

Catholic Identity: Session 1

We begin our prayer:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Loving Creator**,**
You formed us in secret
and know the depths of our being.
As we come before Your Word today,
open our hearts to the mystery of life
You have woven within us.
Grant us the grace to see ourselves and others
as fearfully and wonderfully made,
fashioned in love and sustained by Your Spirit.
May this time of prayer draw us
into deeper awe of Your handiwork,
and lead us to gratitude
for the gift of being human in Your image.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Reading (*Lectio*)

Read the following Scripture and just focus on what the passage is saying. Take notice of any word, phrase, thought or image that catches your attention.

LORD, you have probed me,
you know me:
you know when I sit and stand;
you understand my thoughts from afar.
You sift through my travels and my rest;
with all my ways you are familiar.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
LORD, you know it all.
Behind and before you encircle me
and rest your hand upon me.
You formed my inmost being;
you knit me in my mother's womb.
I praise you, because I am wonderfully made;
wonderful are your works!
My very self you know.
My bones are not hidden from you,
When I was being made in secret,
fashioned in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw me unformed;
in your book all are written down;
my days were shaped,
before one came to be.
(Psalm 139: 1b-5, 13-16)

Meditation (*Meditatio*)

Read the passage again, and this time focus on what speaks to you in this text and how it relates to your life.

You may use the following questions to guide your meditation if needed:

What might God be trying to say to you through that word, phrase or image that caught your attention initially?

How does this passage speak to your understanding of God's intimacy with you? How does God's desire to be intimate with you at ALL times make you feel? What type of response does this knowledge evoke from you?

What feeling arise within you to hear that you are God's handiwork, a masterpiece of His creation, who is fearfully and wonderfully made? How does God's image of you compare to your image of yourself?

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What are the implications for you in your relationships with others if God sees all His children in this fashion?

If practicing lectio divina *as a family or in a group, after the reflection time, invite the participants to share their responses.*

Prayer (*Oratio*)

Read the Scripture passage one more time. What do you want to say to the Lord? Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you.

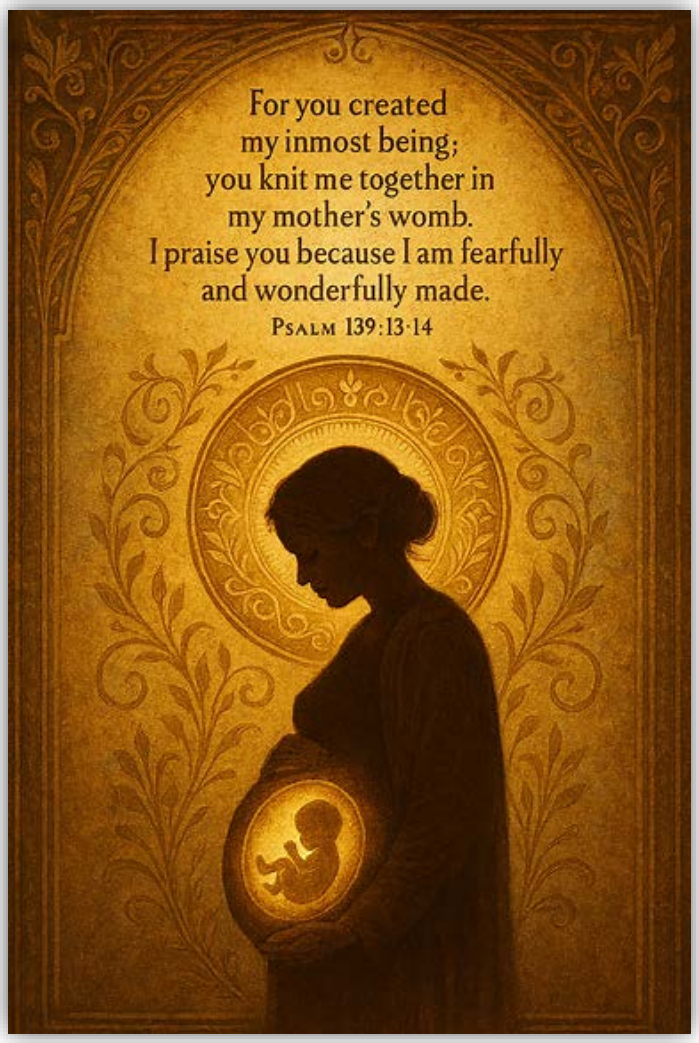
Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)

Read the Scripture a final time, then rest in God's presence. Simply be with Him and listen for His voice. Allow His love and grace to fill you.

After a period of silent reflection conclude your time of prayer with the closing prayer below:

Closing Prayer

Gracious God,
We thank You for the gift of Your Word
and for the wonder of our creation.
In this time of prayer,
You have reminded us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made,
woven together by Your loving hands.
Help us to carry this truth into our daily lives,
seeing ourselves and others with reverence and compassion.
May our hearts remain open to Your Spirit,
and may our lives reflect the beauty of Your handiwork.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Living the Word *(Actio)*

This week, each day when you get up, take a moment to look into the mirror and marvel at the wonder of God's creation that is YOU! If you struggle with negative self-talk or are tempted to criticize yourself, take a moment to recall that you are God's handiwork, knit together with love and created for a purpose.

Seize any opportunity the Lord presents to you this week to love and serve others, letting the awareness of being wonderfully made inspire you to use your gifts to love and serve others.

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