Journey into Compassion
A Study Series
Session II

Theme: Wait with Me

Introduction and Chapter 1

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<tr>
<th>Assemble</th>
<th>Participants handouts placed on seats</th>
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<td>Flip chart and markers</td>
<td>Worship page</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name tags</td>
<td>Lyrics of <em>On the Streets of Philadelphia</em></td>
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<td>Bowl of stones</td>
<td>Homework for Session III</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candle, placed on center table</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bible, placed on center table (readings marked)</td>
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<td>Cross, placed on center table</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chime (Singing Bowl or Bell)</td>
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<td>Computer for playing music</td>
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<th>Agenda Item</th>
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<td>Opening Sharing and follow-up discussion</td>
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<td>Soul Work: Sit with Job</td>
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<td>Conclusion</td>
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Gathering Time

Before beginning session make reading assignments.

Suggestion for gathering music: “Stay With Me,” found on the album Laudate: The Music of Taize. This can be found in the Session II resources or you can use this link to a recording on Youtube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmAOcHqvS0Q

Light the candle, take your seat and ring the chime, after a moment turn down the music.

Opening Worship

Facilitator: Let us say together.......  

All: We are gathered “in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”

One facilitator reads the following as the other brings in a bowl of stones, one for each member of the group including facilitators. Place the bowl on the worship table.

Facilitator: In the presence of overwhelming sorrow our hearts are often like stone, fearful and protected. Even Jesus asked that the cup of sorrow be removed. We from time and time again refuse the cup all together. We turn away and harden our hearts.

Facilitator: Oh God, When we are blind to the cup of sorrow.

All: Give us sight to see.

Facilitator: When we are asleep to sorrow.

All: Awaken us.

Facilitator: When our hearts are like stone.

All: Soften us.

All: Lord, open our eyes that we may see you in our brothers and sisters.  
     Lord, open our ears that we may hear the cries of the hungry, the cold, the frightened, the oppressed.  
     Lord, open our hearts that we may love each other as you love us.  
     Renew in us your spirit.  
     Lord, free us and make us one. Amen  
     (Mother Teresa)

Reader 1: Matthew 26:36-46
Reader 2: Read one of the following:
Psalm 22: 1-2 and Psalm 23:4, or
Psalm 27: 13-14 or
Psalm 28: 6-7

Facilitator: And now let us offer our petitions to God for this ongoing journey:
Particularly during the earlier sessions when petitions are offered, it may be helpful for the facilitators to start with their own petitions.

Opening Sharing

Welcome group and invite participants to respond to the incomplete sentences regarding their reading for the week. Reminder: It is important to remind the group that their responses need to be short. One or two sentences only. This sharing time is only to name the issues not a time for discussion or explanation.

Activity:

Lead a discussion on the tension between our competitive selves and our compassionate selves discussed in Chapter 1. Use the issues raised in the Open Sharing time to facilitate the discussion or if necessary choose from the following questions.

• What do the authors mean by “When we take a critical look at ourselves, we have to recognize that competition, not compassion, is our main motivation in life.....”?  

• Do you agree with the authors when they tell us that, “Being compassionate would require giving up dividing lines and relinquishing differences and distinctions.”?

• Do you agree that “To be compassionate then means to be kind and gentle to those who get hurt by competition.”?(Introduction).

• What does Emmanuel, “God with Us,” mean to you? As soon as we call God, “God-with-us,” we enter into a new relationship with intimacy.” (Chapter 1)

• What is your personal experience of this word: the Greek verb splangchnizomai, (splangkh-nid'-zom-ahee) the entrails of the body, our guts which means to ‘to be moved with compassion’

• Did the readings and discussion change understanding of compassion?

Play Bruce Springsteen’s “Streets of Philadelphia” as transition into activities. This can be found in Session II resources or you can use this link http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYlr9FtYtME
**Soul Work:**  Sit with Job -- “Don’t just do something sit there.”

**Facilitator:** We are practicing simple presence. Remember Job’s friends. They came to “fix” the situation for Job by giving him suggestions and advice. Many times we don’t need “fixes,” advice or suggestions, we simply need someone to listen. One of the hardest things for us to do is to be simply present. Nothing more.

This exercise is not about story telling, it is about being present with and listening to another.

Ask everyone to stand behind their chairs with their backs to the circle. One of the facilitators will move a chair to the center of the circle and sit in it. S/he will begin talking about a hardship in her/his life. Instruct the group to listen and as each feels moved to “join” the speaker, quietly return to the circle and take their seat. When everyone has taken their seat the facilitator can finish the story. Maintain silence for a minute longer.

Facilitators lead discussion of this experience by asking the participants how it felt to listen and say nothing. At what point did each one feel drawn to move into the presence of the speaker. Ask the facilitator how it felt to have everyone’s back to her/him and then how it felt to be listened to.

**Conclusion**

- Questions and answers
- Distribute handout *Homework for Session III* and discuss

**Sending Prayer**

**Facilitator:** Let us offer our concerns and encouragements to each other, as we leave this space to continue our journey… it may be helpful for the facilitators to start

**Facilitator:** In silence I invite you, one at a time, to move a stone from the bowl and place it close to the cross, saying, “I will wait with you.”

Keep the stones on the worship table around the cross for the remaining four sessions.

**All:**

*Lord, make us instruments of your peace.*  
*Where there is hatred, let us sow love;*
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is discord, union;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
it is pardonning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

**Facilitator:** Go in peace to love and serve the Lord with compassion. Let us share the peace as we prepare to continue our journey.

*Everyone shares God’s Peace*