

# Pray for 10 others *in* color

Paraclete Press

*with*  
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*author of*  
*Praying in Color*



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*Pray for Others in Color*

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# Coloring and Prayer

When I remember the activities of my childhood, coloring is near the top of the list. Sitting on the kitchen floor with a box of crayons and a new coloring book is vivid in my mind's eye—and nose. Some of my crayons were pristine and whole; the favorite red one was battered and broken, paper torn to release more color. I loved their waxy crayon smell, but the acrid smell of the newsprint pages in the coloring book made my nose twitch.

Coloring was both work and play. Choosing the colors I wanted to use and trying to stay within the lines required decision and attention. Delight at the rainbow of crayon shades in the box and on my paper kept me coloring for hours. Although some people say that coloring books stifle creativity, the shapes enclosed by lines can be a starting place for creativity. For those of us who are drawing-phobic or intimidated by the vastness of a blank piece of paper, a coloring page is a safe invitation to play with the tools of an artist without having to be one.

I still play and create through coloring. But it has become more for me. It is a starting place for prayer. A dozen or so years ago, family members and friends were diagnosed with a multitude of cancers. I tried to pray for them, but my words became lost in a dark cloud of worry and what-ifs. I prayed a barrage of one-liners: “Please heal her.” “Please let him feel no pain.” “Please comfort them.” My prayers felt small and inadequate.

One day I was doodling and coloring for fun and realized I had written a name in the middle of a doodle. It was the name of my sister-in-law Sue who had stage-four lung cancer. I continued to doodle and color. Her name became the center of my attention. After five or ten minutes, I realized I was praying for Sue. I didn't have articulate or elegant prayer words, but I was spending time with her and releasing her into God's care. For those minutes my worry decreased and I felt God's presence. I added and colored other shapes with people's names in them. At the end of the doodling and coloring session, I had a page of designs and names—a visual prayer list and journal of my prayer time. Every time I looked at the page it reminded me to pray for each person

again—with or without words. Praying this way is the closest I have ever come to “praying unceasingly.”

Coloring is both prayerful and playful. It gives me a new way to be with God and the permission to not have words. With a handful of colored markers and pencils I become childlike—a useful attitude for prayer. While my hand and eyes move across a coloring page, my mind and body slow down. I enter a proverbial prayer closet, carving out a space and place for silence and an opportunity for God to speak.

When I first included doodling and coloring in my prayer time, I prayed for other people—intercessory prayers. Since then, I’ve added all different kinds of prayer: giving thanks, praying for others, confessing, praising, worshiping, brooding, complaining, contemplating Scripture, lamenting, asking for help, looking for guidance. . . .

## Coloring Your Prayers for Others

The coloring pages in *Pray for Others in Color* are designed specifically for *intercessory prayers*. Intercessory prayers are the requests we make to God on behalf of other people. We offer people into God’s care and ask God to help them. We pray for their health, new behavior, job opportunity, security, happiness, recovery from addiction, healthy pregnancy, or peaceful death. Love, concern, worry, fear, despair, and hope motivate our prayers.

*Sometimes a person approaches us and says, “Please pray for me,” often with a specific, urgent request; they may be too scared or confused to do it. They want our participation in their life. Praying for another is a serious commission, and can be a daunting task. It is sometimes the one thing we can do to help someone else. Intercessory prayer can also include regular, daily prayers we say for our family*

*and friends with no urgent requests in mind, but to immerse them in God and ask for God's continuous protection and guidance in their lives.*

Sometimes my prayers of intercession are really for me. I want my children to do what I want them to do. I want to fix the behavior of other people. “Let Roderick get that new job.” “Let Emma find a good spouse.” “Help John to find a church so he can know You better.” In a way, these prayers are mostly so I will not have to worry—to make me comfortable. They might even be prayers of manipulation. I don’t really know if the job is right for Roderick or if Emma even wants to get married. Perhaps John already has a relationship with God. Who am I to know what another person needs? My “best” intercessions are the prayers where I tell God what I’m thinking and surrender those requests to the One who really knows the needs of others. I sit with God in silence as I color and doodle. If the result is more trust in God, less fear, and greater love for the person, then I know my prayer has “worked.”

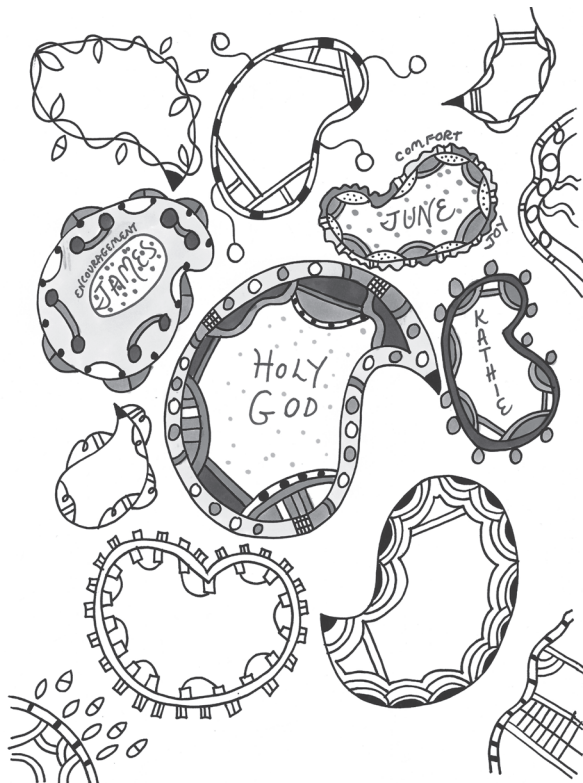
### *How It Works*

Select a coloring page and start with the focus on God. Choose a name for God such as the one shown on the left-hand page or your own choice—whatever works best for you. Write the name in a space in the design on the page. Start to color. Think of each stroke of color as a nonverbal prayer. Feel free to pray with words, too, asking God to be present in this prayer time. Words, however, are not necessary. Keep praying, coloring; when words run out, enjoy the time of silence focused on God. End this intro time by taking a deep breath and saying “Amen” or offering, “Thank you for your presence, God.”

Choose another space in the design and write the name of someone for whom you want to pray. Start to color. If you have specific requests to God for the person, pray them. Write single words or phrases in nearby spaces if you like. Offer your requests to God and then let those requests go. When your words run out, release the person into God’s care. Let go of your thoughts, worries, and expectations. Keep praying by focusing on the person’s name, being quiet, listening for what

God might say, and coloring. If verbal prayers come up, pray them. Let this time of prayer ebb and flow between words and silence. When your prayer for the person feels complete, take a deep breath and say “Amen” or recite a short verse of Scripture such as “Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me!” (Ps. 27:7).

Here in black and white is an example of this type of prayer—you’ll want to use color:



Each coloring page can be for one person or many. To pray for more people, move to other spaces on the page and repeat the process. If your finished page has multiple names, revisit each one and say a simple prayer of thanksgiving or blessing before you end your prayer time.

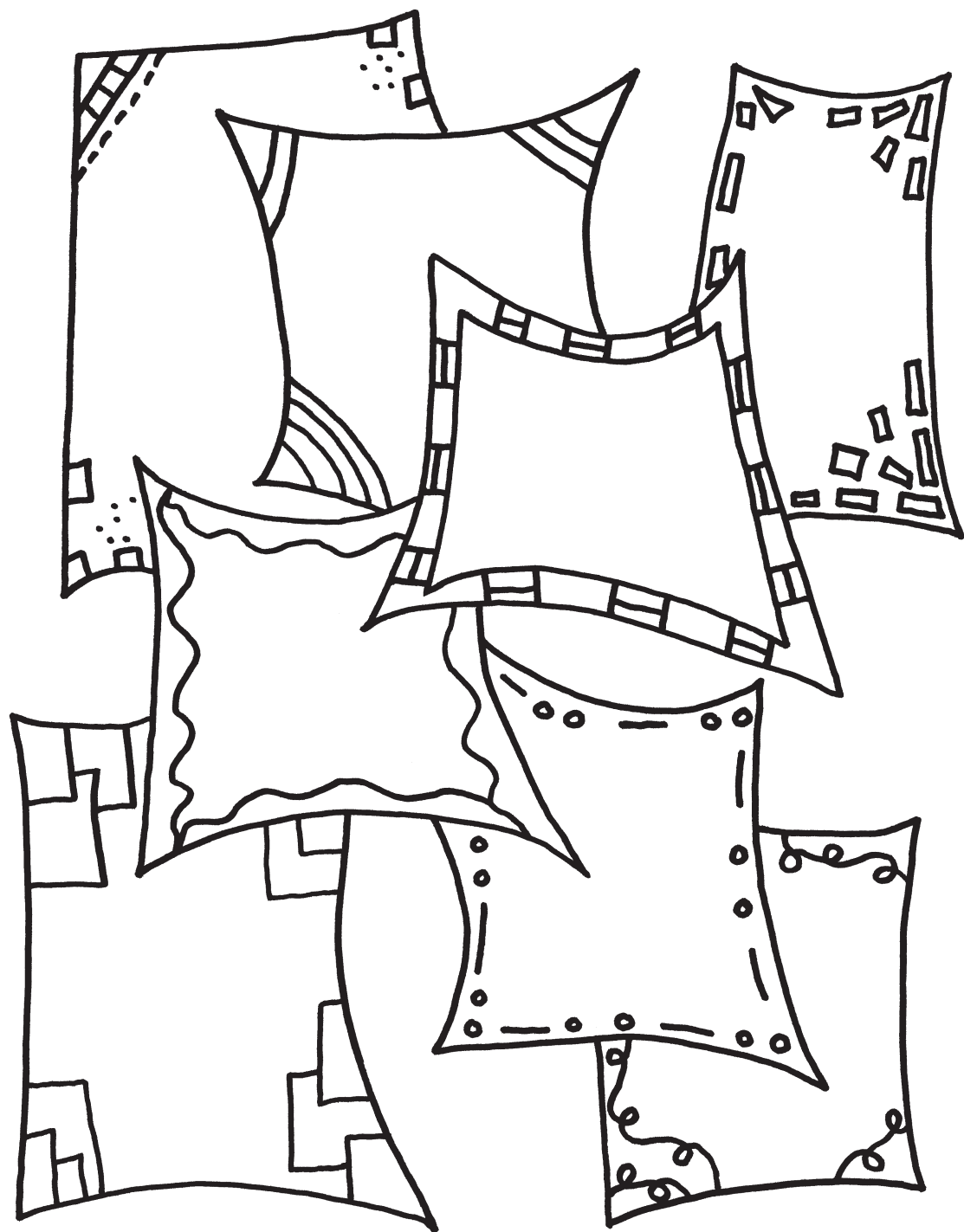
Keep your colorful tapestry of prayer in a place where you can see it. Each time you look at it, let it prompt you to pray again for the person or people on the page. Let it be an opportunity to trust God with your concerns and an invitation to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17).

—Sybil MacBeth

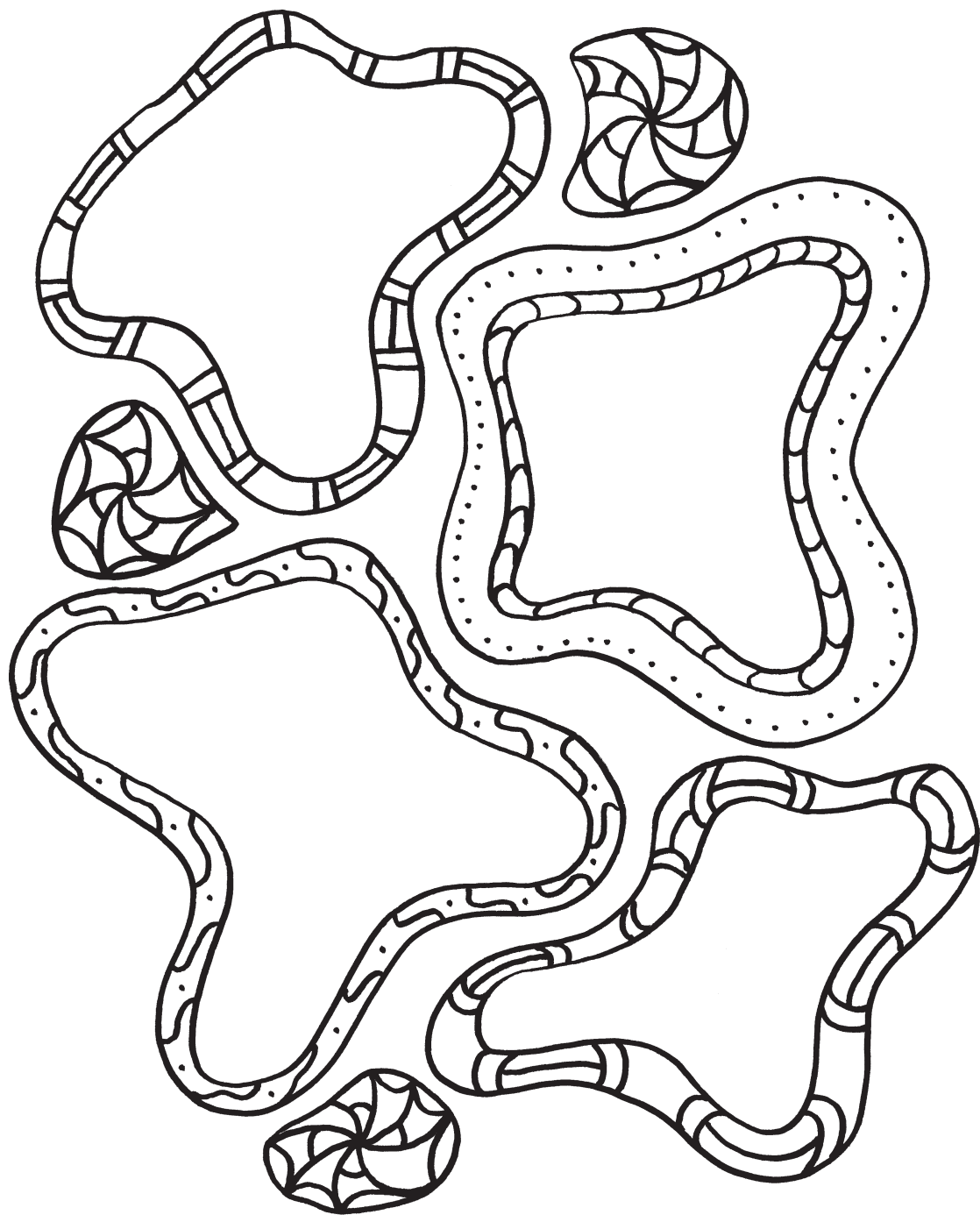
# Holy God

Write a name for God such as the one shown here or your own choice—whatever works best for you—in a space in the design. Pray and color. Choose another space and write someone's name. Pray and color. Add words or phrases in nearby spaces if you like. When words run out, keep coloring, praying and listening for what God might say. (You will find a more detailed suggestion of how to pray for others in color in the introduction.)

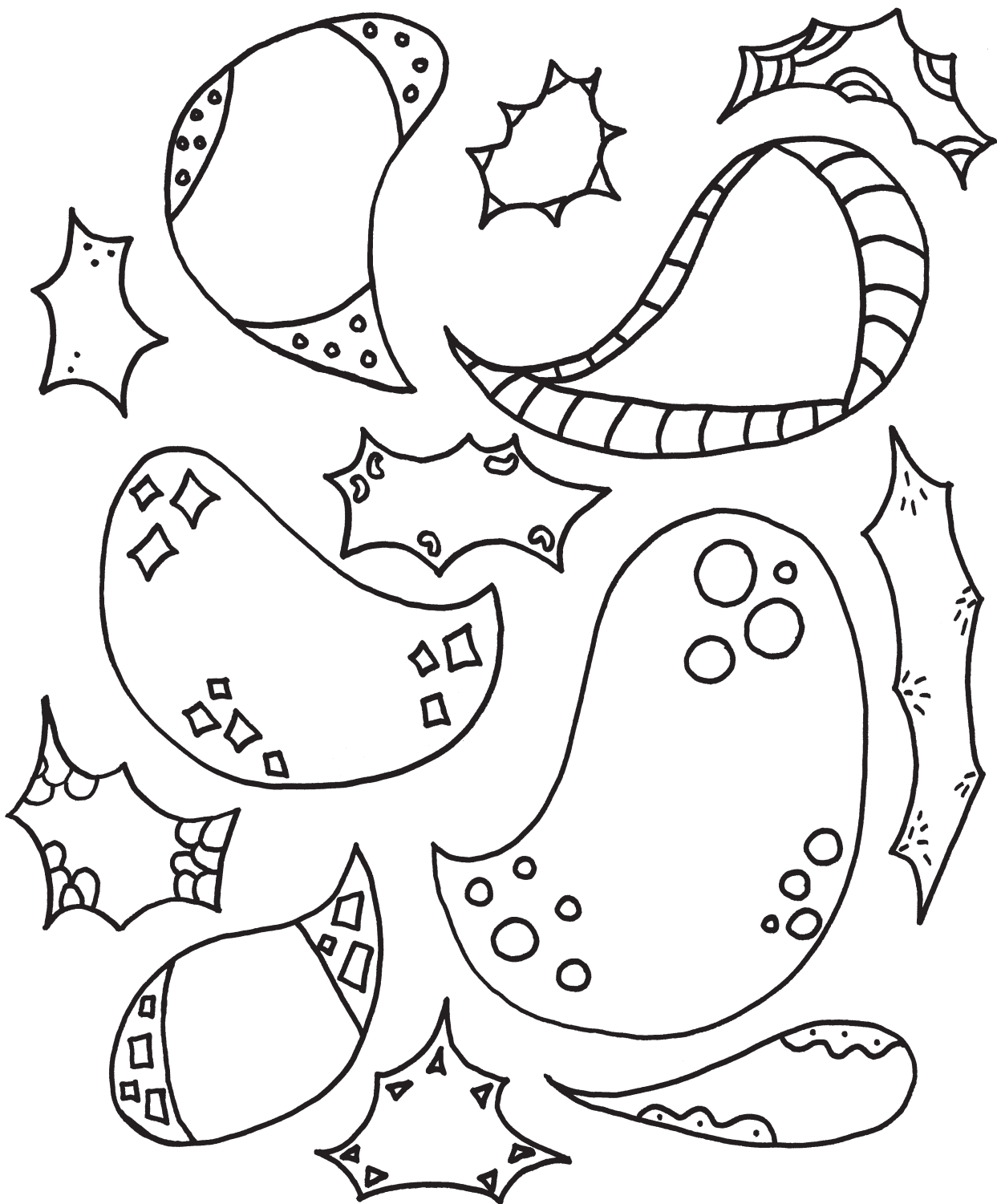




Abba



Blessed  
Hope



Comforter

