



OBSERVING THE CHRISTIAN CALENDAR YEAR

The Cycle of Love

THE CYCLE OF LOVE

*A time for concentrating on the outworking
of redemption*

ORDINARY TIME
PENTECOST SUNDAY

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EMPOWERING YOU TO EMBRACE GOD'S DESIGN FOR YOUR LIFE

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About the Cycle of Love

(Contemplating Redemption-God through us)

Ordinary Time

Ordinary Time is a lengthy six-months long season. It begins with Pentecost Sunday which falls on the fiftieth and final day of the Easter season and ends on the Sunday before Advent (Reign of Christ Sunday).

During Ordinary Time the Sundays are simply numbered, and it's this ordinal nature of tracking the time that gives rise to the season's name.

Additionally, the season's name refers to the fact that unlike the seasons of the Cycle of Light (Christmas) and the Cycle of Love (Easter), there are no major celebrations or feasts during Ordinary Time. This season represents the days where we do our living, between the celebrations and the feasts, the ordinary days.

The months of Ordinary Time provide opportunity for us to enter into rhythms of healthy discipleship:

- gathering for worship and dispersing for witness
- tending to ourselves and caring for others
- enjoying our rest and fulfilling our duties
- witnessing in the world and worshipping in community
- caring for neighbors and caring for self
- laboring fruitfully and resting peacefully

Two simple disciplines help us live well in Ordinary Time. These are the disciplines of "receiving the day" and "releasing the day."

Receiving the day – This discipline speaks to our disposition each morning.

- Gratefully accepting the new day as a gift
- Acknowledging God's goodness
- Inviting His empowering presence into our day
- Committing ourselves and all our endeavors to Him
- Setting about the day in joyful dependence upon Him

Releasing the day – Releasing the day is all about our disposition at the end of each day.

- Going over our day before going to sleep
- Recalling those moments when we most clearly sensed God's closeness and care
- Reflecting on the moments when we felt most disconnected or disconcerted
- Giving thanks for God's presence in our daily experiences
- Confessing our sins
- Leaving in God's hands anything that we left undone or that threatens to undo us
- Entering peacefully into the gift of sleep

The color of Ordinary Time is green which, much like the first buds of springtime, symbolizes hope.

Pentecost

Pentecost is the culmination of the Easter season and a time to celebrate the outpouring and indwelling of the third Person of the Trinity. As the culmination of the Easter season, Pentecost is celebrated fifty days after Easter Sunday. Therefore, it is observed on the seventh Sunday after Easter and ten days after Ascension. It is generally celebrated for eight days, from Sunday to Sunday.

Additionally, Pentecost Sunday marks a time for commemoration and celebration of the official birthday of the Christian church which was signaled by the receiving of the Holy Spirit by the early believers (Acts 2:1-4).

The term Pentecost is Hellenic and is the name for the Feast of Weeks which is a Jewish harvest festival observed on the fiftieth day of the Omer (Lev. 23:16).

The color of Pentecost is red which symbolizes joy and the fire of the Holy Spirit.



Ideas for Observing the Cycle of Love

This is a list of possible options for celebrating the days and seasons of the Cycle of Love. Whether you choose to celebrate this Cycle one time or several, make each year meaningful by selecting options that speak to you and your family. Directions and/or explanations can be found for many of these ideas by searching the internet.

Ordinary Time –

A time to pour ourselves out for God and others while allowing God to pour Himself into us.

- Light a green candle during mealtime.
- Pray, asking God to pour Himself into you.
- Study the Holy Spirit.
- Proclaim the Good News.
- Enjoy a sunrise and/or sunset.
- Gather friends or family around your dinner table.
- Breathe a breath prayer. Pay attention to where God might be present in that moment and be mindful of your desire to keep your eyes and heart turned toward Christ.
- Study the Trinity.
- Get outside and enjoy the long days of summer.
- Open your eyes wide to the ordinary activities you do every day.
- Breathe a simple breath prayer each time you perform some routine activity such as washing the dishes or carrying out the trash.
- Intentionally, engage in an everyday task as a prayer or act of worship.
- Share words of encouragement with someone in your life's path.
- Practice the Presence of God.
- Help someone in need.
- Begin each day in prayer. Ask God to order your priorities and give you opportunities to invest in others.
- Drive someone to a doctor's appointment.
- Set a daily time to meet with God in Bible reading and prayer.

- Invite others into your home.
- Be inconvenienced for a friend.
- Schedule a time of solitude.
- Visit a shut-in.
- Affirm others daily.
- Scripture journal.
- Volunteer.
- Rearrange your priorities to reflect God's priorities.
- Study the life of Christ.
- Reflect on your ordinary days. Look for the hidden holy moments within them.
- Keep an "Ordinary Time" journal. Record your reflections on your daily activities, what you are learning from time spent in His Word, or your personal journey with God through this season.
- Get to know your neighbors.

Pentecost –

A time to celebrate the outpouring and indwelling of the third Person of the Trinity.

- Wear red to church on Pentecost.
- Through the eight days of Pentecost, light a red candle at your household meal each day.
- Place a dove symbol in your home during the octave of Pentecost.
- Search the Scriptures. Discover all you can about the Holy Spirit.
- Research the Feast of the Pentecost (Feast of Weeks).
- Pray to the Holy Spirit. We often pray to God and to Jesus but neglect this third member of the Trinity in our prayers.
- Study John 14:16-17; John 14:26; and John 16:7, 13-15.
- Read and meditate on Ephesians 5:17-19.
- Celebrate the birth of the church—at church. Have a birthday party complete with cake and ice cream. You might even want to include gifts. If so, create a needs' list (kitchen needs, nursery needs, office needs, etc.) and share it ahead of time. Church members can then celebrate the birth of the church by bringing the gift of a needed item to the party.

- Host a bubble-blowing party. As you watch the bubbles float in the wind, discuss the Holy Spirit and His work.
- Hang windchimes on Pentecost Sunday and leave them out during the season of Ordinary Time.
- Select and read a book about the Holy Spirit and His work:
 - *Forgotten God* by Francis Chan
 - *How to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit* by A. W. Tozer
 - *Keep in Step with the Spirit* by J. I. Packer
 - *On the Holy Spirit* by Basil the Great
 - *The Holy Spirit* by John Owen
 - *The Holy Spirit* by Sinclair Ferguson
 - *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit* by R. C. Sproul
 - *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* by R. A. Torrey
 - *Who is the Holy Spirit?* By R. C. Sproul

*“How we spend our days is, of course,
how we spend our lives.”*

Annie Dillard

Additional Resources



Books:

A Parent's Guide to Ordinary Time, Axis Parent's Guide Series, David C. Cook

Extraordinary Ministry in Ordinary Time: An Invitation to Renewal for Pastors by James Harnish

Finding God in Ordinary Time by Christine Eberle

Living the Christian Year: Time to Inhabit the Story of God by Bobby Gross

The Bright Field: Readings, Reflections and Prayers for Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity and Ordinary Time by Martyn Percy and Others

The Circle of Seasons: Meeting God in the Church Year by Kimberlee Conway Ireton

Other:

[What is Pentecost?](#) by Matt Chandler (The Village Church)

