

I began wondering how I could create simple mandala templates designed for use with specific methods of prayer. I focused on four prayer styles that I have found especially meaningful: *lectio divina* (savoring the words of scripture), intercessory prayer (remembering the needs of others), Centering Prayer (listening deeply for the still small voice of God), and the Ignatian Examen (seeing God in daily living). I shared some of these ideas with a graphic designer friend, and together we developed the four mandalas found in this book. In brief, she and I designed the *lectio divina* mandala with lines around the outer ring for writing words of scripture that resonate with us while we pray. The intercessory prayer mandala provides space to include names and specific prayer requests for others. The centering prayer mandala draws our attention toward the center as we color and pray. And the Ignatian Examen mandala helps us see God in the specific events of our everyday lives. The following four chapters will offer more details about each design.

The mandalas in this book have become a refreshing way for me to focus my prayer time. When coloring, the distractions that often derail my prayers stay at bay, allowing me the space to be with God on purpose. I can more easily leave behind my Martha-like worries and embrace the opportunity to sit at the feet of Jesus with a colored pencil in my hand. Through the spiritual practice of contemplative coloring, I have found a renewed sense of spiritual joy and relationship with God. My prayers are more focused, more enjoyable, and more meaningful. Even my prayers of lamentation hold greater honesty and connection to the healing balm of God's presence.

I have prayed using these mandalas in a whole host of ways and places. I try to carry my mandala journal and colored pencils with me wherever I go. As a result, I have colored and prayed in places as diverse as the top of Piestewa Peak in Arizona, a local hospital waiting room, a beach in California, and a village in Liberia. I have prayed with these mandalas to process a child leaving for college, the death of a dear friend's son, my reaction to terrorist attacks, illnesses of family and friends, struggles with self-doubt, birthday celebrations, and much more.

Lectio Divina—

savoring the words
of scripture

Intercessory Prayer—

remembering the
needs of others

Centering Prayer—

listening for the still small
voice of God

Ignatian Examen—

seeing God
in daily life