

Just **ONE** Week

ONE

A Health and Wellness Small Step for Congregations



What Is Just One Week?

It's a simple, starter way for your congregation to focus on health and wellness. Use this tool created by Portico Benefit Services to insert three small healthy practices into the life of your congregation for just one week: centering, physical movement and healthy eating.

Why these three practices?

We've chosen these three practices because a large percentage of us don't exercise enough, don't eat well enough, struggle with weight issues and feel emotional stress. But they are also important aspects of living in a faith community.

- 1 Centering before worship is part of our liturgy. We use times of silence to prepare our hearts, clear our minds and relax our bodies for worship.
- 2 In worship, we move. We sit, stand, kneel, walk, bow our heads.
- 3 Breaking bread is a powerful tradition in worship communities.

Why try *Just One Week*?

Of course, adding a few healthy practices for one week doesn't create dramatic change. The goal here is to take a few small steps, and use them to begin conversations about what it means to live well together as a faith community. **Just One Week** focuses exclusively on the one-week experience – living it, sharing it, discussing it, learning from it.

Centering

The act of quieting oneself — to be present in the moment and to feel at peace.

Why pause to center? Living well is living daily as a new creation in Christ from the waters of baptism. When we practice centering routinely and frequently, we are more likely to be at peace throughout the day and better able to live as whole and holy people, better equipped to pass on our faith.

Benefits: Centering is the effort to clear our minds of stray thoughts and set aside the typical anxieties that wander through our minds — usually about things that have happened or things that may happen. Even 30 seconds of centering can help still our emotions, and allow us to focus more calmly on the people we're with and the tasks at hand.

Moving

Physical activity — movement — helps us tend our bodies, in service to God.

Why add movement? When we worship, we do so as a full body of Christ in community. So too, we use our individual bodies, in their entirety, to serve and worship God. When we reach, stretch and kneel, we glorify God using the bodies God has given us. As we move together in worship, we affirm the importance of living well together and sharing the wellness journey.

Benefits: Movement is essential to keeping the body healthy, agile, flexible and resilient. It promotes good circulation and balance which can reduce falls. For example, many Americans rarely reach their hands above their heads. When we reach up, however, we lengthen the spine, stretch the muscles in our arms and backs, and increase circulation through the body.

Eating

We must eat in order to serve. In fact, what we eat affects our ability to serve.

Why serve healthy foods at church? If we think of the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, it is important that we nourish it with the most nutritious, healthy foods possible. The church is committed to being a place of growth in faith and life. We are called to be stewards of all the gifts God has given us — including ourselves, others and our environment.

Benefits: What we put into our bodies — food and drink — affects the way our bodies perform. It also affects our body's ability to retain good health over time. What we consume affects our ability to concentrate, learn, age, prevent illness, recover from injury, etc.

How to Lead Just One Week?

Feel free to customize this experience to best fit your faith community. We offer a variety of activity options below, ranging from traditional to contemporary, which can be modified or used as directed.

Sunday 1 — Introduce *Just One Week* to the congregation.

- 1** At the beginning of Sunday service, **announce the start of *Just One Week***.
- 2 Deliver a sermon** that integrates health, faith and the concepts imbedded in **Just One Week**. Consider discussing our Lutheran call to live well as described by The Wholeness Wheel.
- 3** Add intentional **centering** to worship.

Examples:

- Center before worship. “This week, as we begin our service, let’s center ourselves for prayer. Invite silence, taking a few moments to pause and breathe evenly. With our feet flat on the floor, let’s sit up tall, lower our gaze and, if it’s comfortable, close your eyes. Breathe in slowly through your nose. Exhale slowly through your nose. Repeat 4 times as you feel the rhythm of your breath. Let us pray ... [offer prayer]”
- Invite people to center before prayers, Holy Communion, the message/homily/sermon. Intentionally observe silences indicated in the rubrics.

- 4** Add **movement** into worship.

Examples:

- Incorporate movement during invocation and/or intercessory prayer. “This week, in addition to speaking those words, let’s add the following movement (as you are physically able) as we pray. This movement enables us, not only to speak the prayer, but to symbolically release it, entrusting it to God. During the petition, bring your hands together and gently press your palms together. Slightly bow your head toward the hands. When I say ‘Lord in your mercy’, if you are able, lift your hands upward, stretching toward the heavens. Let your eye gaze follow. Allow your hands to come apart a comfortable distance. Let your eye gaze rest between your hands. Respond with the words: ‘hear our prayer.’ Bring your hands back to our starting position. Repeat after each petition.”
- Invite people to walk before or after worship services, add clapping or swaying movement to hymns, encourage more moving during sharing of the peace.

- 5 Serve, enjoy and discuss the presentation of only **healthy foods** and beverages.

Shopping list suggestions: (Please modify as needed and adapt depending on what local foods are in season.)

- _____ Sliced fruit (e.g., pineapple and cantaloupe chunks, serve from bowl or as finger food using toothpicks)
- _____ Whole pieces of fruit (e.g., bananas, apples, tangerines)
- _____ Vegetables washed and sliced into finger food (e.g., red pepper, carrots, celery, cucumber)
- _____ Whole-grain crackers (consider offering a gluten-free option)
- _____ Nuts (e.g., walnuts, almonds, low salt) **NOTE:** Be aware of any nut allergies in the community
- _____ Yogurt (serve from bowl or individual yogurt containers)
- _____ Pitchers of water and ice with fruit slices (e.g., oranges, limes, lemons — even cucumbers)
- _____ Tea and coffee
- _____ Fat-free milk

During the Week — Find ways to use and discuss the healthy practices.

- 1 Invite reflection and reaction to the *Just One Week* experience.
- 2 Begin planning the second Sunday service (and sermon) to help your congregation hold the *Just One Week* experience in a meaningful way.
- 3 Begin staff meetings with **centering** and prayer.

Examples:

- “Take a few moments to pause and breathe evenly. With our feet flat on the floor, let’s sit up tall, lower our gaze and, if it’s comfortable, close your eyes. Breathe in slowly through your nose. Exhale slowly through your nose. Repeat as you feel the rhythm of your breath. Let us pray ... [offer prayer].”
- Begin meetings by centering.
- Before prayers, allow time for centering.

4 Add **movement** to routine congregational activities.

Examples:

- If the topic of a meeting is conversational, less task-oriented or impromptu, convert it into a “walk-and-talk” meeting. (Best if done with one to three participants for times where no one needs to take notes.) Walking alongside another can be more comfortable and less intense than sitting face to face. Activity can stimulate creativity. And you’ll burn more calories. Try holding your next brainstorming meeting during a brisk walk.
- Incorporate movement, like stretching, into education hours or confirmation curriculum.

5 Serve only **healthy foods** and beverages during meetings throughout the week; draw attention to it, encourage conversation around it.

Examples:

- Invite staff to pack healthy lunches and eat together as a team throughout the week, discuss how this feels.
- Buy/prep healthy food and drink for second Sunday

Sunday 2 — Discuss the ideas.

- 1** Plan service that helps congregation hold the **Just One Week** experience in a meaningful way.
- 2** Deliver a sermon that inspires discussion. Consider asking a question and having people turn to their neighbors to discuss.
- 3** Integrate **centering** into worship. (See Sunday 1)
- 4** Incorporate **movement** during worship. (See Sunday 1)
- 5** Serve, enjoy and discuss the presentation of only **healthy foods** and beverages. (See Sunday 1)

After — Evaluate the experience.

- 1** Encourage conversation about how it felt to add these small steps to your congregation's life for one week.
- 2** Ask staff and congregants if any of these small steps spilled over into their week.
- 3** Ask the question: "Shall we continue any of these small steps beyond just one week?"
- 4** Read through Portico's wellness-related activities and select an activity to do as a congregation. Consider *Slow Down, GO! Challenge, Road to Emmaus* or *Tackle a Habit*. Find them at PorticoBenefits.org/wellness.

This information should not be considered or used as a substitute for professional health care advice. By providing this information, Portico Benefit Services is not providing any medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Each individual is responsible for his or her own health and medical treatment decisions. You should talk with your doctor to determine the lifestyle changes and health care treatment options appropriate for you.

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