

Walking Meditation

Before you begin, choose a purpose for your walk. Are you exploring the bounty of Creation? Are you choosing to walk in gratitude? Are you looking for calm in the chaos? Your purpose will govern your thinking as you walk.



Open your door (or car door if you have driven to a spot) and step outside. Take a moment to stop and close your eyes. Stand up straight, and balance yourself on both feet. Pull your shoulders back and relax. Concentrate on your body -- how does it feel? Concentrate on your feet, standing firmly on the ground. Whatever your age, your physical health or condition, thank God for your body. You were made in Her image and you are blessed.

Next, **take a slow deep breath** in, hold it for a few seconds, and let it go slowly. This is a chance for a breath prayer: while breathing in silently say “Lord God” or Lord Jesus” and while breathing out silently say “walk with me”. Do this breathing a few times to invite God to walk with you as you go out. Thank Her for showing you Creation in your short journey into the world around you.

Now, start walking. For the first few minutes, **look up around you**. Notice the colour of the sky -- how many shades can you see? Look at the trees -- are the buds flowering? How many colours of green can you see? Can you see birds or other creatures in the trees or in the sky? Listen for life around you -- two-legged, four-legged, even many legged. Take this time to notice but not to think.

When you get to a safe place to do so, stop. Close your eyes and **face the light**. Take a moment to feel the warmth on your face. Then, turn yourself slowly in a circle, stopping when you are facing the light again. Consider -- how do you know that you are facing the right way in life? What is the light that guides you in your day-to-day choices? Try another breath prayer of “Lord God, light my way.”

Walk again, this time **looking low around you**. Look for diversity and differences. Are there small plants growing in a lawn or forest floor? Can you see bugs or worms in the soil? What different colours of green or brown can you see looking low? If it is safe to do so, you can also walk off the path/sidewalk to notice the difference between walking on a hard path and the soft earth. Consider the diversity and bounty of Creation. Are you ready for all of the differences that crop up in your life? Consider also the gifts you have been given to handle the world as it “crops up”. In your mind, turn to God and say thanks.

When you find a safe place to do so, stop again but keep your eyes open. Try a **5-finger exercise**:

- find 5 things you can see around you
- find 4 things you can hear around you
- find 3 things you can feel
- find 2 things you can smell
- find 1 thing you can taste (without putting anything new in your mouth)

Consider how you feel about the things you noticed. Were they all appealing? Was anything you saw or smelled or felt distasteful? Creation is full of many things -- do you notice them all or are you drawn to things of beauty? Are you missing things that are “right under your nose”? Ponder this as you continue walking.

In the next section of your walk, deliberately **look for something “ugly”**. If you can, pick it up and look at it closely. Look deeper to see beauty or strength or value. Does the misshapen plant still provide shelter? Does the bug you find disgusting still have a place in the food chain? How does the practice of looking deeper help us to “welcome the stranger” in our lives?

Continue walking, and **listen for song** around you. You will likely hear birds, but what other sounds can be song? How do songs change your state of being? Consider how you can add a song into the world around you that would contribute to the wonder of Creation. Perhaps, take some time to sing a favourite song in your head as you walk.

Walk until you are back. Continue to **notice your surroundings**, letting your eyes and ears go where they will. Find wonder around you and continue to thank God for all you experience.

Before you open your door to go inside, stop and close your eyes. **Scan your body**, from your feet to your head. How are you feeling now? Is it different than you felt in the beginning of your walk? Again, do a breath prayer: “Lord God, thank you for the world”.

For other forms of walking meditation, try <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/walking-with-god/> or <https://www.kutsucompanions.com/post/walking-prayer-a-nature-walk-with-god>