

Processing Transition On Your Own

Every transition is marked by three stages: the ending, the waiting stage (or the space in-between), and the new beginnings. Each of these stages is significant and will take time to process each, so we encourage you to not rush through it but to give yourself ample space to reflect. And while group reflection is important, we expect that you will need some more space to process on your own. We want to give you a framework to process the stage that you are in, as well as a preview of how you might feel in the days ahead. Throughout this transition, allow yourself to feel whatever comes up — sadness, excitement, anger, fear, hope, or anything else — and invite the Spirit and your people (community) into your processing. After reading the short description of each of the three stages of transition, we invite you to spend some time working through the following questions on your own, perhaps in a journal or with a close friend.

The Ending

It must be acknowledged that every transition involves a death of sorts, a loss of what was. For us to truly get to the other side of this transition in a healthy way, the ending phase requires us to get in touch with what exactly we are losing and then to grieve those losses. The grief process is neither linear nor logical, and that's okay. It may take longer than you're comfortable with; don't expect to be fully through it all after tonight.

- With that in mind, spend some time naming and sympathetically acknowledging the losses you are grieving or can foresee grieving as you go through this transition. What makes you sad about these changes?
- Think about a time when you experienced loss in the past. How did you respond? How do you tend to cope with change? How do you tend to cope with grief?

Take a few deep breaths in and out, and imagine Jesus sitting with you right now. As you feel his gentleness, kindness, and warmth towards you, start to bring your feelings of grief, loss, and fear into his presence. What might it look like to practice abiding in him in the midst of the ambiguity, sadness, or fear you are experiencing?

The Waiting Stage

There is a crucial stage when going through a transition that exists between an ending and a beginning. We often skip this waiting stage because we either don't know that it exists or because we don't

understand its value. It is in this space of waiting that we begin to anticipate new beginnings while we receive God's future hope and healing for our grief. Yet, before we can move into the new beginnings, we must recognize that our anxiety about the future can rise in this space while our energy to move through our emotions falls. It can often feel disorienting or aimless, but it's a crucial part of the journey.

- Take a moment to reflect on your past experiences with transition. (e.g. past church stuff, divorce, moving, switching schools, losing a loved one, etc.) What about the upcoming transition connects to, feels parallel to, or even stirs up similar emotions from those experiences? Choose one of those moments and work through the following questions:
 - What was that experience like for you?
 - What did you feel?
 - How did you respond?
- And now, reflect on how this experience feels similar to that?
- How might this experience be different?
- Are there any fears that come up for you regarding this transition? Any questions?
- Because this stage can be convoluted, make sure to keep coming back to some of these questions in the future.

Take a few deep breaths in and out, and imagine Jesus sitting with you right now. Imagine the heavy feelings you're experiencing, from this transition and any past experiences this transition brings up, as rocks in your hand. (You may want to actually get some physical rocks, if you're a body-centered person). As you feel his gentleness, kindness, and warmth towards you, begin to have a conversation with him about handing the rocks over to him. Invite him to help you carry the heaviness of ambiguity, fear, and grief of this transition and any past emotions it brings up.

New Beginnings

On the other side of the ending & the waiting phase is an opportunity for new life. Oftentimes, in fact, new beginnings can only exist because of a transition. The loss we face in a transition can create the space required for new life, growth, and opportunity. And as apprentices of Jesus, we get to practice resurrection even in things like transitions.

- What hopes do you have on the other side of this transition? What are you most excited about?
- Who is also working through this transition that can you stay connected to along the way?
- What role do you feel that Jesus is personally inviting you to play in the future of this transition?

Take a few deep breaths in and out, and imagine Jesus sitting with you right now. As you feel his gentleness, kindness, and warmth towards you, continue to dream about the future. Ask Jesus what he has in mind. Tell him what you would like to see happen. It could be helpful to light a candle, representing the presence of God with you in this journey.

What's Next?

Even after all that reflection, questions may remain. Where do we go from here? How do we continue to process this transition well? How can we actively participate in this transition? We would suggest processing with others and prayer.

Others/Prayer: Please partner with me in this transition through prayer. Join me in praying for...