

TEN TIPS FOR CONTEMPLATIVE COLORING

1. **Everyone is an artist.**

You are wonderfully made in the image of God, your Creator. Therefore, you have creative gifts embedded within you. Trust that you are a work of art created by God. Whatever you create will be a work of art as well.

2. **Set aside time.**

Designate time in your day to be with God on purpose. You may choose to mark your prayer time as an appointment with God on your calendar. Determine what works best for you within the flow of your own life. Allow yourself to let go of your distractions and sit at the feet of Jesus to color and pray on a regular basis.

3. **Set aside sacred space.**

You may find setting aside time for God easier if you set aside a space dedicated solely to prayer. Focusing on prayer may be difficult if you are at your desk with a pile of bills staring at you. Set aside a special space and gather items you will need for prayer—a Bible, mandalas, colored pencils, a candle, a journal, and so on. Create a space that is comfortable and inviting so that you will long to spend time there in prayer.

4. **Lines are optional.**

In contemplative coloring, the lines are merely suggestions. Color within them, color on them, draw new lines, and draw beyond the lines. Anything goes!

5. **No color is off-limits.**

Pick the colors that attract you or that hold meaning for you. Don't overthink color selection so that it becomes a distraction of its own. Whatever colors you choose will be the right ones.

6. **Leave blank space.**

There is no need to "finish" coloring a mandala. You can leave blank space that you return to at a later time. The blank spaces may even become integral parts of your prayerful creation.

7. Use colored pencils or crayons with this book.

Colored pencils are a favorite of mine when it comes to coloring. If you are an experienced artist, you may prefer professional quality pencils. However, I have not found that expensive pencils work any better than inexpensive ones. I do see a value, however, in spending a little extra to get a wide variety of colors and shades. I enjoy using soy-based crayons. Not only are they better for the environment but you can use your finger to blend the colors to create some nice effects.

8. Spin the mandala.

Remember that you can spin this book any direction you wish so that you can color comfortably whether you are left-handed or right-handed.

9. Breathe.

This may seem self-evident. However, sometimes in moments of great focus, it's easy to hold your breath in concentration. Relax and breathe deeply while you color and pray.

10. The sky's the limit!

Perhaps one of the most important things to remember is that there is no right way to color. Release any preconceived notion you have about the process. Embrace your inner child, and follow where the Spirit leads. Your focus is the journey, not the destination.

Selah!