

# Study Guide – *Just Women, Winter 2012*

---

## *Introduction*

Welcome to Just Women! We hope this leader's guide will help you plan meaningful study sessions using the Winter 2012 issue of this magazine.

The focus of this issue of Just Women is “Radical Hospitality: Learning from our Past to Build Stronger Relationships.”

As these sessions focus on radical hospitality, each session provides an opportunity for the study leader to practice this discipline in your gathering. Greet each group member by name as they enter. Create a space for your meeting that is comfortable and pleasing to the senses. Be aware if group members have allergies to scents or to food items, if so be sensitive to these as you create your space and plan your refreshments. During your discussion encourage each person to participate in the discussion as she is comfortable. (*Read Julie Roberts-Fronk's article, “My Friend Talks too Much” for tips on how not to become the conversation police.”*)

## *Preparation*

In preparing for the study sessions outlined here, have an individual subscription for each woman in your group. If you need more magazines, go to <http://www.discipleswomen.org>, and follow the link to *Just Women*.

The four sessions in this study guide will ask your group to focus on how we have received radical hospitality (grace) from God and how we are be conduits of that radical hospitality for others. These sessions are undergirded by the teaching from 3 John 1:5, “Dear Friend, when you extend hospitality to Christian brothers and sisters, even when they are strangers, you make the faith visible” (*The Message Bible*).

Read through the Winter 20 edition and familiarize yourself with how the theme of radical hospitality is developed in the articles. Focus your attention on the articles, “*Not in my Backyard: Putting a Face on Human Trafficking*” by Julia Cochran on pages 4 – 5, “*Learning Hospitality*” by Yvonne Gilmore-Essig on pages 7 – 9, “*Practicing Radical Hospitality*” by Jolene Johnstun on pages 10 – 11, and “*A Different Kind of Roots*” by Carol Cure on pages 14 -17. Ask your group members to read the article that you will be focusing on *before* your meetings so everyone will be prepared to participate in the study.

## Session 1

### *Supplies*

Bibles, the Winter Issue of *Just Women*, Newsprint, Marker, a selection of newspapers and news magazines.

Prior to the meeting, review the resources for “Breaking the Chains of Modern Day Slavery” that are available on the internet. You can either do a Google search or browse the following websites:

[www.discipleshomemissions.org/pages/DW-SocialActionBreakChains](http://www.discipleshomemissions.org/pages/DW-SocialActionBreakChains)

[www.six11.wordpress.com](http://www.six11.wordpress.com)

[www.ccinky.net](http://www.ccinky.net)

[www.abwmbreakthechains.org](http://www.abwmbreakthechains.org)

Use these websites as the starting point to see what resources and ministries are available in your area. Select resources that provide information of which your group may not be aware or ministries that your group might be interested in supporting. Bring this information to your group.

### *Opening Prayer*

God of love, whose compassion never fails, we bring before thee the trouble and the perils of people and nations, the sighing of prisoners and captives, the sorrows of the bereaved, the necessities of strangers, the helplessness of the weak, the despondency of the weary, the failing powers of the aged. O Lord, draw near to each; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Anselm, 1033 – 1109<sup>1</sup>

### *Icebreaker*

Prior to meeting draw or trace the outline of a person on the newsprint (it should be about 36 inches tall). Find the picture of the face of a child or woman whose ethnicity represents the majority of women in your group. As members of the group arrive have them look through the magazines and the newspapers for articles and pictures that address the oppression, abuse, and/or exploitation of women and children.

After everyone has had an opportunity to add something to the newsprint, take a few minutes to talk about what has been chosen. Answer the following:

- Who is impacted by the issues that you have identified?
- What societal factors contribute to the existence and continuation of the issue?

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Complete Book of Christian Prayer*. New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1996. 133.

### *Alternative Icebreaker*

If you have access to the necessary equipment, play the closing argument given by defense attorney Jake Brigance in *The Time to Kill*. Use the following questions to guide the discussions:

- What are the main points of Jake's argument?
- How did you feel as you listened to this argument? What was your response when Jake asked the jury to consider his daughter as the victim?
- What makes it easier to overlook oppression and exploitation of those who we consider different from us?

### *Scripture Focus*

Read the following scripture Amos 2: 6 – 8

Read the article: “*Not in my Backyard: Putting a Face on Human Trafficking*” by Julia Cochran on pages 4 – 5.

### *Questions*

This session will help the women in your group define human trafficking and increase their awareness of the problem. It will challenge the women to consider the church's call to help eliminate human trafficking through increasing awareness of the ministry of Street GRACE in Atlanta, Georgia. Finally, the women in your group will be asked to consider how they might contribute to the solution. Use the following questions to guide your discussion today:

- What are the reasons for judgment against Israel given by Amos? How does this relate to the issue of human trafficking today?
- What is the United Nations definition of human trafficking?
- Who is most vulnerable as potential victims of human trafficking?
- How does Street Grace work to eradicate human trafficking?
- Was there anything that surprised you as you read this article?

Review the resources that you found during your web search.

Brainstorm how your group might work to help overcome the problem of human trafficking.

### *Closing Prayer*

Close with the Disciples Women's Benediction or a prayer led by someone in your group.

## Session 2

### *Supplies*

Bibles, the Winter Issue of *Just Women*, a selection of magazines with a variety of photos. (if using the alternative icebreaker have a selection of scented and unscented hand creams)

### *Opening Prayer*

Like your disciples on the road to Emmaus, we are so often incapable of seeing that you, O Christ, are our companions on the way. But when our eyes are opened we realize that you were speaking to us even though perhaps we had forgotten you. Then the sign of our trust in you is that, in our turn, we try to love, to forgive with you. Independent of our doubts or even our faith, O Christ, you are always there; your love burns in our heart of hearts.

(Brother( Roger Schutz)<sup>2</sup>

### *Icebreaker*

As the members of your group arrive give them the a few minutes to catch-up up with one another. After they have had this opportunity distribute the magazines. Ask them to choose a photo that feels like “home.” After each person has had the opportunity to do this, ask them to share their photo and tell why it feels like “home.”

### *Alternate Icebreaker*

For groups where the members know each other well and are comfortable with touch you might want to use this icebreaker. Ask group members to pair up. Explain that each person will be giving the other a hand massage. Have the person who is receiving the massage choose a hand cream. Gently rub the cream into the fingers one at a time. Start from the base of the finger and move to the finger tip. Rub the palm and the back of the hand. As you are rubbing be sensitive to the pressure that you are applying. You might want to ask the person if they would like you to use more or less pressure. After about 5 minutes – switch.

Be aware that some individuals are not comfortable with touch and do not force anyone to participate.

### *Scripture Focus*

Read the following scripture Genesis 18: 1 – 8

---

<sup>2</sup> *The Complete Book of Christian Prayer*. New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1996. 69.

“*Learning Hospitality*” by Yvonne Gilmore-Essig on pages 7 – 9.

### *Questions*

Use the following questions to guide today’s discussion:

- How does Abraham offer hospitality at Mamre? What do you notice about the food that Abraham offered?
- Gilmore- Essig suggests, “For Christian women hospitality is radically important because it is where formation takes place; it is where we are formed and participate in the formation of others.” What do you think she means by this? How does this reflect your own formation as a Christian woman?
- It is stated that in the ancient Greek culture hospitality was a divine right. Is hospitality still considered a divine right in our culture? Why or why not? In the church culture? Why or why not?
- What were the rules for hosts and guests in the ancient Middle East? How are these rules (principles) applicable to us today as we entertain strangers in our presence?
- Reread Mary Oliver’s poem, “*Making the House Ready for the Lord,*” found on page 8. What speaks to you in this poem? Who are the invited and uninvited guests in your life? How are they received?
- Popcorn and poetry are the signs of welcome at New Song Community Church. What are the practices of your congregation that extend radical hospitality to the visitor ?
- Gilmore-Essig ends her article with the story of Mary and Martha. Who do you most relate to – Mary or Martha? Is it easier for you to give or to receive hospitality? What would help you to be more like the other?
- Gilmore- Essig states, “The advent of Jesus was a way of making space for a new paradigm of hospitality.” What do you think she means by this? How do you practice this new paradigm in you home? at work? in your congregation? in your community?
- 

### *Closing Prayer*

Close with the Disciples Women’s Benediction or a prayer led by someone in your group.

## Session 3

### *Supplies*

Bibles, the Winter Issue of *Just Women*, a copy of *A History of Disciples Resettlement* for each person in your group.

### *Opening Prayer*

*O God,*  
You bring hope out of emptiness  
Energy out of fear  
New life out of grief and loss.  
As Mary returned to mourn  
Yet found unspeakable joy,  
So comfort all who have lost their homes  
Through persecution, war, exile,  
Or deliberate destruction.  
Give them security, a place to live,  
And neighbours they trust  
To be, with them, a new sign of peace to the world.

Janet Morley (Christian Aid)<sup>3</sup>

### *Icebreaker*

Read the following to the group:

It is the middle of the night and you are sound asleep. Suddenly, you wake to the sound of someone pounding at your door. When you open the door you see armed men who tell you that you have ten minutes to evacuate your home. You are told that you can only take what you can carry. You are told that you can never return.

Discuss the following:

What would you take?

Where would you go?

Who would help you?

What would be most difficult for you to leave behind? Why?

### *Scripture Focus*

Read the following scripture: Matthew 2: 13 – 15

Read the article “*Practicing Radical Hospitality*” by Jolene Johnstun on pages 10 – 11.

---

<sup>3</sup> *The Complete Book of Christian Prayer*. New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1996. 116.

## *Questions*

- Imagine that you were Mary. How would you have felt as you were fleeing to Egypt? What would have been your concerns?
- Describe a time when you felt like a stranger? What helped you to feel more comfortable? At home?
- From the *Refugee Resettlement Manual*. Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 2010.

*The word “refugee” is often confusing, because people use the word when talking about many different kinds of people – foreigners, immigrants, persons displaced in their own country, migrants, etc. However, for the U.S. resettlement program, there is a specific definition of who is a refugee. The U.S. Refugee Act of 1980 adopted the United Nations definition of a refugee as **a person with a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group**. Only persons fitting that definition are eligible for resettlement in the United States. Persons already in the United States who might also fit this definition cannot be resettled as refugees, but they may apply for asylum. If granted asylum, they receive the same rights as refugees.*

How does a refugee differ from an immigrant? What feelings do you think are experienced by refugees? How are these similar and dissimilar from other foreign nationals who enter the United States. What would assist a refugee to feel “at home”?

- Read the *History of Disciples Resettlement*? Discuss the following: What did you learn from this article? What are your reactions to this article? Do you know of any ministries in Disciples congregations in your area that assist refugees?
- How does Jolene indicate that the ministry with refugees helped revitalize her congregation?
- Johnstun states “anyone can be a missionary in his or her own community.” How would you define the work of a missionary? Where are the mission stations in your community?
- Who are the individuals (groups) that are the recipients of your congregation’s radical hospitality?

## *Closing Prayer*

Close with the Disciples Women’s Benediction or a prayer led by someone in your group.

From the *Refugee Resettlement Manual*  
Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 2010.

### ***History of Disciples' Resettlement***

*The first recorded refugee family resettled by a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation was a Jewish family of four sponsored by First Christian Church in Eureka, Illinois, in 1941. They arrived from Germany through the American Friends Service Committee (prior to the Disciples establishing their own resettlement program). Dr. Salmon, the minister of the Eureka church, wrote: "It is and has been my conviction that this was one of the most important things that has happened in my entire ministry." In 1949, the Disciples' refugee program began when Ruth Milner was asked to administer the resettlement of "Displaced Persons" out of Europe in cooperation with Church World Service. Ella Williams Grimes assumed responsibility for the "Relief and Rehabilitation" program between October 1954 and October 1981, thus giving 27 years of dedicated service to refugees. Jennifer Riggs joined the staff during the large influx of Vietnamese and Cuban refugees in 1980. After Ella's retirement in 1981, Jennifer became and continues to be the director of the program.*

*At the end of 1981, the program was broadened to include more than refugee resettlement. Ministries to assist persons with immigration problems were added, and the name of the program was changed to "Refugee and Immigration Ministries" (RIM). In the early 1980's, RIM became a major financial supporter of the Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries, a ministry with Central American refugees on the Texas/Mexico border. Similar ministries within other congregations around the United States were also supported, including Humane Borders, a ministry of First Christian Church in Tucson, Arizona that began in 2000 to provide water in the desert.*

*Since the beginning of the program in 1949, over 33,000 refugees have been helped to start a new life in the United States. The RIM program has helped process the paperwork for these individuals, but it has depended upon the faith and committed action of Disciples' congregations to carry out this important ministry of "welcoming the stranger."*

*Those welcomed included many persons from:*

- In the 1950's - Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia.*
- In the 1960's - China, Cuba, Holland (Dutch Indonesians), and Yugoslavia.*
- In the 1970's - Cambodia, Chile, Cuba, Iraq, Laos, Romania, Uganda, the USSR, and Vietnam.*
- In the 1980's - Afghanistan, Cambodia, Cuba, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Iran, Laos, Poland, Romania, the USSR, and Vietnam.*
- In the 1990's - Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cuba, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Iran, Kosovo, Laos, Liberia, Romania, Somalia, the Sudan, the USSR, and Vietnam.*
- In the 2000's - Afghanistan, Bosnia, Burma, Croatia, Cuba, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, the USSR, and Vietnam.*

- *In the 2010's – Bhutan, Burma, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, and Somalia.*

*Through the years, the Disciples' refugee program, currently located in DHM (Disciples Home Missions), has received its major financial support from Week of Compassion.*

## Session 4

### *Supplies*

Bibles, the Winter Issue of *Just Women*, one copy of *My Family Tree* for each group member.

### *Opening Prayer*

O God, our Father, we thank thee for our home and family;  
for love and forbearance, for friends and foe, for laughter enjoyed and sorrow shared,  
for the daily bread of thy bounty in good times and bad. Help us to be mindful of thy gifts  
and glad to show forth thy praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

R.N. Rodenmayer<sup>4</sup>

### *Icebreaker*

Have a copy of *My Family Tree* and a pen or pencil for each person. Take some time to have the group members complete their family tree. After everyone has completed their sheet, take some time to share about each person's family. Ask the following:

- *Where are your ancestors from?*
- *What ancestor are you most like? Why?*
- *What ancestor is most interesting to you? Why?*
- *What ancestor would you most like to be like? Why?*

### *Scripture Focus*

**Read the following scripture: Matthew 1: 1 – 17**

Background: There are few passages in the bible that generate less interest than the genealogies. Indeed, for most these lists of strange sounding and often difficult to pronounce names are often passed over with barely a glance. According to biblical scholar Raymond E. Brown, biblical genealogies serve several purposes. First, in a society where safety and survival was linked to tribal membership, genealogies served to establish identity and protection as the tribe cares for its members. Second, genealogies serve to divide time into epochs and to authenticate and validate cultic offices such as priests and political offices such as kings. Third, in a society where the character of ancestors were thought to reappear in future generations, genealogies serve to reveal one's character and personality traits.

---

<sup>4</sup> *The Complete Book of Christian Prayer*. New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1996. 76.

In Matthew's genealogy, Jesus is revealed as the son of David and more subtly the son of Abraham. Historically, three main proposals for Matthew's inclusion of women in the genealogy have been put forth. In the fourth century, Jerome proposed that the women were sinners whose inclusion is the foreshadowing of Jesus' redemption of all sinners. While this view gained popularity, it should be noted that the bible does not identify these women as sinners. Martin Luther (1483 - 1546) argued that the common bond of these women were that they were foreigners, thus, foreshadowing God's adoption of the Gentiles. This is supported by the Biblical narrative. Most recently, scholars have suggested that the Rahab, Tamar, Ruth, and Bathsheba share two characteristics with Mary. All took initiative in partnering with God and all have somewhat irregular unions with their partners. This last proposal lifts up a theological understanding that in partnership with humanity, God overcomes all obstacles and impediments to establish God's plan.

**Read the article "*A Different Kind of Roots*" by Carol Cure on pages 14 -17 of *Just Women*.**

### *Questions*

This session will encourage the women in your group to consider their own natural and spiritual genealogies.

- As Jesus is the son of David and son of Abraham what does this reveal about his character?
- In traveling to the Congo, Carol Cure was able to reconnect with the experiences of her grandparents and great aunt. Have you had a similar experience of traveling somewhere and reconnecting with a part of your family story?
- Carol Cure states, "arriving in Mbandaka, I remember saying under my breath, 'Now this is more like it!' It felt like coming home, and despite the heat and humidity, I slept soundly there from the first night." Where are the places that at "like coming home for you"? What contributes to this "home-like" feeling?
- Cure states that she now has roots in the Congo and that her ties with her Congolese sisters are like blood ties. With whom do you share blood ties? What forged these ties?
- How does understanding our roots help us to become the person God intends us to be?
- Biblical genealogies were created to validate tribal (community) identity, authenticate line of cultic and political offices, and to point to the character of the person to whom the genealogy belongs. Who are your faith ancestors? Who is the biblical person that you most identify with? Who is the biblical person that you find most interesting? Who is the biblical person whose character you would like to emulate?

|

## *Closing Prayer*

Close with the Disciples Women's Benediction or a prayer led by someone in your group.

## *My Family Tree*

*Complete your family tree as completely as you can. Note where each person came from.  
Note the faith community where they worshipped. What is something unusual or  
interesting about your ancestors.*

<i>Great-great grandpa</i>	<i>Great-great grandma</i>	<i>Great-great grandpa</i>	<i>Great-great grandma</i>
<i>Great-grandpa</i>	<i>Great-grandma</i>	<i>Great-grandpa</i>	<i>Great-grandma</i>
<i>Great-grandma</i>	<i>Great-grandma</i>	<i>Great-grandma</i>	<i>Great-grandma</i>
<i>My grandpa</i>	<i>My grandma</i>	<i>My grandpa</i>	<i>My grandma</i>
		<i>Aunts and Uncles</i>	
<i>My dad</i>		<i>My mom</i>	
		<i>Siblings with ages</i>	
<i>Me-</i>			