

Title:

With these Hands 

Purpose:

To offer a simple process to evoke story/life reflection/and meaning making

Supplies:

Archival or watercolor paper (see supplies); pen or sharpie; watercolors and brushes.

Directions/Language of Invitation

Begin by suggesting our hands have been so important in our lives, relationships, work. Mention that families cherish handprints of children. Use your own brief reflection. I might say how I would value having a drawing of my mother's hand. You or client can trace the hand. Offer watercolor to paint in and around the hand. Then: "Think of words, qualities, roles in your life." You or person can write these on fingers, around the hand drawing borders, anywhere on the paper. Either you or person sign/initial/date art.

Variations/Special precautions/Lessons learned

Be gentle as you attempt to open a hand for tracing. Arthritis may cause painful joints and contracted joints, making it impossible to get the hand flat on the paper. It does not have to be perfect.

Processing: "What stories in your life come up for you as we reflect on your art." Offer poem making about the experience. The words written may become a poem.

Additional resources:

You may choose to read a poem about hands as part of the invitation.

A poem that inspires me but have not found the occasion to share with a patient is:

My Mother's Hands (author unknown)

I held her hands in mine last night...

they looked so thin and worn...but they held mine just as tightly...as the day that I was born.

Those gentle and expressive hands...

etched by work and care...have folded over my bedside...many times in humble prayer.

They've washed for me...they've fed me...

they've helped me be a man...There's something of our Lord, Himself...

In every mother's hand.

Another poem is Daily by Naomi Shihab Nye. Search www.google.com using the name of poem and poet or visit <http://www.panhala.net/Archive/Daily.html> A sample of this exquisite poem is:

"This bed whose covers I straighten--Smoothing edges--till blue quilt fits brown blanket--
And nothing hangs out"

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www.constantsource.com