



Praying the Body– The Practice of InterPlay® as Soulwork

Course Number

Summer 2012

Pacific School of Religion

Mon-Fri 9-1pm July 9-13

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Mudd 100

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For those seeking ideas, practices and theological grounding for embodiment in personal and community prayer life to help unlock and reclaim the wisdom of the body for the spiritual journey. Cynthia Winton-Henry helps leaders around the world befriend and welcome body and soul through the practice of InterPlay. Based on courses she taught at Pacific School she and Phil Porter created the InterPlay practice to strengthen inner, interpersonal, and global connections and to heal splits between body and soul by bringing creative practices to the foreground of our conversations with the Divine and each other.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this course students will be able to identify embodied, creative ways to lead and offer prayer as they

- practice five embodied modalities of soul making: movement, voice, word, stillness, and connection and
- identify ways to shift and heal to create more embodied connections through practices in witnessing others, noticing and affirming, differentiating the small and the big body
- recognize prayer as historically danced, sung, spoken and drummed and suggest why such practices were dismantled.
- learn steps that rebuild embodied prayer for any setting: seated warm-up, one-hand dances, one-breath songs, hand-to-hand partnering, and thirty-second “tellings.”
- investigate embodied parallels to traditional prayer.
 - Prayers of Intercession: Dancing on behalf of others
 - Prayers to nurture the physicality of grace
 - Prayers of Release: “Exforming” information overload
 - Prayers of Discernment through body wisdom
 - Meditation and contemplation
 - Prayers of Confession: surrendering truths.
 - Prayers to retrieve lost or forgotten aspects of body and soul
 - Prayers of Lamentation
 - Prayers of Gratitude and Affirmation

- Prayer through sacred texts and music.
- Better assess what the body wants in relationship to self, others the divine, and what makes this easy or hard.

Requirements

Class Attendance

Reading:

**Dance: The Sacred Art: Rediscovering the Joy of Movement as Spiritual Practice*, Cynthia Winton-Henry
Woodstock, VT, Skylight Paths International, 2010

**The Healing Wisdom of Africa: Finding Life Purpose through Nature Ritual and Community*, Malidome Some, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, New York, 1999.

Pdf. Pp 216-218 *What the Body Wants*, "Fear of the Body." Canada, Woodlake Press, 2004

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/concordances/strongs-exhaustive-concordance/> search body

Recommended: *Awakening the Creative Spirit: Bringing the Arts to Spiritual Direction*. Betsey Beckman, Christine Paintner, Spiritual Directors International, Seattle, 2010

Four daily, Written Reflections

Grading and Plagiarism Policy <http://www.psr.edu/grades>

Reading and Daily written reflections: 20 percent of the grade.

Class participation: 80 percent of the grade.

A missed day will drop the grade one grade point unless a student takes a similar class and does the written reflection, using themes of the class that they missed.

Calendar of Assignments and Schedule

Before the First Class: Please do the Reading prior to the course. Email a letter to Cynthia@interplay.org, due no later than the second day of class. Feel free to introduce yourself. Then share one challenge, one gift, and one validation for you and/or your community uncovered in the readings.

Monday: What the body wants.

- Invoke and Bless: The role of body wisdom in prayer: Create Play and Rest
- The Physicality of Grace: grace-making prayer.
- Understanding the small and big body.
- Building blocks of somatic wisdom: movement, voice, word, stillness, contact.
- Self care and Collective Care
- Prayers of Intercession: Dancing on behalf of...

Reflection:

Write "I Am" then a list of body parts. Alongside each body part write an adjective, then who or what challenges or supports you. Last, to whom or what you offer your body to?

I AM my heart and I am _____. I am _____. I offer my ___ to _____.

Continue with any noticings.

Tuesday: Restoring Embodied Prayer

- Somatic History: Hymn of Jesus. Dancing carols. Labyrinths. Mystic's dance. Prayers of the drum.
- Collective Meditation as Medicine.
- Directions in personal prayer
Exformation, Spiritual Disciplines, Discernment, Incrementality
- How to witness embodied prayer: to perform or not to perform?

Reflection: Write a memory list/elaborate on three memories/write a page of thoughts on the history of embodied prayer.

Wednesday: Prayer, Healing, and Storied Bodies

- Four Ways: Release, Retrieve, Maintain, and Play
- Claiming love: affirmation and reassurance.
- Praying through sacred texts and music.
- Our storied body: letting stories live and breathe.

Reflection: Mandala/doodle: A visual or word collage for personal, communal or social healing.

Thursday: Initiations: The Struggle and the Power

- Clarity of Vision, Efficiency of Energy, Courage to Love: The circle of relation, our form and content, union/differentiation
- Retrieving lost aspects of body and soul: body deals: body image, trauma, differences.
- Support for Wounds: No Growth, Laments, Rants
- Truth-telling and Assurance: A dance of apology.

Reflection: Describe a need for prayer. What embodied prayer form would be beneficial? What embodied practices are easy to incorporate? Which are at your edge and would require support?

Friday: Gratitude and Thanksgiving

- Collective forms of praise and joy
- Review of forms and resources
- A bodyspirit celebration

English as Second Language (ESL) Policy

1. Upon request by the ESL student to the PSR faculty, the faculty member will extend the deadline for papers one week to allow time for editing. 2. Upon request by the ESL student, PSR faculty will allow twice as much time for ESL students to complete in-class written exams.

The PSR curriculum aims to develop Progressive Christian leadership in students. A Progressive Christian leader:

1. Is rooted in Christian tradition

Has the ability to re-appropriate tradition for new times/places

Can critically analyze texts and traditions

2. Understands the contextual nature of knowing and understanding

Understands one's own perception is limited Understands the reality and value of multiple perspectives Understands ambiguity and complexity and can hold the tensions related to difference can critically evaluate a context and respond

3. Is self aware/spiritually grounded Has an engaged spirituality

Is self-reflective and reflexive

4. Works in partnership

Is actively involved in ecumenical and interfaith conversations Appreciates the value of diversity and moves beyond appreciation to engagement Is socially connected and can work collaboratively Is competent in cross-cultural situations Nurtures the development of leadership in others.

5. Can envision and engage in the creation of a more just world Holds a liberation perspective. Has a global consciousness Works for social change and has a systemic perspective Is involved in institutional transformation

Cynthia Winton-Henry, M. Div., is a recipient of PSR's alumni award and the Center for Art Religion and Education Art's Minister of the Year Award, As executive director of InterPlay, she inspires a global movement of people

researching the power of play as a path for creating healthy, smart, and sustainable community. She has taught in graduate schools, villages, slums, and spirited communities in the US, India, Australia, and Africa. She blogs at Mystic Tech: Spiritual Solutions/Somatic Wisdom. Her books include ***What the Body Wants, Dance: A Sacred Art: Discovering the Joy of Movement as Spiritual Practice*** and ***Chasing the Dance of Life: A Faith Journey***.

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