



Walk of awareness

Notes for walkers



Before the walk

- Decide on a comfortable length of time to walk: between 30 minutes and an hour is about right.
- This walk is best done individually, but if you are more comfortable walking with someone else, keep silent throughout.
- There is no set route; wander where you feel led. It's good to combine different environments, if possible. For example, town or city streets followed by a park, or village streets leading into countryside (stick to marked footpaths in rural areas).
- Take a bag with you to collect things on the way, to remind you of different parts of the walk. They will be used at the end of the walk. Alternatively, take photos of things you wish to record.
- Before you set off, have a moment of contemplation and prayer. Allow yourself to be still and focus on God's presence with you as you leave. If you prefer, read the following prayer silently to yourself:

God of all our journeys, be with me as I walk.
 Open my eyes to your presence.
 Open my ears to your call.
 Open my mind to your wisdom.
 Open my heart to your Spirit.
 Amen.

The walk

- As you begin to walk go quietly, unhurriedly, lightly and with reverence for the ground on which you tread, and for what you see and meet. Remember, walk in silence.
- From time to time, stop, and take in the whole scene before you, using all your senses.

Feel the ground under your feet.

Touch things with the tips of your fingers.

Listen to sounds, those nearby and far away; those above you and around you. Are they pleasant, irritating, intriguing?

Smell the environment; what stands out to you? Flowers, food, traffic...

Look at detail. Notice shapes, patterns, different colours, spaces between things, textures, different materials such as synthetic and natural, metal, wood, concrete, iron, plastic, paper...

Watch things move; do they travel slowly or quickly, up and down, to and fro?

Notice immovable things such as hills, bridges, buildings and roads.

See contrast: light and shade, big and small, order and chaos...

Observe people as they pass by: their age, their mood, their posture, their clothes...

If possible, find a secluded place to be on your own. Stay for a while. How does it feel to be there?

- All along your journey, remember God is with you, in the tranquillity of a field or wood, and in the busyness and noise of the litter-ridden street. Reflect on how you feel about God's presence in these different places you find yourself.

On your return

- Find a quiet space to sit on your return and just spend a few moments alone reflecting quietly on the journey you have had. You may want to look again at any items you collected on the way, revisiting in your mind the places you found them. Ask yourself if you found it easy to experience God in that place or not.
- Do any of your items remind you of any particular pieces of Scripture? If so, find and read them again carefully and slowly, no matter how well you think you know them. What does this passage say to you now?
- Once you feel the time is right, move into the communal area with the others who have been on the *Walk of awareness*. Put the items you've collected into a shared collage. Be imaginative about how you use them. Perhaps write a piece of Scripture underneath, or words of your own. Or you could embellish the items with craft materials or your own artwork.