

Christ-Centered Yoga Journaling for Twins and Teen Girls

by Dr. Donna Jagielski, Owner, Blessings, Balance & Breath Yoga

How many of us maintain some type of reflective and creative journal? That reflective journal may consist of images and words clipped from magazines, similar to a vision board. A reflective journal may also incorporate our writings, drawings, and other elements to capture and express how we are processing God's word in accordance with our daily life in the flesh. Journaling is an excellent way to synthesize information. The more options we have to process and digest, the more likely we are to integrate the practices into our lives. Creative journaling is simply a wonderful way to personalize learning. The act of doing internalizes our learning process.

*"Tell me, and I forget, teach me and I may
remember, involve me, and I learn."
(unknown)*

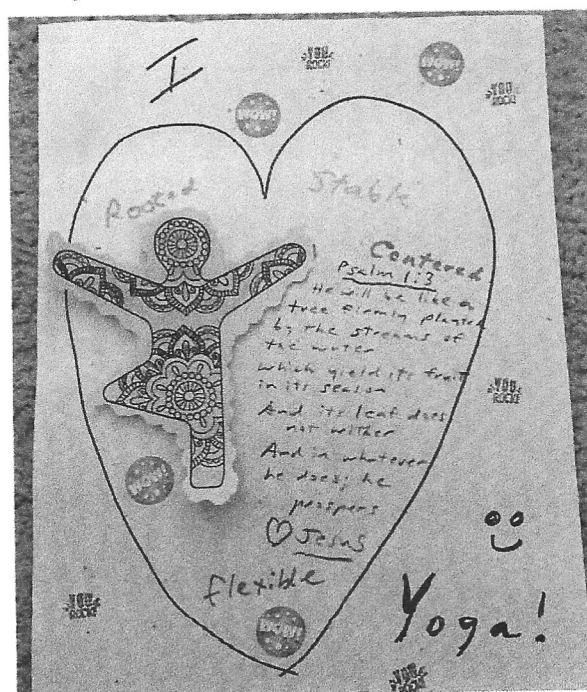
Sometimes both yoga poses and scripture are challenging to learn and remember. I'm sure we all can recall times at bible school when we had to "memorize" scripture. Similarly, when we first learn yoga, the terms, poses, and sequences can be overwhelming. As Christian yoga practitioners/students, the aim is to discover the connection between yoga and scripture. Creative journaling can set the stage for us to achieve that connection.

Adding time for creative journaling in conjunction with a yoga class/practice can bring the poses and scripture to life. It solidifies their meaning, reinforces understanding, and cultivates the connection. Anyone at any age can explore this type of creative journaling, but it is

very beneficial when teaching youth because it is engaging, personal and fun!

We all realize that technology is very popular with youth: apps on phones, tablets, and games. Yet, hands-on activities are quite fulfilling. Engaging activities include cutting items out, artistically arranging objects, the messiness of glitter, ink pads, stamps, glue stickiness, and possibly even stenciling letters. The more we involve as many of our senses as possible, the more likely "knowledge," "understanding," and "commitment" will "stick."

A simple way to incorporate journaling into a yoga practice is to encourage youth to create an interactive journal. Using a three-ring binder allows for easier rearranging. After inserting several journal pages, you may even see a sequence of the yoga poses emerge!



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To begin, each girl receives the following to keep and maintain:

- One three-ring binder of any color, any size (recommended at least 1" thick), preferably with a transparent front cover and pockets in both the front and back
- Sheet protectors

The transparent cover provides the opportunity to design a personalized front cover. Having pockets inside the front and the back cover is handy for saving keepsake items such as prayer notes, found objects in nature, and other items.

When the girls are ready to create, typically after the yoga practice is over, these are the suggested items to have available:

- Plain paper, possibly in different colors
- Self-created or pre-created 'yoga' journal sheets (see photo example)
- Various coloring and writing instruments: crayons, colored pencils, markers, oil/pastel pencils, etc.
- Various craft items such as stamps and stamp pads, stickers, ribbons
- Adhesives: glue sticks, glue dots, clear tape
- Magazines (preferably ones geared toward the age group, yoga-related, Christ-centered, nature related)
- Scissors (preferably some that are craft style - that will cut in particular border style - curved etc.)
- Glitter??? Well, that's up to you!

During yoga practice, there is typically a "peak pose," which is at the focal point of the practice and aligned with the theme and scripture. This peak pose and scripture would be the focal point of the creative journaling for that day/session. Tree pose is an excellent example (as seen in the photo example). This balance pose symbolizes being planted, grounded, rooted, strong, and resilient. Accompanying the

description of tree pose is the "peak scripture," such as:

Psalm 1:3 (NASB)

*He will be like a tree firmly
planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its
season*

*And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he
prosper.*

As the girls continue their Christ-centered yoga journey, more inserts will be added to their interactive journals. Encourage girls to practice yoga with accompanying scripture daily to connect the body, mind, and spirit. As they continue their journey, they may create their own yoga sequence by reordering and rearranging the inserts. Finally, continue to encourage them to reflect on how yoga can be a moving meditation and compliments their time in prayer with the Lord.

Dr. Donna Jagielski holds a doctorate in education from ASU. She has been an educator, educational administrator and currently works in educational programming for a nonprofit organization. She is actively involved in her church in Phoenix and Flagstaff where she maintains dual residency. She is a RYT-200 and RCYT-95 and is a member of the Yoga Alliance. She currently leads Christ-centered yoga for the Women on the Move program she facilitates at her Phoenix church and also leads yoga at a juvenile detention center in Phoenix.

