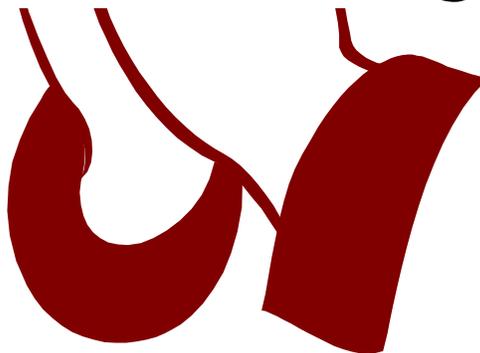


Balanced Diet—Session #2



Our Journeys



BALANCED DIET

Session #2 – Our Journeys

Purpose: Celebrate those who have lived their lives as Christian folks; have been all different places on the path; have lived long enough in the church to discover there are always new things to learn. This session identifies how everyone has a place with God, no matter what their experience or where they are on their personal spiritual journey. There is always room to grow and things to learn about ourselves and God.



TIME	ACTIVITY	SUPPLIES
5 minutes	Skit	Skit for Session #2 4-5 chairs Folded paper to look like a bulletin
25 minutes	Invite 3 people, from different places on the faith journey spectrum (lifelong Christian, young Christian and a person who comes to Disciples from another faith tradition), to share their personal stories of their journey to date (8 minutes each).	Note paper or Flip chart Colored dots Labyrinth
15 minutes	<p>Introducing Dining on God’s Word</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Either write out the 5 Steps on the flipchart ahead of time, or have it projected on screen ▪ Tell them there will be a handout available ▪ Review each step <p><i>Transition to next segment by saying we will now focus on ONE example or method of dining on God’s word for group activity.</i></p>	Dining on God’s Word handout Screen, if needed
25 minutes	<p>Introducing Lectio Divina – <i>Prayer of the Listening Heart</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain that the history of Lectio Divina – the Prayer of the Listening Heart – is an ancient Christian practice that can put us in touch with the scriptures 	Lectio Divina handout Leader: review the Spiritual Formation section in <i>Tools for Leadership</i> (available on-line at www.discipleswom)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review Lectio Divina handout (can be created as a page to project) ▪ Break into groups of 4 ▪ Distribute handout ▪ Ask each small group to go through the process 	
5 minutes	Ask small groups to spend 5 minutes processing their experience with the Lectio Divina	
15 minutes	<p>Introducing how to memorize scripture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the handout (can be created as a page to project) ▪ Ask them to find their prayer partner and each pick a scripture to memorize before tomorrow. ▪ On their index card, write down both their own and their partner's scripture reference (this is the holding accountable part of the discipline) ▪ Ask your partner for her prayer concerns and write them down for your personal prayer time ▪ Pray with one another 	<p>Handout – How to Memorize Scripture</p> <p>Index cards</p>

Session #2 - Small Group Leader Notes

- 1) Explain that the first activity is to think about their own spiritual journeys to date. Where have they been, where are they now, what has that journey looked like – all smooth sailing, ups and downs, ins and outs, whatever.
- 2) Instruct group to take the small piece of paper and draw a picture of their idea of a spiritual journey. Tell them it doesn't have to be artistic, but just reflective of what it 'looks like' in their mind. No points for pretty. No deductions for messy! Allow about 7 minutes.
- 3) Next have them write on paper where they believe they are in their spiritual journey – arriving, struggling, growing, stagnating, seeking, lost, moving toward God, away from God, puzzled.....wherever, whatever. (about 7 minutes)
- 4) Discuss in group. Go around your group and ask people to share their pictures and explain (very briefly) what it means to them. Next ask people where they think they are right now and why. (About 15 minutes)
- 5) When finished with discussion, have each one of your members take a colored dot (provided to them by group leaders) and place the dot on labyrinth that reflects where they believe they are on this visualization of a spiritual journey. Make sure they are quiet as other groups may not be done with their discussion.

Session #2 Skit – Our Journeys

Setting the Stage:

- Have about 4-5 chairs in a row
- Two women (one older and one younger) are speaking as if thinking as they walk in. WHEN the script calls for them to sit, they do so on the outside chairs and take cursory looks at one another and then turn their backs towards each other.
- Younger woman is carrying a paper that looks like a church bulletin.
- They are not talking or looking at each other, but convey to the audience that they are thinking about the other one as they speak.

YOUNG WOMAN: *Well, here I am. Now I just have to walk in like I did last week and find a place to sit. I think I'll go in the back, cause I don't want anyone to notice me too much. But, they were very nice to me last week. I so need to find the Lord. I feel lost and scared.*

OLDER WOMAN: *It's Sunday and here I am at church. Now to find my regular pew. Oh there's Nellie, and Beulah and oh there's Beverly....such a wonderful leader at our circle. I really enjoy her lessons. Oh, my! Who is that in my seat?*

YOUNG WOMAN: *Okay, I made it...now to look at this paper. What did that man call it? A bulletin? Order of worship? Oh, I can't remember. (looking around) Wait a minute.... Why is that old lady staring at me?*

OLDER WOMAN: *Now why is that young lady sitting in my spot? And what is that she has on? Don't young people know how to dress for church anymore? What am I going to do? I'm*

not sure I've seen her before. Maybe she just doesn't know that's my spot. Oh my, what should I do?

YOUNG WOMAN: *She's still looking at me. I don't think I know her... I'm sure I didn't meet her last week. She seems a little flustered....but that can't be...she looks like she's been coming here for 100 years. She must know what's up, unlike me who has NO clue. Oh yes, there's one of her friends – oh that's the nice lady I met last week – she actually talked to me... now she's sitting down across the aisle with her friend.*

OLDER WOMAN: *Well thanks to Beverly I got seated. She invited me to join her in her regular spot. I guess I am just not as adaptable as I used to be since George died. I miss him terribly and sometimes feel so lonely and afraid. It's pretty bad, Lord, when I can't even deal with moving to another pew! I'm sure that young girl doesn't have to deal with feeling so alone.*

YOUNG WOMAN: *Oh my gosh, the service is starting. People are standing up. How do they know to do that? Where does it say stand up? I wish I had someone to come with me and then maybe I wouldn't feel so stupid and nervous. But that's part of the reason I am here – I don't have anyone to care for me in my life. I don't really know what I am looking for, but I know I feel something missing in my life. That lady sure has it nice – lots of friends and she seems so comfortable with herself and this place.*

OLDER WOMAN: *Oh, my mind is wandering again. What was it the pastor just said? I have absolutely NO idea.*

YOUNG WOMAN: *Now they're singing a song. What a moving song. Maybe there is something here for me. Maybe there is a God who can love me – even me! I really feel all the voices singing together - it's like God is talking to me!*

OLDER WOMAN: *What is that girl doing now? She's swaying and singing and raising her hands. Does she think this is a camp meeting or something? Oh Rose – there you go again...you used to enjoy this song so much. Have I gotten so comfortable that even songs don't move me anymore? I envy her enthusiasm, her feeling, her obvious love for God – it shows!*

YOUNG WOMAN: *I like this feeling! But there has to be more than just songs. That lady is staring at me again. Have I done something wrong? She seems so peaceful...I want that kind of peace and ease with God.*

OLDER WOMAN: *Now Beverly is hauling me around to say hello to all these people. Oh, my, now she is taking me over to say hello to that young woman.*

YOUNG WOMAN: Hello.

OLDER WOMAN: Hello, my name is Mary. Thank you for joining us today. Are you new to the church?

YOUNG WOMAN: Hi, I'm Ashley. Yes, I was here just last Sunday for the first time.

OLDER WOMAN: Oh, really. I hope you are enjoying your experience here.

YOUNG WOMAN: Oh yes, I am. People seem very nice.

OLDER WOMAN: Are you from here? Is your family joining you?

YOUNG WOMAN: Yes, I live in town, but I don't have any family in these parts. And even if I did, I don't think they would come to church with me. I don't really come from a church-going family, if you know what I mean.

OLDER WOMAN: Well, I guess I do, but I was raised in this church and started coming when I was just in elementary school. I have been here ever since.

YOUNG WOMAN: Wow.

OLDER WOMAN: Perhaps you'd like to join us for our Bible study on Mondays? Some women of the church get together, read scripture and try to find answers through study, prayer and discussion.

YOUNG WOMAN: Well I never thought of that before. I do want to know more about Christ and the Bible. Maybe I'll do that. Thank you for the invitation.

OLDER WOMAN: Yes, yes – do think about it – Monday nights. Goodbye. *Now why did I do that? What was I thinking.....come to our Bible study! I haven't even been going regularly the last couple of months. I do miss it, now that I think about it...it just seemed so much trouble to get out of the house and go. But, she was very nice. So pleasant. And she never got to church as a child. Maybe some of her enthusiasm and wonder will rub off on me. I hope she comes. Maybe I should call her and remind her.*

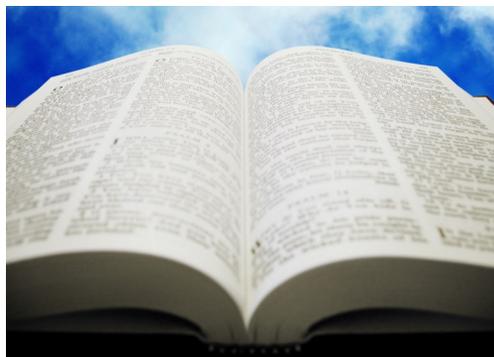
YOUNG WOMAN: *She was very nice. What did she say her name was? Marilyn? Martha? She wasn't stuffy at all. Hmm. Bible study. Maybe that would be good. I'm sure she has the whole Bible memorized, seeing as how she's been studying it all these years....if I go I won't say anything, but maybe I'll learn something from some of the other ladies.*

OLDER WOMAN: *What's the song they're singing now? Open my eyes....Yes, Lord, I think this is a Sunday when you have opened my eyes. Thank you for that!*

Five Steps to Dining on God's Word

You need to hear. This means to put yourself in places where you will be able to listen to others teach about the Bible. Listening to preaching should not be the ONLY thing you do, everyone can benefit from good Bible teaching.

Read the Bible on a regular basis. Beginning in the book of John is one idea. As you may know, the Bible has 66 books (30 Old Testament and 27 New Testament). Try and see what it's like to finish one book before you move on to another.



Study it. You need to do more than hear and read God's Word. You need to "mine the treasure" through studying the Bible. Have you ever seen someone wolf down a steak so fast you wondered if they had even tasted it? That's what life would be like if you never studied God's Word. You would get nourished but would miss out on the pleasure of truly knowing God by studying His love-letter to people.

Memorize it. When you memorize portions of the Bible, it's like making it part of yourself. A good way to memorize scripture is to pick verses, write them on a 3 x 5 card and review them often. A good verse to start with is Jeremiah 15:16: After all it does talk about eating God's Word!

The dessert of this meal is meditation. To meditate means to sit back and enjoy what God is teaching you in His book. It's like taking a big bite of chocolate cake and taking your sweet time eating it. Meditating on God's Word means reflecting on it, thinking about it and turning it over in your mind. Often, it is only when you meditate that you realize the full meaning of a passage.

A great way to picture these five steps or courses of a spiritual meal is to look at your hand. Each finger could represent a different course. As you look at your hand, imagine the names of each course written on one of your fingers. Start with your pinkie for 'hear' and finish with your thumb for "meditation". Taking all five steps for dining on God's Word will help you get a *grip* on living the Christ life.



Lectio Divina

Prayer of the Listening Heart

Romans 8:26-28

Likewise the spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God who searches the heart, knows what's in the heart of the spirit, because the spirit intercedes for the people according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good, for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

Instructions

Please only speak when it is your turn and do not comment on your own choices or anyone else's. It is important to listen and hear what each person shares.

1. One person begin by reading the scripture above out loud. Then everyone in turn, beginning with the person to the right of the reader, choose one word or phrase that pops out at you from the passage and share that word or phrase orally with the group. (Remember ONLY the word or phrase – no more and no discussion – no whys). Each share in turn, the original reader going last.
2. NEXT, person to right of original reader reads the passage out loud again. This time, listen for the word or passage that speaks to a place in your life. Again, the person to the right of the reader shares orally the word or phrase that speaks to a place in her life. (Again no discussion – no whys.)
3. NEXT, person to the right of 2nd reader reads the passage out loud a third time. Listen and identify what this passage is calling you to do. Share, one at a time once again,

beginning with the person to the right of the 3rd reader, what the passage is calling you to do. (Again no discussion).

4. FINALLY, person to the right of the 3rd reader reads the passage out loud one last time. Beginning with the person to the right of the final reader, pray out loud for the person on *your* right. (They already shared what to pray for in their declaration of what the passage was calling them to do).
5. When you have all prayed, wait in silence until the leader calls you together again.

How to Memorize Scripture

- Develop and follow a plan
- Start small
- Find someone to whom you can be accountable
- Write the verse on a small card you can carry with you
- Read and review the verse and reference over and over
- Consider setting the scripture to music or finding a hymn that uses the scripture
- Use the verse whenever you can
- Write out the verse once a day for a week
- Memorize verses especially meaningful to you
- Pray. Ask God to help you memorize His Word.

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