

The Garden of My Soul

Inspired by St. Teresa of Avila's Teachings on Prayer

- Print the 3 pages of the garden based and pieces on cardstock—this helps everything stand up better
- Color the garden base—if possible, attach the base to some cardboard or tape to a table so that it lays flat: the plants don't tip over as easily that way
- Color, then carefully cut out all the plants and decorations—be sure to cut the tabs out also, don't cut them off! Make sure you know what each virtue means—see the next page for definitions.
- Tape the ends of the tabs together on each plant/object to make little rings so they stand up. You may need to gently bend the trees and fountain so that they curve and lean back a bit to make them more stable



- *When it is prayer time: Set up your garden. As you put each plant and decoration in your garden, read the names of the virtues and reflect on your day—how did you grow those virtues? Which virtues did you use during the day? What is growing well in your garden and what is struggling?*
- *Put out the chairs for you and Jesus and the little table, then begin your visit with Jesus—enjoy time with Him in the garden of your soul!*



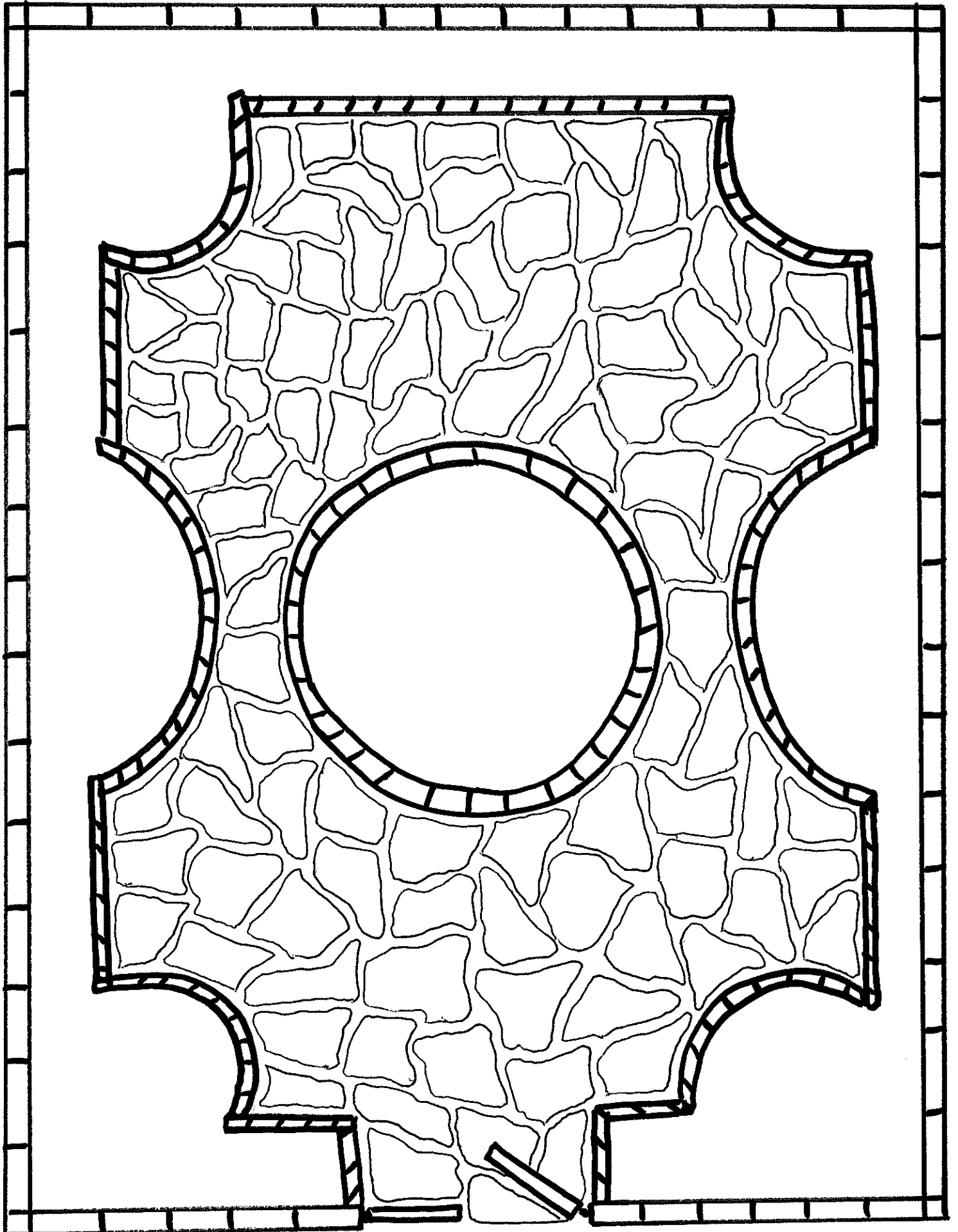
The Garden of My Soul

St. Teresa of Avila compared our souls to a garden where Jesus visits us. Our job is to cultivate (take care of) our garden and grow beautiful flowers and fruits of virtues to please Jesus. When we pray, we are watering our garden. When we receive the Sacraments—especially Reconciliation and the Eucharist—we are weeding and feeding our garden. When we choose to act on the virtues growing in our soul, we are sharing a harvest of goodness with other people. Jesus loves to spend time in the garden of our souls with us—He is so pleased and eager to be with us. He will help us in our garden—pruning and weeding and planting—so that the garden of our souls is a beautiful and restful place. Be patient with the garden of your soul—it will take a lifetime for it to flourish and become all that Jesus has planned it to be!

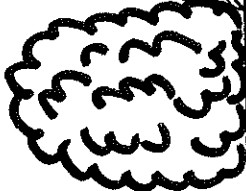
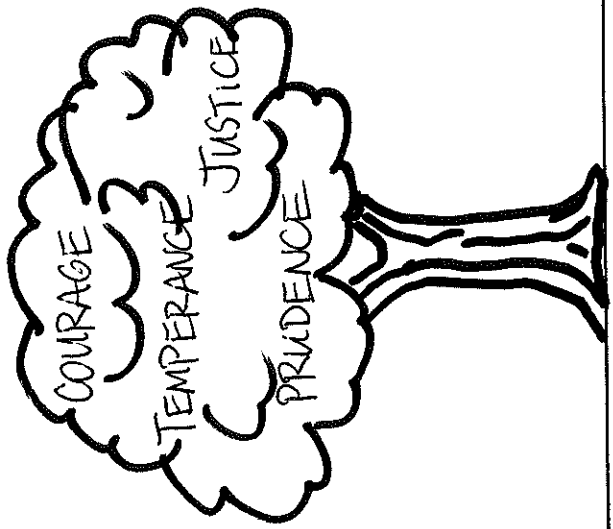
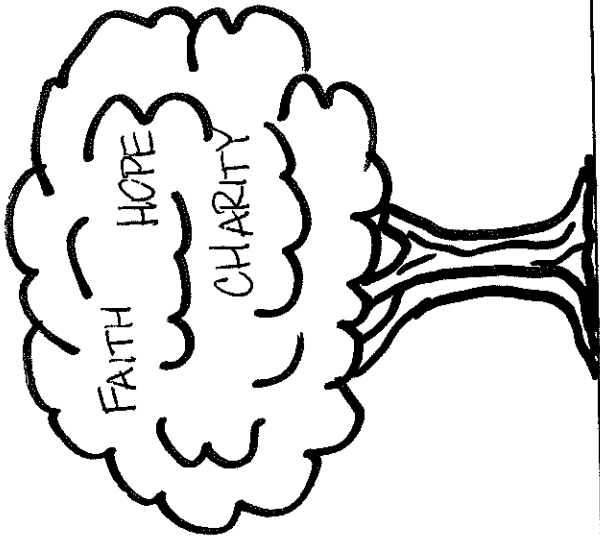
Virtues in the Garden of My Soul:

What is a virtue? A virtue is a good habit that helps us do good and avoid evil. Virtues are graces (gifts) from God that we develop with hard work and practice. Virtues help our hearts turn completely to God and receive the greatest gift He wants to give us—eternal life in heaven!

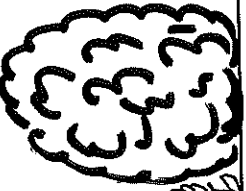
Theological Virtues <i>(focused mainly on God)</i>	Faith	<i>Believing what God says is the truth; saying “Yes” to the Creed and what the Church teaches as revealed by God</i>
	Hope	<i>Putting my trust in the promises of God and knowing that He is working out my ultimate good (heaven!)</i>
	Charity (Love)	<i>Wanting what is best for other people; seeking union with God and being completely open to Him</i>
Cardinal Virtues <i>(the key virtues for the Christian life)</i>	Courage (Fortitude)	<i>Choosing to do what I know is right even when I am feeling afraid; not letting fear make my choices for me</i>
	Temperance	<i>Knowing when enough is enough; not being greedy and wanting more than I really need</i>
	Justice	<i>Giving each person what they deserve simply by being a person loved by God; being fair</i>
	Prudence	<i>Carefully choosing what is the best way to act or the best decision to make; keeping my priorities straight</i>
Other virtues to cultivate in your soul	Patience	<i>Giving people the time and support they need; not getting frustrated when people don’t understand</i>
	Honesty	<i>Speaking the truth in love; not making up stories or keeping quiet when I need to admit to doing wrong</i>
	Obedience	<i>Following the commandments and rules of God and others who have authority over me</i>
	Humility	<i>Knowing that other people are loved by God just as much as I am; not putting myself first</i>
	Joy	<i>Energy and lightness of heart that comes from truly knowing that God loves me, He REALLY loves me!</i>
	Generosity	<i>Giving freely to others of my time, my talents, and my treasures—thinking of others needs, not just my own</i>
	Mercy	<i>Giving other people the same compassion and understanding that I get from God, not holding onto grudges</i>
	Endurance	<i>Sticking with what I know to be right and true even if I face challenges; not giving up when things get tough</i>
	Modesty	<i>Not trying to show off and get extra attention from other people; giving compliments to others</i>
	Purity	<i>Treating myself and other people as Temples of the Holy Spirit; not using other people as objects for my pleasure</i>
	Gratitude	<i>Recognizing the gifts that God gives me and thanking Him for them; saying “Thank you” to others</i>
Peace	<i>Having a calm and quiet heart that is open to God; seeking to build unity with others</i>	



THE GARDEN OF MY SOUL



PATIENCE



HONESTY



OBEDIENCE



HUMILITY

