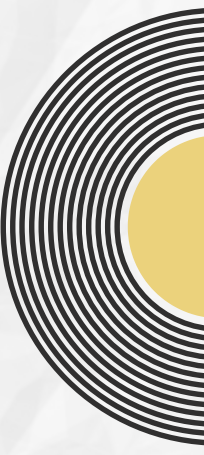


Lent With Leonard Cohen

*5 sessions for
individuals or groups*

Listen to the songs of Leonard Cohen
and use simple, creative ways to
respond that stir our hearts, souls,
and minds in deeply felt ways this
Lent.



Introduction

Lent I Song I: "In My Secret Life"

Lent is traditionally a time of self-examination, but it is the opposite of self-absorption. Lenten examination is a clear eyed look at the fantasies, inconsistencies, moments of clarity, and parts of the self that we want to hide from others, even ourselves, and especially God. Cohen's song is just such a clear-eyed view of this "secret life".

Lent II Song II: "Come Healing"

Lent is a season when we can give free rein to our own longings for healing in ourselves and in the world. This song gives voice to those longings and the many forms healing can and needs to take.



Introduction

Lent III Song III: "Anthem"

Halfway through Lent, we can be tempted to feel like we're 'failing' Lent. Our disciplines and promises broken and uneven. This song is an invitation to return to the present and its possibilities; not to be stuck but to return to rejoicing with all our cracks. Maybe at this point in Lent we can come into the awareness that Lent is God's work in us. We're simply here to make room for that work to happen.

Lent IV Song IV: "If it be Your Will"

This is a song of deep longing and surrender. It's not hard to imagine its sentiment as akin to the prayer of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane before his arrest and crucifixion. It might be the closest of Cohen's songs in form and content to the laments and longings of the psalms.



Introduction

Lent V Song V: "Love Itself"

In the last song before we enter the journey of Holy Week, this song speaks of a powerful experience in an ordinary place. In a sunlit room, the singer glimpses how Love transforms everything and dissolves the separation between all creation and the creator - the named and the nameless one. At the same time, the singer experiences the uncontainable, paradoxical nature of Love.

For further reading about Cohen's theology see: Marcia Pally, "Leonard Cohen's Jewish theology and theodicy," (Journal of Religion and Popular Culture) Available here:

<https://marciapally.com/2021/03/leonard-cohens-jewish-theology-and-theodicy/>

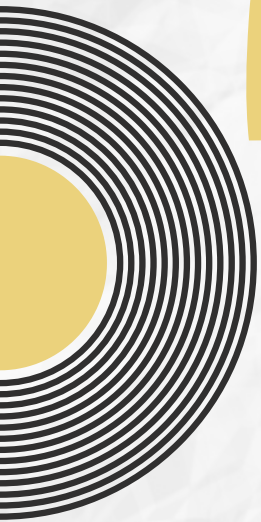


Session outline

Here is the playlist for Lent:

<https://tinyurl.com/cohenlent>

1. Read aloud the line from the Psalm.
2. Listen to the song. Lyrics are on the back pages.
3. Respond: What words, images, or phrases resonated for you? Or what aspects of the music spoke to you? Highlight them in some way in the book. Rewrite it. Sketch it. Journal it. Share and discuss (if you wish).
4. Listen again.
5. Respond: How does the element that resonated with you speak to you about the divine (if anything)? What does it tell you about yourself and/or others? Share and discuss (if you wish).
6. Listen again. Simply sit in restful silence.
7. Pray the closing prayer.



Session 1:

Song: In My Secret Life

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and
renew a right spirit within me.

Psalm 51:10



Listen



Reflect



Pray



Relate

Closing prayer:

Almighty God, to you all hearts are
open, all desires known, and from you
no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the
thoughts of our hearts by the
inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that
we may perfectly love you, and
worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Session 2:
Song: Come Healing

I lift up my eyes to the hills -- from
where is my help to come? My help
comes from the Lord, the maker of
heaven and earth Psalm 121:1-2

Closing Prayer:

O God of peace,
who taught us that in returning and
rest we shall be saved, in quietness
and confidence shall be our strength;
by the might of your Spirit lift us,
we pray, to your presence, where we
may be still and know that you are
God. Amen.



Listen



Reflect



Pray



Relate

Session 3:
Song: Anthem

O come, let us sing to the Lord; Let
us make a joyful noise to the rock of
our salvation! Psalm 95

Closing Prayer:

Almighty God, you have shone upon us
the new light of your incarnate Word.
May this light, enkindled in our
hearts, shine forth in our lives;
through Jesus Christ, who lives and
reigns with you, in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, one God, now and for
ever. Amen.



Listen



Reflect



Pray



Relate

Session 4:

Song: If it be Your Will

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not
want Psalm 23

Closing prayer:

Creator and Healer, you work your
Sabbath will in the chaos of our life:
teach us the insight that gives true
judgement and praises you wherever you
are found, making miracles from spit
and mud; through Jesus Christ, the Son
of earth. Amen.

Alternative Collects, pg. I5



Listen



Reflect



Pray



Relate

Session 5:
Song: Love Itself

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope

Psalm 103



Listen



Reflect



Pray



Relate

Closing Prayer:

Holy and immortal God, you bring us
into being and hold our lives in your
heart. May the fragrance of your love,
made known to us in Christ, draw us
closer to you and unite us with
Christ. Amen.

Lyrics

IN MY SECRET LIFE

In my secret life (x4)
I saw you this morning
You were moving so fast
Can't seem to loosen my grip
On the past
And I miss you so much
There's no one in sight
And we're still making love
In my secret life
In my secret life
I smile when I'm angry
I cheat and I lie
I do what I have to do
To get by
But I know what is wrong
And I know what is right
And I'd die for the truth
In my secret life
In my secret life
Hold on, hold on, my brother
My sister, hold on tight
I finally got my orders
I'll be marching through the morning
Marching through the night
Moving cross the borders
Of my secret life

Looked through the paper
Makes you wanna cry
Nobody cares if the people
Live or die
And the dealer wants you thinking
That it's either black or white
Thank God it's not that simple
In my secret life
I bite my lip
I buy what I'm told
From the latest hit
To the wisdom of old
But I'm always alone
And my heart is like ice
And it's crowded and cold
In my secret life (x8)



Lyrics

COME HEALING

O gather up the brokenness
Bring it to me now
The fragrance of those promises
You never dared to vow

The splinters that you carry
The cross you left behind
Come healing of the body
Come healing of the mind

And let the heavens hear it
The penitential hymn
Come healing of the spirit
Come healing of the limb

Behold the gates of mercy
In arbitrary space
And none of us deserving
The cruelty or the grace

O solitude of longing
Where love has been confined
Come healing of the body
Come healing of the mind

O see the darkness yielding
That tore the light apart
Come healing of the reason
Come healing of the heart

O troubled dust concealing
An undivided love
The heart beneath is teaching
To the broken heart above

Let the heavens falter
Let the earth proclaim
Come healing of the altar
Come healing of the name

O longing of the branches
To lift the little bud
O longing of the arteries
To purify the blood

And let the heavens hear it
The penitential hymn
Come healing of the spirit
Come healing of the limb

O let the heavens hear it
The penitential hymn (penitential
hymn)
Come healing of the spirit
Come healing of the limb



Lyrics

ANTHEM

The birds they sang
At the break of day
Start again
I heard them say
Don't dwell on what has passed away
Or what is yet to be

Ah, the wars they will be fought again
The holy dove, she will be caught again
Bought and sold, and bought again
The dove is never free

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in

We asked for signs
The signs were sent
The birth betrayed
The marriage spent
Yeah, and the widowhood
Of every government
Signs for all to see

I can't run no more
With that lawless crowd
While the killers in high places
Say their prayers out loud
But they've summoned, they've
summoned up

A thundercloud
They're going to hear from me

Refrain

You can add up the parts
But you won't have the sum
You can strike up the march
There is no drum
Every heart, every heart
To love will come
But like a refugee

Refrain (x2)

That's how the light gets in (2x)



Lyrics

IF IT BE YOUR WILL

If it be your will
That I speak no more
And my voice be still
As it was before

I will speak no more
I shall abide until
I am spoken for
If it be your will

If it be your will
That a voice be true
From this broken hill
I will sing to you

From this broken hill
All your praises they shall ring
If it be your will
To let me sing

From this broken hill
All your praises they shall ring
If it be your will
To let me sing

If it be your will
If there is a choice
Let the rivers fill
Let the hills rejoice

Let your mercy spill
On all these burning hearts in hell
If it be your will
To make us well

And to draw us near
And bind us tight
All your children here
In their rags of light

In our rags of light
All dressed to kill
And end this night
If it be your will
If it be your will



Lyrics

LOVE ITSELF

The light came through the window
Straight from the sun above
And so inside my little room
There plunged the rays of love

In streams of light
I clearly saw
The dust you seldom see,
Out of which the nameless makes
A name for one like me

I'll try to say a little more
Love went on and on
Until it reached an open door
Then love itself
Love itself was gone

All busy in the sunlight
The flecks did float and dance
And I was tumbled up with them
In formless circumstance

I'll try to say a little more
Love went on and on
Until it reached an open door
Then love itself
Love itself was gone

Then I came back from where I'd
been
My room, it looked the same But
there was nothing left between
The nameless and the name

All busy in the sunlight
The flecks did float and dance
And I was tumbled up with them
In formless circumstance

I'll try to say a little more
Love went on and on
Until it reached an open door
Then love itself
Love itself was gone
Love itself
Love itself was gone



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Notes



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Notes

