

artisan church

*Beauty*

values exploration

# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this kit is to help you to explore what Artisan's values mean to you, how you are living them out in your day-to-day life, and to foster collective re-engagement of the Artisan community to develop ways we can more fully embody our values.

This kit can be completed by individuals, friends, families, or small groups -whatever is right for you. You should complete the activities at your own pace, but we would suggest to try to work through one activity from each section (Define, Reflect, Immerse, Challenge, and Act) at a time.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Journaling activities can be done on an individual basis or in community. You can choose to write down your answers in a notebook, or share with others.

When practicing meditation, particularly if you are new to the practice, it is important that you forgive yourself for being distracted. We suggest meditating for 5-10 minutes, but an even shorter period will work, just find what works for you. Find a quiet place and set a timer to countdown so you are not distracted by the time. Sit in a posture that is comfortable, but still feels like you are alert. Take a few deep breaths to begin and consciously relax your shoulders and other tense areas. The meditations suggested will give you a focus, or you can focus on your breath. Every time you notice yourself distracted, gently guide your attention back to your focus, without judgement. Try to increase the amount of time you meditate as you go along.



# Define

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## Activity 1: Journaling

How do you define beauty?

**Describe a time you recently experienced beauty.**

**Ask two people what they think of when they hear the word beauty.**

Beauty is defined by the Merriam Webster dictionary as:

**Beauty** noun

1: a combination of qualities, such as shape, color, or form, that pleases the aesthetic senses, especially the sight.

2: a combination of qualities that pleases the intellect or moral sense.

**Beauty** modifier noun

1: an excellent specimen or example of something. "the fish was a beauty, around 14 pounds"

2: the pleasing or attractive features of something. "the beauties of the Pennsylvania mountains"

3: the best feature or advantage of something. "the beauty of keeping cats is that they don't tie you down"

**How does this definition compare to or change how you define beauty?**

## Activity 2:

### Word Association Exercise

Write down the words that pop into your head as you consider the word beauty. Alternatively, if you have access to the internet, visit [Visuwords.com](http://Visuwords.com) and type in the word beauty or beautiful. By double-clicking on the connected words, you can expand the word network.

**Did these connections make you consider beauty in a new light? In what ways?**

## Activity 3: Bible Study - Lectio Divina

Artisan Church's value of Beauty reads:

We are inspired by the breathtaking artistry of our creator and seek to reflect that beauty in all we do as we co-create with him.

*Psalms 27:4; Exodus 31:2-5; Exodus 35:35; 2 Chronicles 2:7; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 4:8*

Choose one of these verses to study using the [spiritual practice of lectio divina](#).

Step One: **Read** the passage, listening with the "ear of your heart." What phrase, sentence or even one word stands out to you?

Step Two: Read the passage again and **Reflect** on the word of God. Be aware of what touches you, a thought or reflection that is meaningful. Allow a minute or two of silence.

# Define

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Step Three: Read the passage again and **Respond** spontaneously to the word of God. Be aware of any prayer that rises up within that expresses the experience. Allow a minute or two of silence.

Step Four: Read the passage a final time and **Rest** in the word, reflect or pray and allow God to speak in the silence. Allow three or four minutes of silence.

**What stood out to you in the verse you studied? How does that change the way you see the value of beauty?**

## Activity 4: Bible Study - Lexicon/Blue Letter Bible

Let's look some more at how beauty is talked about in the bible. If you have access to the internet, go to [BlueLetterBible.org](http://BlueLetterBible.org) or download the Blue Letter Bible app on your phone or tablet.

Using their search engine, search for verses in which the word beauty is used. Note that the number of uses may vary between translations, so check out a few different ones.

Read the verses. If you have time, go to each verse and look at the context for each use of the word.

**What do these verses have in common?**

**How do these verses expand your idea of beauty?**

# Reflect

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## Activity 1: Journaling

**Why did you choose to explore this value?**

**What images, objects, or ideas capture your imagination when you think of beauty?**

## Activity 2: Journaling

**How have you experienced the value of beauty?**

**At what time in your life did you feel most connected to this value?**

**What feelings are stirred when you consider this value?**

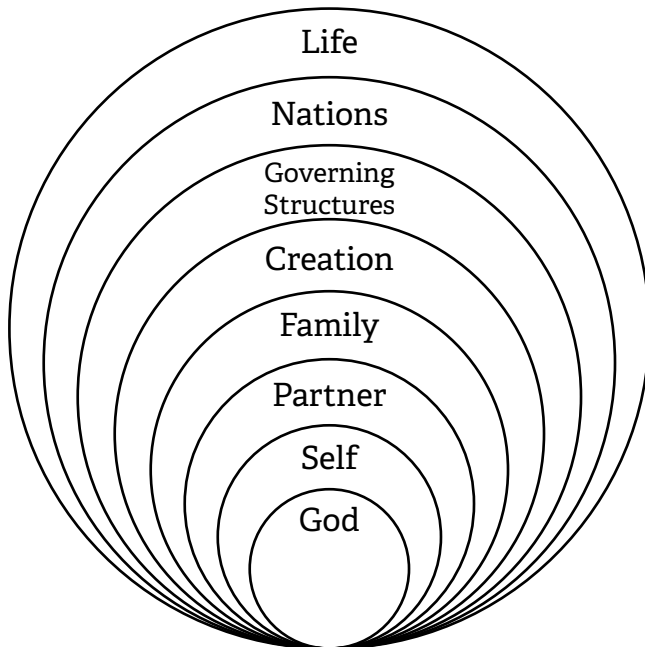
## Activity 3: Journaling

**How have you seen beauty exhibited in people's lives, including your own?**

**Who in your life embodies this value well? In what ways?**

# Reflect

Lisa Sharon Harper uses this diagram in *The Very Good Gospel* to illustrate the different circles of relationship. There may be layers of this diagram that do not resonate for you. That's okay. Feel free to skip layers that don't connect with you or add layers beyond what's listed here.



**Starting with your relationship to God, how could you express the value of beauty in these relationships?**

## Activity 4: Meditation

Meditate for 5 min, using the word beauty, or beautiful, as your mantra. When distracted, forgive yourself and return your focus to the word.

**Afterward, write down any thoughts about this value that arose during your meditation.**



# Immerse

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## Activity 1: Candle Meditation

Find a space where you feel comfortable and calm. Sit in a comfortable spot. If it's safe for you, light a small candle and put it in a safe place within your eyesight. If a flame isn't safe for you or those around you, you can use a battery-operated candle or any other light source. With your eyes fixed on the candle or other light source, take a few deep breaths, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Then, with your eyes still fixed on the candle or other light source, meditate on the value. Perhaps say the value out loud or silently. Give yourself a few minutes to meditate on the value and observe the light. Close by taking a few deep breaths, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Reflect on how you felt during this meditation time. Make sure to blow out the candle if you're using one.

## Activity 2: Observation

Find a natural object you consider beautiful, like a flower, a stone, or a fruit or vegetable. Use your senses (as you're able) to observe the object.

**Sight:** Look closely at your object (you could even use a magnifying glass). **What do you see magnified that you don't see otherwise?**

**Does looking at the object closely enhance or detract from its beauty?**

**Hearing:** Use your imagination to think about what noise water or air would make

as it passes over or through your object (or a group of your objects). **Do these sounds evoke any emotions or memories?**

**Touch:** Hold the object in your hand and feel its surface. **What texture do you feel?**

**How do you think that texture was created?**

**Is there a purpose to that texture?**

**Taste:** If you choose to, you may taste your object (parental supervision recommended). **What does it taste like?**

**Does the taste evoke any emotions or memories?**

**Does the taste enhance or detract from the object's beauty?**

**Smell:** Smell your object. **What does it smell like?**

**Does its smell reflect where it came from?**

**What purpose could that smell have?**

# Immerse

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## Activity 3: Audio

Listen to some of the following songs or read through the lyrics ([links to audio and lyrics](#) can be found in the online version of the values exploration kit)

*Brokenness Aside* - All Sons & Daughters

*The Earth is Yours* - Gungor

*Bad Blood* - Sleeping at Last

*Peace* - Robbie Seay

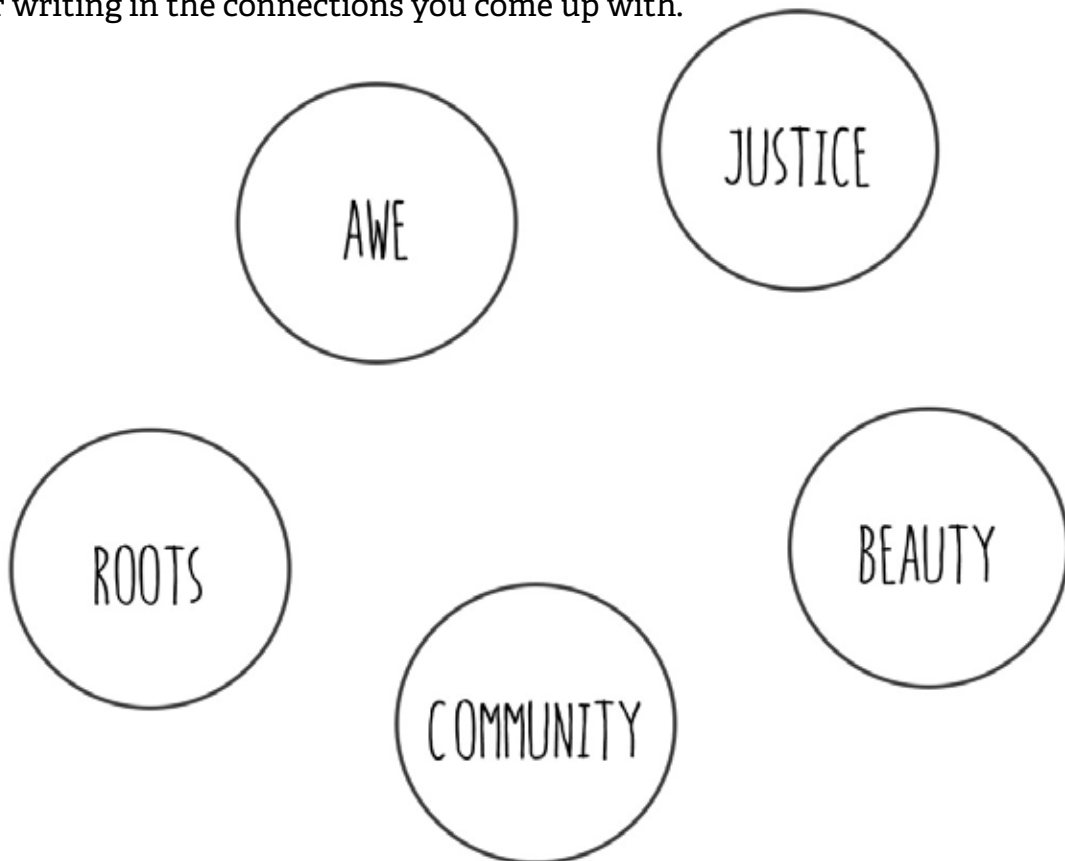
*Beautiful Things* - Gungor

**What images of or connections to beauty do the artist's lyrics bring to mind?**

**What new connections to beauty did you find in the song(s)?**

## Activity 4: Connection

In this activity, consider how the value of beauty connects to the other four Artisan values, roots, justice, community and awe. Use the diagram below to explore these connections by drawing or writing in the connections you come up with.



# Immerse

## Activity 4: Art Engagement- Connect

Pick one of the images below that resonates with you or another artwork of your choice.

Instead of a full meditation, this engagement activity will encourage a brief observation and description, but instead of interpreting the art, we will focus on our connection to the artwork related to the value of beauty. Feel free to do on your own or share process with a partner, child, or friend.

### OBSERVATION

For just a minute or two, take a visual inventory of the image you have selected. Simply observe the image, focus on the image as a whole and notice details that stand out to you.

### DESCRIPTION

Next, describe what you see by naming the objects/subjects that you recognize. Take a moment to also notice:

- Colors (what colors dominate the image

or stand out to you?)

- Lines and Shapes (What type of lines and shapes do you see? Are they figurative or abstract?)
- Technique (What are the brushstrokes like?)

### CONNECTION

Connect the work of art to your life, your experiences, and your thoughts about the Artisan value of beauty.

Does this work stir up memories? What does this piece of art make you feel? How do you see the value of beauty at play for you personally in this work? What stands out to you, or comes up again, from the previous exercises on this value? Does a certain Bible verse, definition, or word surface for you?







Claude Monet  
*Water Lilies*, 1916  
Oil on canvas  
[Image via wikimedia.com](https://www.wikimedia.org/)



Faith Ringgold  
*Listen to the Trees*, 2012  
Quilt with digital inkjet,  
silkscreen, woodcut, and  
acrylic on Habotai silk  
[Image via brodskycenter.com](https://www.brotskycenter.com/)

**Previous Page (left to right)**

Georgia O'Keeffe  
*Light Iris*, 1924  
Oil on canvas  
[Image via georgiaokeeffe.net](https://www.georgiaokeeffe.net/)

Kehinde Wiley  
*Two Heroic Sisters of the  
Grassland*, 2011  
Oil on canvas  
[Image via brooklynmuseum.com](https://www.brooklynmuseum.com/)

# Challenge

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## Activity 1: Journaling

How well do you feel that you embody this value? In what ways?

If you don't feel that you embody this value very well, what do you think is holding you back?

## Activity 2: Journaling

Can you think of ways that this value or verses associated with this value have been or could be used to harm others?

What could we do to prevent that?

## Activity 3: Journaling

Not everyone connects with each value. Is there anything in the description of this value or the accompanying verses that you think is problematic?

What could be added to the description that would make it easier for you to connect with this value?

There are many gifts and virtues discussed in the Bible. What other values do you think we're missing?

# Act

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## Activity 1: Journaling

What does it look like to live this value everyday?

What act will you do to show yourself and others that you value beauty?

## Activity 2: Learn

Learn more about how to live out this value. You can learn from a book/website/social media personality, or really any source. If you can, post the resources you find on Instagram #ArtisanValuesBeauty.

## Activity 3: Practice

While we encourage you to explore how to express this value in your everyday life, we don't have to do it all ourselves. Find a place/organization/person who engages with this value and give them some support. Volunteer, affirm, donate.

# Act

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## Activity 4: One Little Thing

Here is a list of little things you can do to embrace beauty in your life. Or come up with your own!

- Take an art or craft class
- Go to an art museum
- Visit the butterflies at the Strong Museum of Play
- Finger-paint with your favorite kid(s)
- Spend time in nature
- Memorize a favorite poem
- Write a short story
- Go get a fancy cupcake
- Make a prayer bead bracelet

