'm with, but I also still attend a congregation in Salt Lake and so in congregational worship, a lot of times, we end up pulling thoughts for children for our children's focus moment, we always have a children's focus moment, and sometimes that is pulled from the worship helps online at Community of Christ. Sometimes it's the person who is in charge of the children's focus moment that day comes up with an activity, but a lot of times somebody will pull the thoughts for children and use that as the children's focus moment. We have a lot of kids in the Salt Lake congregation, they're very important in our congregation, and we really want to make sure that we have quality ministry for them. Because the Sacred Space resources follows the liturgical calendar. I think that it's really easy to just be able to pull elements of it for use in larger group worship. So I definitely think that we use that a lot in Salt Lake.

Karin Peter 15:09

So I want to go back to something that you said you said it a couple of times and that the resource helps kids critically think about their relationship with God. So that's a little bit different than telling a Bible story, or some of the other things that we may do when we think about sharing, discipleship formation with children, when we talk about critically think, is there an example that you could give from some of the writing that you've done where you think it's been intentional to help kids critically think about their relationship with God rather than give them an answer about God?

Joelle Wight 15:58

The one that just pops to mind in all of my writing with kids, and not includes the Sacred Space for children as well as some of the Sunday school material that that I've written. One that pops to mind is the 10 commandments. So, in our liturgical cycle right now, we are focusing on the Old Testament scripture. So correct me if I'm wrong, but in the liturgical calendar, you always have an Old Testament scripture and a New Testament scripture and and Community of Christ. We also add a Book of Mormon scripture in the Doctrine and Covenants, scripture that can be used at the same time, and I think there's also an assault that's included in

Karin Peter 16:33

Yeah, in the lectionary texts for the day.

Joelle Wight 16:36

Yeah, yeah. So um, right now we're deciding to focus on the Old Testament Scriptures. And so we're getting a lot of things that I think require some critical thinking. Because the way that people related to God in the Old Testament is very different than the way that we relate to God now and the way that we understand God now, which is part of the process and the journey of being in relationship with God is having new things revealed and coming to better understand something that can never be fully known, you know, as St. Augustine says, It's God we're talking about so we can understand it if we could understand it wouldn't be God. And so, you know, I came to the lesson where I had to write about the 10 commandments, which is really hard because in Community of Christ, we don't necessarily focus on you know, a list of do's and don'ts and easy answers of what we should and shouldn't do. As Christians we focus more on making responsible choices, we recognize that people are given agency and that the decisions that we make can either contribute to positive things in the world or they can predict contribute to negative or even evil things in the world. And so, with the 10 commandments lesson, you know, we present what the 10 Commandments were and why they were presented and why God gave those to the people. But then we took it one step further, and even though it wasn't in the liturgical or the lectionary texts that day, we talked about the new commandment that Jesus brought when he came and the new covenant that Jesus brought. And through that process, we have a critical conversation about how our relationship with God changes and how the 10 commandments can inform us today. But how they aren't necessarily used in our religion or in our faith the way they were all those years ago. And so that creates opportunity for conversation, as well as really thinking deeply about what it means to make responsible choices as somebody who wants to be in relationship with God.

Karin Peter 18:32

So rather than definitive rules, we're talking about encouraging that continued critical thinking and discipleship and development and understanding that a simple list of 10 things doesn't in any way encompass,

Joelle Wight 18:46

Yeah, especially when those 10 things are things that children are like, not so sure about what is coming into.

Karin Peter 18:53

Well, and there's wonderful feminist undertones there that need to be explored as my feminist hackles begin to rise when I look at some of that Old Testament scripture. Absolutely. That was a good example of, a great example actually, Joelle. Thank you. So, I did want to ask you, maybe I should have asked earlier. But why did you agree to write for this Sacred Space? I'm not. I mean, after you agreed, I'm not sure I ever asked you that on why you agreed.

Joelle Wight 19:26

I think that I agreed to write for Sacred Space because I believe that where we put our time and energy and effort shows what we value most. And there are multiple things represented in the Sacred Space resource that I really value. So I value new expressions and finding new ways to share God's love in the world and Sacred Space offers a new expression of God's love by

providing an alternative way to approach worship. Worship isn't always going to look the same. It can't always look the same in every group. And so having this small group resource that as you said, we can use as we sit around the table stacking with one another, I think is really an important way to have a new expression of God's love. And so that's something I value. And I'm excited to be able to contribute to that. I also really value children and youth, and including their thoughts and experience in worship. I think that they have a lot to contribute and that when they are valued enough to be asked questions, and to be intentionally thought of, they feel that value and thus are more willing to contribute and to participate in more active ways. And so for me that that's for children element of this resource does exactly that and provides those opportunities.

Karin Peter 20:41

So when you agreed to write and you began to prepare to write the thoughts for children, these segments that would be meaningful as we follow the Christian year, what were some of the preparations that you made and maybe you had already figured out that process in the writing that you had done previously for the discipleship formation pieces for children, but how did you prepare to, to write resources that follow the liturgical calendar? Were there specific steps that you made? Were there resources you looked at? Did you just go online and Google? What to do?

Joelle Wight 21:23

Well, I think it's, it's a little bit different every time but in general, I would say that if you just try to take on the liturgical calendar all at once, it's very overwhelming. And it's hard to try to make sure you include the elements of the different season and make sure that you also touch on what the scripture for that week says, and on and on and on. So when I'm writing for sacred space, as well as when I'm writing for other church educational resources, I have a template that I use because I find that when I am able to organize thoroughly, and see all of those different parts kind of laid out nicely and better able to generate meaningful ideas and so the template that I use has a space for the date and the scripture passage, the theme or the focus lesson ideas and the supplies. And so within that under the theme or the focus, I'm able to plug in what liturgical season we're in. As well as looking at the date kind of also gives that reminder as well. And the scripture passage itself, I always make sure I have that on the template. So I can reference it as I'm planning. And as I'm coming up with ideas, so I begin by finding that scripture passage online, I just, I do Google it. And I make sure to use the NRSV and I copy and paste it into that template. And I read through it to see what the most important elements or ideas within the passage are, which was some passages can be incredibly tricky. But then after I've done that, I kind of reflect on that passage in the context of what season it falls within. And so I'll mention this now and probably touch on it again later. But there are some scripture passages from within the lectionary that are used in multiple seasons. And so you can kind of approach it differently based on what season you're in or emphasize certain things differently based on what season you're in. So sometimes this season becomes the main focus of the lesson. So like an Advent, a lot of times, the main focus of the lesson is what part of Advent we're on. Other times it informs how I approach teaching about that passage. And I also try to work through each season as I'm writing rather than, you know, jumping from one lesson in

Lent to over an Advent to back to Ordinary Time I try to kind of keep them all together so that I can progress through those lessons.

Karin Peter 23:39

Yeah, I'm the same way where I need some structure to to do that. I want to go back to something you said that some of the scriptures in the lectionary and we do use the lectionary scripture, the focus scripture in sacred space. Some of them are really hard to write for. I've written some of the thoughts for children and when we hit Isaiah, it was really tough for some of them to come up with a meaningful thoughts for children out of that scripture. And I will admit, I deviate my my process there and might switch to simply talking about where we are in the liturgical calendar because I'm more comfortable with that more familiar with that. But I also think it's important for kids to understand from a very young age that we are walking through this calendar. Kids are so inundated with Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day and the wonderful secular activities and festivals that we have in our life. And it's my hope that kids will begin to discover the joy of living the Christian calendar, in a similar way that these things are can be looked forward to and can be observed in ways that are meaningful in their lives. But some of those scriptures are tough ones. So how has that been? As you've looked at some of them?

Joelle Wight 25:12

Well, you know, if you'd asked me two days ago, I would maybe would have been a little bit more optimistic. But I just spent all yesterday with Job.

Karin Peter 25:19

Oh! Ouch!

Joelle Wight 25:22

So yeah, they can definitely be challenging. But I think that what has been really helpful as I try to work with those challenging scriptures, is again, going back to that critical thinking element. And so not just trying to, you know, see these these passages that are uncomfortable or that don't necessarily fit with the theology of Community of Christ in the general sense, and having those conversations around how we see it differently. So for example, with the Job passage that I was working with yesterday, it was talking about how Job was suffering because Satan the accuser had been sent down to test him, which just makes me cringe. But then I was able to kind of talk about how Job went through all this suffering. But in our Doctrine and Covenants and Community of Christ, we have a passage that says, conditions of suffering unnecessary suffering are not God's will. And so then we kind of went through talking about, you know, what do we do when people are suffering? How can we contribute and be co creators of solutions to that suffering. So I hope that it's still fit what was intended within the lectionary. But I think that it again provides opportunity for important conversations for kids to interact with their faith in new ways.

Karin Peter 26:41

Well, and I love that because it goes beyond the simple, you know, we endure suffering kind of message that job traditionally, how we respond to job traditionally and really does bring in how we in Community of Christ understand God's purposes and God's desires and God's yearnings for creation. So yeah, lovely. So as you've been writing for sacred space, and also for the educational pieces that follow the Christian calendar that follow the lectionary, has your writing had an impact on you, as you've had to live in the Christian seasons. And as you've lived in the lectionary through through this experience of writing has it? Has it changed? You has it deepened your discipleship in any way?

Joelle Wight 27:30

Yeah, I would say that writing for Sacred Space has definitely impacted how I've experienced the Christian seasons. So having a deeper understanding of the seasons has helped me to engage with them more intentionally. Like I mentioned earlier, they were kind of always something that was happening in the background, but it wasn't ever something that I intentionally thought about or was intentionally aware of. At the time of this recording, we are currently in the season of Lent and before writing Sacred Space is a very superficial understanding of this time. I knew many people gave things up during Lent, and that the length of Lent was somehow scripturally based. But I had no idea about many of the deeper meanings and purposes of this season. This year after having written for Sacred Space, I've been able to engage with this season in a new way. I'm not sure like I can't say that now, Linda's my favorite season. I'm still not a huge lover of Lent. But I don't think I don't think I'm really supposed to be right. It's a time of preparation and suffering. And so I now recognize that the 40 days of Lent mirror the 40 days that Jesus prepared for ministry in the wilderness. And so this is a time of preparation and preparation isn't always easy, but it's essential and it's important for us as we prepare to be ministers in the world. And I now understand that in part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus encourages his followers to make sure that their intentions are pure as they participate in what at that time were kind of standard spiritual practices that were common in that day. So these practices include fasting, which is, I think the one that we hear about most, or you know, people giving things up for Lent, but they also include almsgiving, and praying. And so now that I have that understanding, I'm not just thinking about my friends who have given things up for Lent and say, oh, maybe I should do that next year. But instead, I'm trying to incorporate all three more intentionally into my Lenton proper practice in preparation. Yeah, that's a good example. Thank you for sharing that.

So as our listeners explore their Christian calendar and more fully in their lives, how might they deepen their experience? Their Christian walk their discipleship by using the thoughts for children peace in their daily life.

Whether you have children or not, I think thoughts for children can be used by anyone at any time that that's for children can be used as a resource for teaching kids at home, you know, just pulling out Sunday slots for children can be a good conversation starter with your family. Each one has a list of supplies that you'll need, most of which you can find around your house. And so you know, it's very easy to just grab those things quickly, you won't be surprised halfway through the lesson by missing something. And then there's also a script included for those who

feel more comfortable having kind of an outline of what they should say. It's not necessary to stick to the script, of course, but if you're kind of nervous about having conversations with your kids, I think it's a really good resource to be able to kind of guide you through some of the things that need to be said. These lessons can also lead to deeper conversations with your kids and families. So you don't feel like you have to just stop at the last question that's actually written in the resource continue to allow conversation to bloom after the lesson. finished, I think is really important. But even if you don't have children, I think that these resources can also be used as opportunities for adult learning and reflection. So I used to teach fourth grade. And I would always tell my students that I learned more from children's books and children's movies than from just about anything else. I think that the saying about everything I needed to know I learned in kindergarten is very true in very different ways. And so I believe that we can learn a lot from children's resources because even though these resources are intended for children, they can be just as meaningful for adults, if not more so. As we talked about earlier, sometimes that that repetition or that spiraling back to content helps us to revisit something familiar and take it to a deeper level. And so I think that that's for children definitely provide opportunity for that. So don't let the title of this element fool you, this resource can be used by anyone.

Karin Peter 31:55

So I remember we were at an event I think it it was in Headwaters mission Center, which would be Minnesota and Wisconsin. And we were introducing sacred space at large mission center event. And we had people at tables, five or six people at a table. And we gave them the resource and we explained it. And we just had people at the table kind of go through it as if they were a small group. And in doing that, and none of the tables had children, these were mostly seniors around the table. And so I was kind of watching and wandering through the room, responding to inquiries. And all of a sudden back in the corner, I noticed the whole group of seniors at this one table, they were all standing up and doing these motions that I knew were in the thoughts for children piece where they were being a tree and they were being rooted and their arms were growing out. And I went over to them and I said, Oh, you guys don't have to do the thoughts for children. And they're like, No, we love this part!

Joelle Wight 32:58

That's awesome! Good for them.

Karin Peter 33:00

I thought that was wonderful. And and I think every experience I've had in sharing Sacred Space in a mission center event in that way people, even with their children at their table or in their group have engaged in that piece because as you said, we learn. We learn from that, as well.

Joelle Wight 33:17

And it kind of gives you an excuse to maybe be a little bit more free and vulnerable than you otherwise would be. How often do adults stand up in the middle of worship and pretend that their tree, and yet that's a meaningful, important experience?

Karin Peter 33:30

Very much it's been meaningful to me, I still remember it. Yeah, absolutely. So Joelle, as we draw our conversation to a close, is there. Are there any last comments or is there a thought that maybe came to you that you'd like to share with our listeners?

Joelle Wight 33:48

Not really, I would just really like to encourage listeners to check out the Sacred Space resource, whether you're a worship planner, a congregational leader, or just a casual listener. I think that you'll find this resource interesting and helpful in a variety of ways for variety of reasons. So make sure to check it out and see all of the different elements that we've been talking about.

Karin Peter 34:09

Well do all I can see why you serve in the office of 70. You are the proclaimer here. So that, that was an excellent invitation for people to do that. I want to thank you very much for sharing in our common grounds miniseries here on Sacred Space, the small group resource, and we look forward to participating with you in some of your writing that you do for Sacred Space and the children's lessons. So if you don't mind, let's close with one of the thoughts for children that you wrote.

Joelle Wight 34:43

Yeah, so that's for children I have chosen to share today's actually from ordinary time on the liturgical calendar, but the scripture passage is one that is also used during Lent, so it kind of worked out well. In fact, it was used just a couple Sundays ago. It comes from Exodus chapter 17 verses one through seven and it tells the story of when the Israelites were in the wilderness without water and God provided for their need. I think that this particular thoughts for children is especially relevant to our current situation. Again, at the time of this recording, we're experiencing a lot of uncertainty as we deal with the spread of COVID-19. And what that means not only for our faith community, but for the larger world community and how we interact with each other. So the practice included in this resource helps provide calm through grounding for both children and adults. You don't need any supplies to participate. All you need is your five senses.

Let's begin. Sometimes life is pretty hectic, it can make us feel sad or overwhelmed. The Israelites in today's scripture passage were very overwhelmed. They were worried that they wouldn't have the water they needed. In times when we are sad or overwhelmed. It can be helpful to spend time with God. Sometimes spending time with God requires us to practice mindfulness. This means that we're aware of our surroundings, but also aware of how we are on the inside. And we're able to be calm and calm our thoughts and feelings even when things are crazy. One way we can practice mindfulness is by grounding ourselves using our five senses. Do you know what are five senses are? They're sight, touch, smell, taste and hearing. Let's try the grounding exercise. As we go through each step, you won't need to move around or say anything out loud. Instead, try to keep your body very still, and use your senses to find things around you and make a list of those things in your head.

First, I want you to find five things you can see in the space around you. Name those things in your head.

Next, I want you to find four things in the space around you and imagine what they would feel like to touch.

Next, close your eyes without making any noises of your own. I want you to listen for three sounds in your surroundings.

Next, I want you to find two smells in your surroundings. If you can't smell anything right now look around you for things that you can imagine the smell of.

Finally, I want you to close your eyes and think of one thing you really like about yourself. Feel free to share that thing with someone near you or with God.

And then we would typically close this type of thoughts for children with a prayer. And so I'm going to offer a prayer really quickly.

God, thank you so much then in the midst of craziness and hectic times, we are able to spend time with you. My prayer is that each person listening to this podcast, whether they listen to it a week from now, or three years from now, my prayer is that they will feel your presence in their life, even when things are scary or difficult. God, thank you for the moments that we've just had, and for the opportunity to ground ourselves in our surroundings, and in you pray these things in your son's name, amen. Amen.

Karin Peter 38:45

Again, thank you to Joelle Wight for that wonderful children's moment and for the work that you do and share with writing resources for the church and for being here with us today on Project Zion Podcast. This is part of Common Grounds. And I'm Karin Peter. Thanks so much for listening.

Josh Mangelson 39:15

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