

Sharing the Faith Journey in your home

Spiritual Traditions Part 4: Charismatic Tradition

By Beth Barnett

Richard Foster's book *Streams of Living Water* and the *Renovare Spiritual Traditions Workbook* for small groups encourages us to reflect on the different ways that people have practiced their discipleship in different ways, in different times and places, contexts and challenges over the centuries. Six major 'traditions' or 'spiritual orientations' or 'ways' are identified:

Contemplative
Incarnational
Holiness

Evangelical
Social Justice
Charismatic

We are invited to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the traditions we have been fostered in, followed or found. And we are resourced to draw on patterns other than our own. Together, all six of the traditions reflect an image of Christ. And we do well to pursue and respect each of them, as well as accept our limitations in them and recognise that we are only part of the body of Christ, and genuinely need others who function differently to us to complete the whole incarnation and presence of Christ in the world.

Pick one or a few of the following activities and try it with your household, and see what happens. Let us know how you go, or if you have a story to share...

You will need:

Music to dance to (eg: Planetshakers)
Printed passages from the Bible
Balloons
Small gift bags/boxes and paper

Practicing the Charismatic Tradition

The social justice tradition challenges 21st century Western Christians in two dynamic ways. Firstly, in it being SOCIAL justice. That is, it addresses our spirituality

Children can be especially good mentors for the disciplines of the Charismatic Tradition, with their openness to spontaneity and joy, abandonment to the moment and appetite for adventure.

So if you share your living space with children, watch and learn, and encourage.

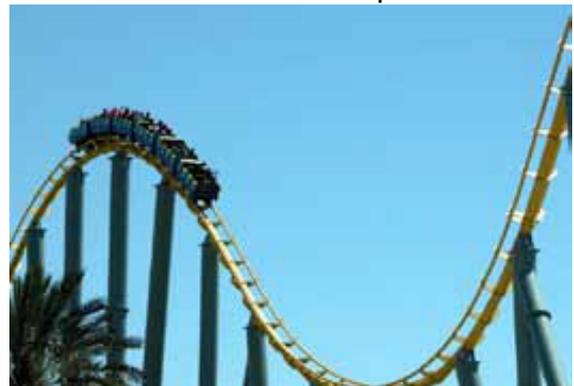
The Charismatic tradition is especially good for those of us who are highly rule, routine and structure dependent. There is nothing wrong with those things (I hear God even has a few rules!) but they are not the full extent of God's ways. Despite centuries now of Christianity being an official organised religion, the Charismatic tradition continues to remind us that the work of the Spirit in the world is not confined to what happens officially in churches, in structured programs, in things that are even overtly labelled Christian or in those wearing WWJD apparel. The Spirit is not contained by our rules and orders. At times in history it has been the Charismatic tradition that has brought down the walls of structured injustice, as in the Azusa Street Revivals which birthed the modern Pentecostal movement.

Read together:

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be with us, teaching us, helping and encouraging us, giving us the things we need to help one another and live well together in God's good ways. He could have left us a set of rules and instructions, but instead he's given us the Spirit. So that makes following Jesus a bit unpredictable! Jesus said the Spirit is like a breeze that blows. Who knows what gifts the Spirit will give? Who knows what the Spirit will say to us? We actually don't know, but we know that it will be good, because it comes from God. The Spirit is full of surprises, so strap yourself in and prepare for the rollercoaster ride!

What are the activities of the charismatic tradition?

Spontaneity and surprise, emotions of joy, conviction and wonder, risk taking and adventure, listening and discerning.



Some things to do together

Crazy Dancing

Get out a Planetshakers, Hillsong United, Snack Music, Johnny Burns or Colin Buchanan CD, crank it up to 11 and have a dance around the living room.

If you need some context, read the story of David dancing in 2 Kings 6.

312 Azusa Street

Find out a bit about the Azusa Street revivals. Develop your understanding of how the Charismatic and Social justice traditions work in harmony. For a basic introduction check out the Wikipedia entry:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azusa_Street_Revival



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