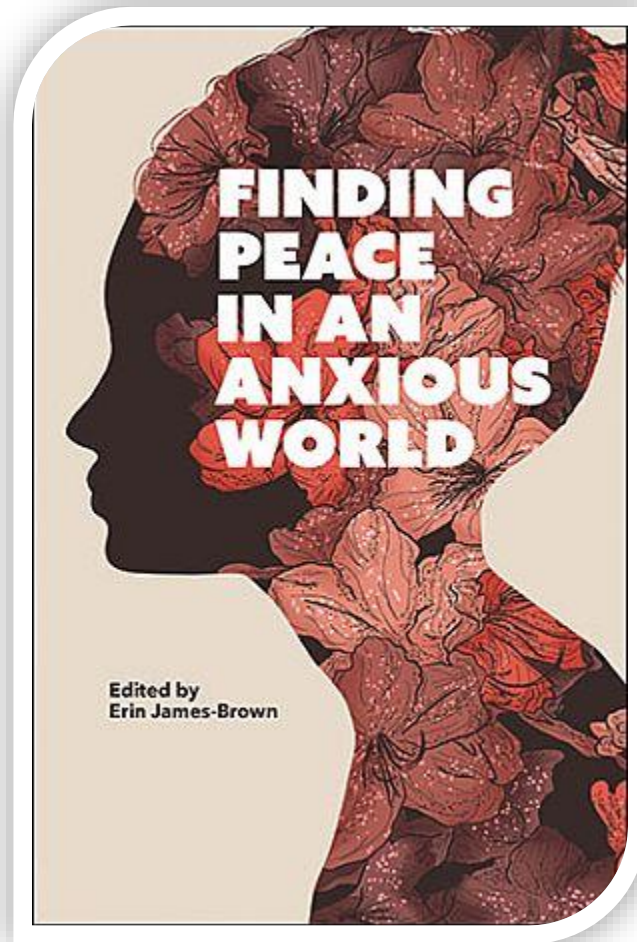


A VIRTUAL four-hour Mission Study plan for



“Finding Peace in an Anxious World”

edited by Erin James-Brown

Florida Conference Virtual Finding Peace Mission Study Team: Linda Cook, Linda Parrish, Kim Wendt and Anne Winn, along with the core team and facilitators of the 2020 Florida Virtual Finding Peace Mission u Study.

Acknowledgments:

Thanks to the Mission u Committee and Leaders of the FL Conference United Methodist Women. Their vision and desire to communicate during the COVID-19 pandemic made this effort possible.

Thanks also to the leaders and participants of the very first virtual Mission u Study prototype in June 2020. It was an amazing course, with amazing people. Kudos to the team as it was an enormous undertaking to craft, experiment and hone a LIVE, full, 8 hour Mission u Study, from which this 4 hour Mission Study was crafted. The combined efforts of eleven current and former Mission u educators, 12 Core team, 6 additional small group facilitators, plus conference and district UMW leaders made it possible.

June 2020 Virtual Mission u Core Team: Lorraine Mayfield Brown, Linda Cook, Jane Darling, Tori Edwards, Shelley Davidson, Danny & Pam Davis, Shari Gillis, Julie Hamilton, Sharyn Ladner, Kenya Monroe, Amy Mormino, Cathy Mospens, Linda Parrish, Shelley Samec, Pamela Toy, Kim Wendt, Anne Winn, Kim Youngblood.

A Flexible Modular Format for Virtual

For Mission Study credit in Florida, a Mission Study should be a total of 4 hours long. The four hours can be done all at one time as in 4 consecutive hours, or it can be done in various smaller segments that total 4 hours.

For this Virtual study, it is **highly recommended that the study be broken into several online meetings**, not done in one long online meeting. Virtual meetings over 1.5 hour are incredibly fatiguing to most people.

This is a *Spiritual Growth* study, so we recommend you intentionally schedule your virtual study meetings at least four days to a week apart, allowing participants to practice the Spiritual Exercises found in the book.

Possible options: four 1-hour Virtual meetings held at the same time on four consecutive days or nights (for example: the four Wednesday nights of a month); or two 2-hour Virtual meetings a week apart (example: 10 am to noon for two consecutive Saturdays). It is up to you.

The following are ideas, best practices and tips for a Virtual, modular-based four hour “*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*” Mission Study.

Overall Considerations for Virtual – Do a “Session 0” *(doesn't 'count' in the 4 hours)*

We used and highly recommend Zoom Video Conferencing™ for this study. Zoom seems to be the easiest and most widely known video conference App. However, it is highly likely that many participants may not yet know how to interact in this environment. We recommend doing a fun, interactive ‘Session 0’ to teach basic Zoom meeting skills and virtual meeting etiquette, and let participants know what they can expect during the course.

Some participants will not have steady wifi or internet connections. Coach them to turn off all other wifi devices (no gaming, Facebook, Netflix, fire sticks), and even turn off phones or other devices not needed for the class. Power down completely or turn off wifi. Close out all other background Apps or Programs running.

Teachers! A GREAT Resource! Most public school teachers have now learned to teach in a Virtual format. The teachers in your group could be great resources.

Handout Ideas: Give participants a handout for each Session to help focus their attention and so that they do not feel they have to take notes. The participants will need to concentrate on the Virtual environment, so try to design your Study accordingly. For example: include the Examen handout and request/encourage that it be done outside of Virtual Session time.

Note: *When providing handouts with links, be sure that the links are LIVE, clickable links so participants can easily watch the videos, worship songs, etc. that you recommend.*

National UMW Materials: These are great for gleaning ideas to develop your study. **Remember, for a Virtual Study to work well... it must be interactive, engaging, use a variety of teaching styles, be very visual, and even entertaining at times. Online studies do not work well if they are boring! Who would come?**

Best Zoom Practices for Virtual Studies and Meetings:

- Have participants arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of virtual study times.
- Ask participants and leaders, who are not speaking, to mute at all times.
- Use Nametags for all participants and rename to actual first and last names.
- Ask callers to self-identify, and rename them immediately.
- If you cannot identify someone, put them in the Waiting Room.
- Be sure to end the meeting FOR ALL when done.
- Be very expressive as you interact in a Virtual environment!
- If recording, be sure to tell participants so.

- USE Spotlight Video when showing drawings, etc., so people can see.
- Turn File Sharing OFF; Screen Sharing to ONLY HOST or COHOSTS.
- If there are Kindle users, be sure to reference book pages AND the location in the book: “The questions are found *at the end of Chapter 1*, on page 31.”

Zoom Roles for a Large Meeting:

- The Zoom Host – The admin of the account who will do Polls, Breakouts.
- Leader of the Call – Co-Host Main Speaker (may or may not be the Host)
- Facilitator(s) – Co-Hosts who are additional presenters of class content
- Chat Box Responders – Co-Hosts who watch/respond to CHATs.
- Tech Support Persons – Co-Hosts help Admit attendees, Rename, Mute, etc.

DO A PLAN – This is a must. Plan out your virtual study, paying attention to timing and who is doing what. Let transitions carry themselves. It is not necessary to introduce speakers, facilitators, etc., and it takes up precious time. Your participants can see the name tags, and presenters can preface their first sentence with, “Hi, I’m Jane Doe...” and go right into their segment.

Once you have the Plan – check the times. Seriously, time out all the sections. If someone is notoriously long winded – do not ask them to present.

Once the Plan is tested... Give that plan (*ahead of time*) to all facilitators, speakers, co-hosts, tech and chat persons etc. Do NOT give it to participants. See example.

Virtual Group Covenant: Do the Point #10 “Add your thoughts” option during your Session 0, to help teach Chat and Chat bombs. At your remaining study sessions, you’ll only need to quickly read the Concise version of points 1-9 (provided).

Virtual Group Covenant (Full Version)

This Covenant is the agreement that will govern our behavior and norms during our Virtual Study together.

1. **Every class member is valued.** Listen and focus on truly hearing what your neighbor is saying, rather than immediately thinking about your own response.
2. **Everyone has a right to speak.** If you find yourself speaking several times in a session, consider letting others speak next.
3. **Participate.** You get ‘out’ of the class, what you put ‘in’ to the class.

4. **Be Prepared.** Help your group, do 'home-work' at home.
5. **Keep your sharing focused** on your own thoughts, feelings and actions.
6. Anxiety is a hard thing. **Respect other's feelings.** Treat everyone with empathy and care.
7. **Confidentiality:** What's shared in the class or group stays in the class or group. No one's story shall be shared without that person's permission.
8. **The main class recording will be done by the Host – no one else.** Break out groups WILL NOT be recorded. Class recordings will only be used if a participant needs to miss a class. See #7 above.
9. Offensive language has no place in a Christian small group.
10. (Session 0 only) Add your thoughts: _____

Brevity and Meaningfulness: As you design your particular 4 hour study, consider these three points.

1. It is VIRTUAL. How you teach, how you interact is different. Plan for VIRTUAL, do not simply 'do what you've always done'. Do what is best.

2. Cut out everything that does not add meaning to the study. In condensing any Mission u study down to 4 hours, for time's sake: keep your focus on the study... not your unit, your church or anything else. This is not an appropriate time for announcements, sermons, additions that do not relate directly to the study, long welcomes and 'where the bathrooms are' speeches. *Keep it focused on the study.*

3. In all things... be brief.

What is Most Meaningful? For the course to be most meaningful, it was felt that the following activities, options and material were key:

- The Examen (fill in handout provided) as homework for every night.
- One breakout per session.
- Variety of interactive teaching styles: drama, testimony, chats, small groups.
- Encourage people to get the book. Leaders should have, and read, the book. The UMW National teaching materials are recommended resources.
- Prayers to start/end.
- Virtual Mutual Covenant.
- Musical worship should be done as *homework*.
- Consider asking participants to read part/all of Proverbs during study.
- Consider keeping attendees in the *same* group for the entire study. Creating group time *outside* of class with the Mission Convo increases group depth.

Zoom Meeting Security

We've all heard about 'Zoom Bombers' or 'Crashers'. Secure your Zoom meetings against such interruptions – follow best practices.

1. Encourage participants to download the FREE Zoom Client for Meetings APP for their devices (iOS, Android, PC, Mac), and any specialty add-ons needed. Computers: go to: https://zoom.us/download#client_4meeting. Phones and Tablets: download from your device's APP Store. ***The Zoom Client keeps your participants more secure.***
2. Remind everyone to keep your Zoom Clients APPs on your devices/computers UPDATED. "Check for Updates" often.
3. Hosts: Set up ALL Zoom meetings with both PASSCODES AND the WAITING ROOM enabled.
4. Hosts: learn how to use your controls, watch Zoom tutorials.
5. Ask unknown phone callers and unfamiliar people to immediately self-identify. RENAME them. If they do not self-identify, either put them back in the WAITING ROOM or REMOVE them from the meeting.

Special Note to Hosts: Check your Zoom settings. "REMOVE" can be set to 'Remove from Meeting *Permanently*'.

6. In the unlikely event a hacker gets into your Zoom meeting, the Host should immediately END THE MEETING FOR ALL. The Host can then quickly set up a brand new meeting, and email participants the new invitation link. Continue your meeting.

Zoom Registrations!

Zoom Hosts can configure their meetings to include Registrations. Once this feature is enabled, the Host can then create custom Registration Questions and semi-custom Confirmation emails. They can also **brand** the look of the Confirmation emails with a banner and a logo, and manage registrations (approve, deny, auto).

If using Zoom Registrations: Remind everyone that the Sign-In Link is assigned to them alone. For security reasons, only THAT Registration Confirmation link will work.

Be sure to resend EACH PERSON their personal **Registration Link Email on the day of class**. This is done via the Zoom Registration area.

If you have participants who forward their emails, sign in from non-registered devices, etc., then the tight security of the Registration system may be frustrating. It can be challenging to 'onboard' persons on the day of your Study... as each and every link is keyed to them so that the system can automatically put them into their pre-assigned break out groups during a Zoom meeting.

If you're ONLY doing random breakout sessions, then an option is to DELETE Registration in your Zoom meeting right before class. Then you can send a group email to your attendees with one link that works for all. The downside is that ANYONE who registers after that is automatically approved by the system and gets a live link. The other downside is that pre-assigned breakout groups will NOT automatically work because everyone joins the meeting via the SAME link, and the system cannot distinguish them. Random breakouts will work, but assigned breakouts will not.

The Rest of this Guide is broken into Sections...

Participant Handouts: Generally email handouts prior to the session, so participants can thoughtfully prepare ahead of time. During the session, the handouts also provide a place for participants to write additional notes.

Study Session Plans: Have actual Teacher/Facilitator Session Plans for each modular session. Refine and adapt for your particular setting, time, participants and style. Be sure to check timing to stay within your determined time frame and give to all Facilitators, Small Group Leaders, Tech and Co-hosts. Everyone works better behind the scenes when they know what the 'Plan' is. Your Study will be smoother.

Additional Handout Pages and Session Share Screen Pages: Additional pages for Participant Handouts and items to show on Share Screen during your Zoom Study Sessions.

Participant Handouts

Usually email handouts prior to the session, so participants can thoughtfully prepare ahead of time. During the session, the handouts also provide a place for participants to write additional notes.

Finding Peace in an Anxious World: An Online Virtual Mission Study

Participant Handout – Session 0: Introduction

[This is not a true handout. Instead, it is part of the 'reminder' email a few days before the Introduction Session.]

Are you getting excited? I am! Our Study, Finding Peace in an Anxious World, starts soon!

Below is your Zoom Link to access the Course. Each link is specific to you and will only work for you.

[Insert Zoom Link]

Session Times: **[List times, including Pre-Class Chat]**

- 6:15 pm pre-class chat, Q & A time.
- 6:30 pm the class begins and ends about 8:00 pm.

Session Dates: **[List dates]**

Virtual Group Covenant (Concise)

This Covenant is the agreement that will govern our behavior and norms during our Virtual Study together.

1. Every class member is valued. Listen and focus on truly hearing what your neighbor is saying.
2. Everyone has a right to speak. If you find yourself speaking several times in a session, consider letting others speak next.
3. Participate. You get 'out' of the class, what you put 'in' to the class.
4. Be prepared. Help your group by doing 'home-work' at home.
5. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts, feelings and actions.
6. Respect other's feelings. Treat everyone with empathy and care.
7. Confidentiality: What's shared in class stays in class.
8. The main class recording will be done by the Host – no one else. Break out groups WILL NOT be recorded. See #7.
9. Offensive language has no place in a Christian small group.

It will be so great to 'see' everyone tonight!

Finding Peace in an Anxious World: An Online Virtual Mission Study

Participant Handout – Chapter 1: Serenity

Reminder: Pre-Course Chat and Group Check In: 6:15 pm pre-class chat, Q & A time. Please plan to arrive at 6:15 pm if you can.

If reading the text: Please Read Chapter 1 of "Finding Peace in an Anxious World" edited by Erin James-Brown. We will discuss that chapter and share how the corresponding Spiritual Exercises have impacted our week.

Our Class Sabbath: The day after our session is our class Sabbath... to rest, reflect and process what we've learned, heard and experienced. We all need a little 'down time' ... and practicing a Sabbath is a great spiritual discipline to use.

What to Bring: Besides your computer, bring your text, a Bible with the Book of Proverbs, your completed Examen Journal pages, this handout – *and* – crayons or colored pens/pencils and a few sheets of blank paper.

Your Mission CONVO Assignment

Small Group Rosters will arrive tomorrow. These are the people in YOUR Group. During the week, try to contact at least two people on your small group roster (Email, Phone, Text, etc.). **You MUST get an actual response**, that is, you must have an *actual* conversation (a CONVO). If someone doesn't return the contact – move on! Reach out to someone else.

A Convo (conversation) can happen differently for different people. A Convo is a dialog, that is, an exchange or interaction between people using a mutually agreeable method: Messenger, email, phone, texting, Skype, Zoom, etc.

So, BEFORE the Class – Here is your Mission...

1. **Connect with two people from your small group. Have a Convo by whatever means is appropriate and mutually agreeable.**
2. During your CONVOS:
 - Introduce yourself.
 - Discuss **your choice of two of the Small Group Questions** found in your Journal and Small Group Questions (in this handout). Limit your discussions to 15 minutes each.
3. If someone from the group contacts YOU; be sure to return the contact.

Chapter 1: Examen Journal and Small Group Questions

Our main spiritual practice is called, The Examen. If you have the text, see pages 29-30 for further explanation (for Kindle users, it's at the end of Chapter 1).

Do this every night, starting now and continuing through *to next session*. Included here are simple Examen Journal pages. Print as many as needed.

How to do an Examen Journal:

1. Sit down at the end of the day.
2. Have your Examen Journal pages ready, as well as a pencil/pen.
3. Do the Examen EACH NIGHT. Using an Examen Journal page, think, pray and write down your thoughts. Describe what you feel and see. Notice patterns in what you write. Your Examen Journal is for you. No one will see your Examen Journal unless you choose to share it.

THEN THE DAY OF, but prior to, the NEXT session, answer the following questions:

1. What were you thankful for upon remembering God's work in your life?
2. Upon reflection, where did you find God? Where did you feel God's absence?

3. When were times you knew peace? When were times you were out of peace?
4. Thinking about your next week, where do you hope to experience God's peace?
5. How are you being lead to share God's peace with others? The world?

[Include the Examen Journal page in the Handout, found in the last section of this guide.]

Finding Peace in an Anxious World: An Online Virtual Mission Study

Participant Handout – Chapter 2: Acceptance

Reminder: 6:15 pm Pre-Class Chat and Group Check In

If reading the text: Please read Chapter 2: Acceptance of our text: "Finding Peace in an Anxious World" edited by Erin James-Brown.

Our Class Sabbath: The day after our session is our class Sabbath... to rest, reflect and process what we've learned, heard and experienced. We all need a little 'down time'... and practicing a Sabbath is a great spiritual discipline.

<p>What to Bring: Besides your computer, bring your text, a Bible with the Book of Proverbs, your completed Examen Journal pages, and this handout.</p>
--

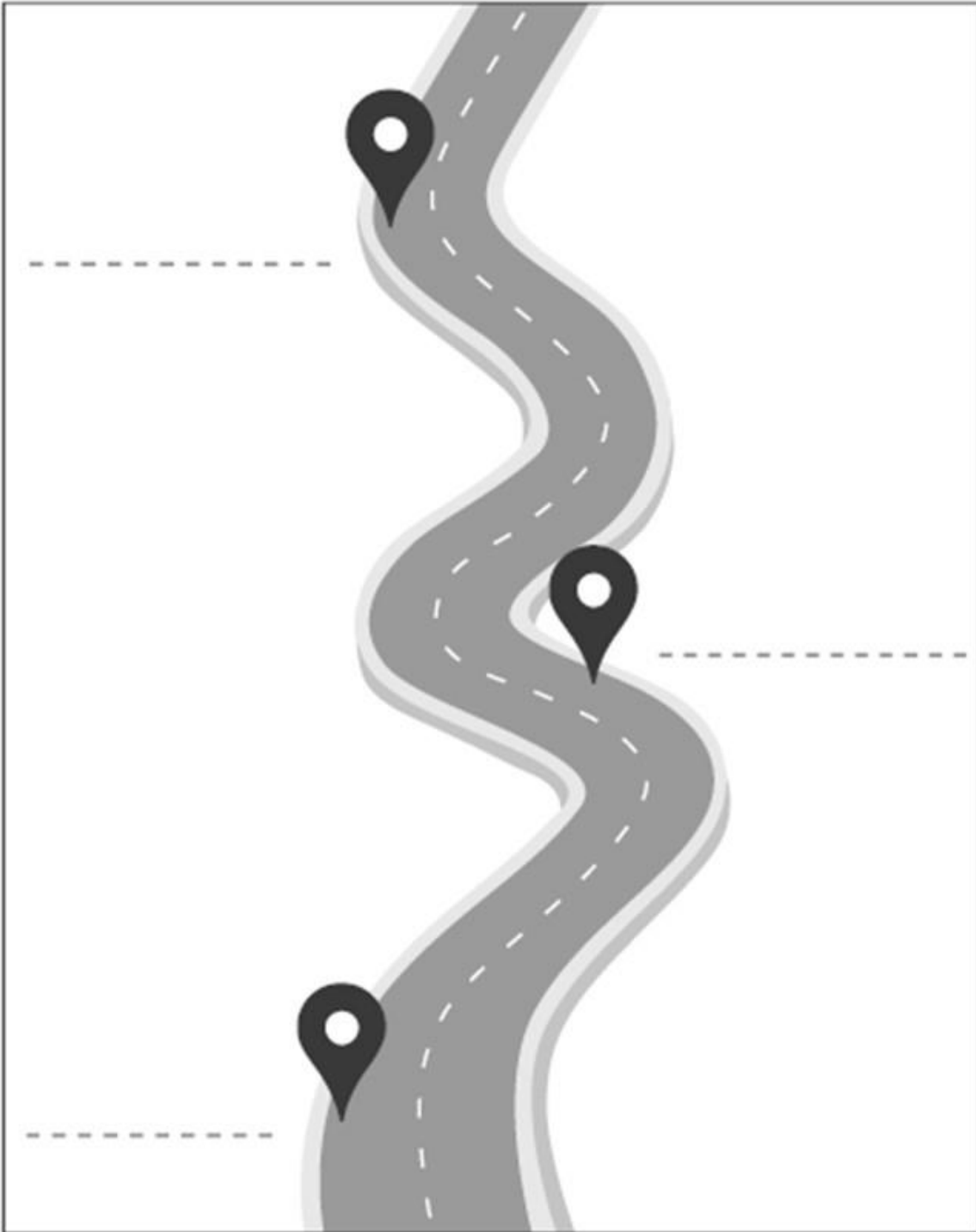
Daily Journal/Examen Continues: A blank Daily Examen Journal page is provided. Feel free to print copies as needed to continue on in your Examen.

QUOTES for your Breakout Session: Below are 4 different quotes to consider for your Breakout Session. Your group leader will pick one of them to discuss, but you may find all of them thought provoking as you prepare for your session.

- “Many people think that acceptance is a passive, doormat stance. . . . But, acceptance is much deeper and more spiritually active than a stance of resignation. Acceptance allows us to see the world, ourselves, and our loved ones as they really are” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 36).

- “The prayer cannot begin with ourselves and our ability to control things. That is a self-centered prayer. The first step has to be about serenity and acceptance. These two actions ground us in the idea that something bigger—God, God’s creation, and God’s sovereignty—is at play” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 35).
- “There are reasons why many people have rejected the practice of this kind of acceptance in their spiritual lives. For one, it can be very hard to give up control of a situation that we desperately want to turn out differently. Another significant reason is that this line of reasoning has been used to excuse harm after harm in the name of God” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 37).
- “Acceptance can be an extraordinary gift for several reasons. First, it is actually quite impossible to change everything that we cannot accept. Accepting the things we cannot change releases us from the anxiety of living in a false reality” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 38).

Session 2: Visual Representation of God's Path



Chapter 2 Mission CONVO Assignment

Remember: a Convo (conversation) can happen differently for different people. A Convo is a dialog, that is: an exchange or interaction between people using a mutually agreeable method: Messenger, email, WhatsApp, phone, texting, Skype, Zoom, etc.

BEFORE the next session – Here is your Mission...

1. **Connect with two people from your small group prior to class. Have a Convo by whatever means is appropriate and mutually agreeable.** If you want to Zoom with each other outside of class time, let your Group Leader know. It can be arranged!
2. This week's conversation will be deeper. During this Convo:
 - a. Discuss the things that are happening around you right now. What bothers you? Frightens you? What don't you understand? How are these things effecting us? Your church? Your family? Your soul?
 - b. What do you think the practice of Christian Acceptance is? Is not? (Hint: It's probably not what you think.)
3. If someone from the group contacts YOU; be sure to return the contact.

Please note that there are no 'wrong or right' answers. We don't actually have answers for many of these things – they are a reality in our culture and world right now.

Some things we cannot change, others we can, others we should.

[Include the Examen Journal page in the Handout, found in the last section of this guide.]

Finding Peace in an Anxious World: An Online Virtual Mission Study

Participant Handout – Chapter 3: Courage

Reminder: 6:15 pm Pre-Class Chat and Group Check In

If reading the text: Please read Chapter 3: Courage of our text: "Finding Peace in an Anxious World" edited by Erin James-Brown.

Our Class Sabbath: The day after our session is our class Sabbath... to rest, reflect and process what we've learned, heard and experienced. We all need a little 'down time'... and practicing a Sabbath is a great spiritual discipline to use.

Daily Journal/Examen Continues: A blank Daily Examen Journal page is provided. Feel free to print copies as needed to continue on in your Examen.

What to Bring: Besides your computer, bring your text, a Bible, your completed Examen Journal pages and this handout.

This week's Serenity Prayer focus phrase is "Courage to change the things I can". Take a moment, and re read the full Serenity Prayer.

Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.

- Reinhold Niebuhr

Insight: People tend to deal with anxiety in one of two ways: either becoming an 'overfunctioner' or an 'underfunctioner'. Which do you think you are? Share with your small group.

Participant Handout – Chapter 3: Courage

Our text quotes from a book by sociologist, Brené Brown:

“Heroics is important and we certainly need heroes, but I think we’ve lost touch with the idea that speaking honestly and openly about who we are, about what we’re feeling, and about our experiences (good and bad) is the definition of courage. Heroics is often about putting our life on the line. Ordinary courage is about putting our vulnerability on the line. In today’s world, that’s pretty extraordinary.” (Finding Peace in an Anxious World, 52)

Have you ever thought of ‘ordinary’ courage? What does ‘courageous vulnerability’ mean to you?

Read Proverbs 4: 20-27.

What does this scripture say about ordinary courage?

Spiritual Practice: Praising in Song: Singing can also be an important spiritual practice. Singing Praise involves the body, mind and soul – and interrupts our anxious thoughts. Let’s sing a song of praise and reflect on the meaning of the words. Notice how you feel after a time of Praising in Song.

Below are two song choices: One Traditional and one Modern. Choose which style you prefer. Before listening and singing – answer this question:

Before listening/singing, reflect: What am I anxious or worried about in this moment? What cares or concerns are on my heart? *(Write them down here. Prepare to give them to God during your time of Praising.)*

CLICK BLUE LINK TO WATCH (Traditional): [It Is Well With My Soul - Audrey Assad](#)

CLICK BLUE LINK TO WATCH (Modern): [Kristene DiMarco - It Is Well \(Live\)](#)

It Is Well With My Soul: CCLI Song # 25376. Horatio Gates Spafford | Philip Paul Bliss © Words: Public Domain. Music: Public Domain. It Is Well: CCLI Song # 7021972. Horatio Gates Spafford | Kristene DiMarco | Philip Paul Bliss. © 2013 Bethel Music Publishing. For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms of Use. All rights reserved. CCLI License # 625707.

After spending time Praising in Song, answer these 2 questions:

1. How do you feel now?
2. What does/did it mean to sing: "It Is Well With My Soul" in your situation or circumstances? *If you have courage, feel free to share with your group.*

Chapter 3 Mission CONVO Assignment

Remember: a Convo (conversation) is an exchange or interaction between people using a mutually agreeable method: Messenger, email, WhatsApp, phone, texting, Skype, Zoom, etc.

BEFORE the Class – Here is your Mission...

Connect with two people from your small group prior to class. Have a Convo by whatever means is appropriate and mutually agreeable. If you want to Zoom with each other outside of class time, let your Group Leader know.

- a. This week's Convo: Share your impressions and things you've learned from the study, the book so far.
- b. Are you an 'overfunctioner' or an 'underfunctioner'?
- c. When in your life have you had 'Christian courage'?

[Include the Examen Journal page in the Handout, found in the last section of this guide.]

Participant Handout – Chapter 4: Wisdom

Reminder: 6:15 pm Pre-Class Chat and Group Check In

If reading the text: Please read Chapter 4: Wisdom of our text: "Finding Peace in an Anxious World" edited by Erin James-Brown.

Our Class Sabbath: The day after our session is our class Sabbath... to rest, reflect and process what we've learned, heard and experienced. We all need a little 'down time'... and practicing a Sabbath is a great spiritual discipline to use.

Daily Journal/Examen Continues: A blank Daily Examen Journal page is provided. Feel free to print copies as needed to continue on in your Examen.

<p>What to Bring: Besides your computer, bring your text, a Bible with the Book of Proverbs, your completed Examen Journal pages and this handout.</p>

Read: Proverbs 2: 1-11.

In this session we explore what it means to seek after the wisdom of God and examine what elements go into wise living. We will also experience the spiritual practice of trustful wayfinding through a labyrinth walk and review the various practices for alleviating anxiety that we have discussed throughout the study.

Chapter 4 Mission CONVO Assignment

Remember: a Convo (conversation) is an exchange or interaction between people using a mutually agreeable method: Messenger, email, WhatsApp, phone, texting, Skype, Zoom, etc.

BEFORE the Class – Here is your Mission...

1. **Connect with two people from your small group prior to class. Have a Convo by whatever means is appropriate and mutually agreeable.** If you want to Zoom with each other outside of class time, let your Group Leader know.
 - a. This week's Convo: **What is Wisdom?** Knowledge, intelligence, and logic are all part of wisdom, but wisdom is more than any of these things. "We are limited in our understanding and knowledge and experience," the author writes. "Knowledge, intelligence, and logic are important. But there is still something missing that keeps it from passing into the realm of wisdom: morals and compassion. As followers of Jesus, we call this Christian wisdom" (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 73).
 - b. **Group Mission Question:** Think about a time you have sought, or helped someone seek, Christian wisdom. What was that process like?

Participant Handout – Chapter 4: Wisdom

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE: THE LABYRINTH

A labyrinth is a sacred place set aside for you to reflect, look within, pray and negotiate new behavior. Move or walk through the labyrinth at your own pace. This is not a race, nor is it a maze. Let the path guide you to the center *and* back out again. A Labyrinth page is included with this handout. As you 'walk' the labyrinth, trace your fingertip over the 'path' on the page. Take it slowly. Savor the experience.

Labyrinth Steps:

1. Prepare your mind by spending a few moments in calm reflection.
2. At the beginning of your journey, state your purpose for walking in the labyrinth: i.e....a solution to a problem; perhaps it is to find healing; ...talking to God; ...to be grateful for the beauty of the Earth.
3. Center yourself; contemplate your purpose.
4. Begin by using your finger to trace the path way 'into' the labyrinth. Remember "Live (Walk) in Love." Eph.5:2
5. Quiet any pestering thoughts; let it all go; Surrender to the experience and let the spirit work. Slowly continue tracing your path inwards.
6. When you arrive at the center: "Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10. Let God take over now. Stay as long as you wish.
7. When you are ready, using your finger to trace your path 'walk' back in gratitude: "Go in Peace." Judges 18:6.

The Serenity Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.

- Reinhold Niebuhr

[Include the Examen Journal page in the Handout, found in the last section of this guide.]

Participant Handout – Chapter 4: Wisdom

Session 4: Finger Labyrinth



Study Session Plans

Example Teacher/Facilitator Session Plans for each modular session. Refine and adapt for your particular setting, time, participants and style. Be sure to check timing, to stay within your determined time frame and give to all Facilitators, Small Group Leaders, Tech and Co-hosts. Everyone works better behind the scenes when they know what the 'Plan' is. Your Study will be smoother.

SESSION PLAN 0: Zoom 101 and Introduction - Example

Finding Peace in an Anxious World: A Virtual Mission Study

ALL LEADERS ARE CO HOSTS

HOSTS Cell/Text No.: _____

Presenters: (List who is doing what, so there is no confusion)

- Name and Section
- Name and Section
- Name and Section

Tech Support: Name(s) to help people with audio/video, "Ask to Start..."

Chat Box Responder: Names (2 recommended)

Meeting Admins: Names (admit attendees, re-name and watch for raised hands, etc.)

(Facilitators NEED to be cohosts to mute/unmute in Breakouts)

When there are participants who do not have video: You'll need to 'say' what we are seeing to include them in the conversation.

SESSION 0 TAKES LONGER, AS IT INCLUDES TRAINING ON ZOOM.

6:00 pm Team Meets: Breakout Assignments, Co Host Assignments, Prayer

6:15 pm Chat/Q & A Time – Team and all participants. Have fun.

- Let participants greet each other, help with audio/video.
 - Remind to connect to power supply – batteries will drain.
 - Remind to close out of all other programs on your device, open your email, click the link. Same link for all sessions.
 - Remind if connection is unstable, 'stop video' for a minute, restart.
-

6:30 pm Welcome and **Confidentiality**. Announce recording. **[NAME TBD]**

TEACH ZOOM MUTING Etiquette, and mute all. (Will teach them how to unmute shortly.)

You will get 'out' of the study, what you put 'in' to the study. Your participation encourages and helps all your classmates, as well as your small group members.

This is a study... there is 'homework'! We will be working in small groups, the larger group and on our own.

Reminder that devices should be plugged in, Zoom will drain batteries.

- 6:33 pm **Brief Prayer Calendar** (Do NOT read everything) and brief **Opening Prayer**. **[NAME TBD]**
- 6:35 pm **Zooming 101 & Practice** **[NAME TBD]**
- Name Tags! Virtual – ‘How to Rename’ Game.
 - Mute and Unmute – Test/Fun – Space Bar Mute
 - Speaker View. Gallery View.
 - Chat, Chat Boxes and Chat Bombs! Very important later...
- 6:45 pm **Class Expectations: The Virtual Group Covenant** [Screen Share a SLIDE] **[NAME TBD]**
- Call on a random person (a team member) to UNMUTE and read each point. *(Final is a ‘fill-in’ for use in Chat Bomb next.)*
- 6:47 pm **CHAT Bomb! Any other Covenant ideas, additions, comments?** Take a moment, and type your ideas into the CHAT: Let’s watch and see everyone’s ideas. *(Remember to repeat out loud some of what you see for non-video people)*
- 6:50 pm **Zooming 102 – Things to do.... And Things NOT to do!** **[NAME TBD]**
- Reactions! Encourage each other! Super Fun.
 - Ceiling Fans, Nostril Shots, Clothing-NOT optional! (oh my!)
 - Break Out Groups and Facilitators – Rules: Be Brief. Let all share. Time Keepers tonight...
- 6:55 pm **This Study - Format:** **[NAME TBD]**
- Sabbath! The day after class – our Sabbath.
 - Small Groups: Rosters (after Sabbath!), emailed to each.
 - Participant Handouts: Sent via email after Sabbath. You will need them to begin your class work.
 - Assignments (outside of class – before session).
 - Spiritual Exercises – each day, as directed.
 - Mission Convo! (see below)
- 7:00 pm **The Mission CONVO (if using):** Between sessions, we have a “Mission Convo” as part of our Small Group work. Here is where you have the time to share with your small group and with each other.
- A Mission Convo (conversation) can happen differently for different people. **DEFINITION!** A Convo is a dialog, that is, an exchange or interaction between people using a mutually agreeable method: Messenger, email, WhatsApp, phone, text, Skype, Zoom, etc.

The Instructions for the Mission Convo will be in your Participant Handout. But here's the basics of what you do:

1. Contact **two** people on your small group roster and
2. Have a CONVO *prior* to the class.

7:05 pm

TONIGHT'S MAIN SESSION – TEXT INTRODUCTION: [NAME TBD]

In our Introduction, the study writers at Urban Village Church describe the events of the summer of 2015. What happened? ***If time: What were some of those events? Raise hand, call on.***

Now, I'd like us to think about where we are right now - Right now in our world/nation/church/life: We have ongoing racial unrest, political upheaval, COVID-19 causing massive world change, masks and financial worry/hardship. Many churches and groups are not meeting in person. Connections are being made via Zoom "calls", Facebook Live, online events. Even our governmental services and grocery buying can be done safely 'online' via curbside delivery, or other means. All this... is encouraging some people to learn new things. Others refuse to learn, or don't have access....

It's been said: We have a new reality, a new 'Normal'. It's also been said that there will be 'no going back' to what we had before...

Get to Practice our Breakouts!!!! Breakout Group set up...

7:10 pm

BREAKOUT (Random Groups Tonight):

In your Breakout groups – Be SURE to keep your remarks brief and to the point. **Select a time keeper to signal when each person's 2 minutes are up so they can quickly end.**

1. What similarities do you see between Urban Village Church's 'reality' and ours today? **Popcorn Share – total 1 minute.**
2. In what city do you reside and what are TWO of the most pressing concerns or issues there? (List 2) **(one minute or less for each)**
3. What two concerns or issues are causing you the most anxiety right now? (List 2) **(one minute or less for each)**

7:25 pm **Main Session:** *Be sure to Welcome people back*

The authors then describe how UVC decided to address the common and persistent feeling of anxiety and God's response to this human condition. They created a sermon series and this course based on the 1st four lines of the Serenity Prayer.

7:27 pm **Optional 30 minute Sharing Time:** *[Time Check and do Sharing – reinforcing the How to Mute and Unmute]*

7:27 pm Let's end our time tonight with our first reading of the whole Serenity Prayer together. **[NAME TBD]**

7:28 pm **Closing Prayer: Group Read (While muted):** The full Serenity Prayer.
Screen Share a Slide/Word Document

*****Last Things/Closing Prayer: Thank you for being here.** Your next Session Handout will arrive _____. You can unmute and say goodbye.

OVERVIEW: Session 1 Serenity (1 hour): Examen in homework

1. Welcome & Confidentiality Statement
2. Peace Greeting, Prayer Calendar and Opening Prayer
3. Virtual Covenant – Full Version
4. Drawing and/or writing around Anxiety – Serenity Page. Use two separate pieces of paper, or a single, 2 column formatted page. Use definitions in text – Fear, Worry and Anxiety. Write or draw on one side: What things cause you Anxiety? On the other side, write or draw: What gives you Serenity?
5. Scripture/Drama
6. Reading Serenity Prayer – all muted except leader
7. Finding Serenity Breakout Session – 1. Identify Fear, Worry, Anxiety in drama. And 2. How does prayer shape your response to anxiety?
8. Sharing from the Breakout
9. Breath Prayer
10. Closing Prayer
11. – *Break – if doing Session 2 immediately following Session 1. Might choose to omit the Closing Prayer as well, if moving into Session 2.*

SESSION PLAN: CHAPTER 1 SERENITY - Example

Finding Peace in an Anxious World: A Virtual Mission Study

ALL FACILITATORS ARE CO HOSTS

HOSTs Cell/Text No.: _____

Presenters: (List who is doing what, so there is no confusion)

- Name and Section
- Name and Section
- Name and Section

Tech Support: Name(s) to help people with audio/video, "Ask to Start..."

Chat Box Responder: Names (2 recommended)

Meeting Admins: Names (admit attendees, re-name and watch for raised hands, etc.)

(Facilitators NEED to be cohosts to mute/unmute in Breakouts)

When there are participants that do not have video: Have to 'say' what we are seeing to include them in the conversation.

6:00 pm Team Meets: Breakout Assignments, Co Host Assignments, Prayer, Coaching how facilitate a breakout group.

6:15 pm Chat/Q & A Time – Team and all participants. Have fun.

- Have attendees RENAME themselves: First **and** Last Names.
 - Remind of Mute and Unmute.
 - Remind to connect to power supply – batteries will drain.
 - Remind if connection is unstable, 'stop video' for a minute, restart.
 - Use Chat: **Team, help attendees remember how to use chat, by asking them in private chats if they did the Mission CONVO.**
-

SESSION 1 PLAN: Serenity (Chapter 1 of text)

6:30 pm **Welcome and Confidentiality.** Announce recording. **[HOST]**

Practicing Peace Greeting/Prayer Calendar/Opening Prayer:

[NAME TBD] "Peace Be With You", then *Brief 1 Minute Prayer Calendar* (Do NOT read everything) and follow with short Opening Prayer.

Announce muting. (Mute) **[HOST or?]**

6:35 pm **Virtual Group Covenant Full Version** [SLIDE] Quickly... **[NAME TBD]**

6:37 pm

MAIN SESSION: [NAME TBD]

Our world/nation/church/life: Racial unrest, COVID-19 fears, massive world change, financial worries. We have a new 'Normal'. Anxiety is a reality of life – even in Jesus' day, as we will see shortly.

Our text, on pages 2-3, says this: "Anxiety, worry, and fear **are real**. Fear is the emotional response to real or perceived impending danger. Worry is repetitive thoughts or emotions as the brain analyzes risks and threats of danger, real or perceived. Excessive fear and worry contribute to anxiety, a physical and emotional response to fear and worry that is *disproportionate* to the threat of danger."

We also learn that "Jesus offers the wisdom of peace as a gift to his followers." (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 5)

6:39 pm

ANXIETY VERSUS SERENITY DRAWING: [NAME TBD] [Blank pages or if used, a 2 column handout page] Using blank paper or a 2 column document, take a minute to write or draw on one side: What things cause you Anxiety? On the other side, write or draw: What gives you Serenity? Example: Anxiety (medical tests) and Serenity (nature walks) Feel free to share your ideas with your small groups during your next Mission Convos.

6:45 pm

Anxiety in Scripture: Luke 2:41-52 [DRAMA] [NAME TBD]
(Scripture in the Chat) How worry/anxiety shows up in Scripture.

6:50 pm

Reading: Full Serenity Prayer **[NAME TBD]** (Everyone muted, except reader). Please stay muted and follow along with me as I read the full Serenity Prayer from your handout.

6:52 pm

Breakout Intro: [NAME TBD]. We are about to go into our breakout session. Here is your task: In thinking about the Luke Scripture Drama: What kinds of fear, worry or anxiety could you identify in the Scripture? Secondly. In thinking back on your reading of Chapter 1 of our text: How does prayer shape your response to anxiety?

6:53 pm

SESSION 1 BREAKOUT: (15 minutes)

- Thinking about the Luke Scripture Drama: What kinds of fear, worry or anxiety could you identify in the Scripture?
- Thinking about Chapter 1 of our text: How does prayer shape your response to anxiety?

- 7:08 pm **Welcome everyone back. [ALL LEADERS]**
- 7:08 pm **Sharing from the Breakout [NAME TBD]** Would a few people care to BRIEFLY share an insight you found on how prayer shapes your response to anxiety? ONE sentence, please. Don't forget to stay Muted and use the Spacebar to unmute... Everyone else, please feel free to respond via CHAT, and use REACTIONS to encourage those who share.
- 7:15 pm **Breath Prayer Exercise** (BK pg. 27) **[NAME TBD]** Serenity through focus. *(Leader leads participants in breath prayer – Co-hosts, check that everyone except the leader is muted.)*
- We will now begin our Spiritual Exercise called Breath Prayer. Get comfortable, relax. You may want to close your eyes and listen to my voice as I guide you through this Breath Prayer. Think of something you wish to share with God that you can say in one breath. Perhaps something like: "Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me." Or a phrase from the Serenity prayer that strikes you like: Lord God, help me to accept the things I cannot change". Remember in this prayer you are focusing on and speaking directly to... God.
- Take a long breath in through your nose, then, as you slowly exhale out... say your phrase. Wait. Be still. Feel yourself getting calmer. *(pause)*
- Take another breath, in deep... then as you let it out... say your phrase again. Let yourself feel more peaceful, each time you do this. *(pause)*
- Breath in.... Breath out your phrase. *(pause)*
- Feeling more relaxed and at peace? Now slowly come back. (Ask participants to wiggle fingers and toes, etc.) You can do Breath Prayer at almost any time, anywhere...
- 7:25 pm **CHAT BOMB:** Everyone type in the CHAT: **one word** that describes how you are feeling *right* now. Watch the CHAT – see how everyone is feeling.
- 7:29 pm **Closing Prayer: [NAME TBD]**

*****Last Things/Closing Prayer: Thank you for being here.** Your next Handout will arrive _____. You can unmute and say goodbye.

OVERVIEW: Session 2 Acceptance (1 hour): Put quotes, God's Path illustration, in homework

1. **Welcome & Confidentiality Statement
2. **Prayer Calendar and Opening Prayer
3. **Virtual Covenant – CONCISE Version
4. Scripture Reading Proverbs 3: 3-8 NRSV
5. Storytime: Ruby's Story
6. Chat Bomb: What is the message about acceptance in Ruby's Story?
7. Acceptance Breakout Session – 4 quotes (Leaders pick 1)
8. Sharing from the Breakout: Meaning of real Acceptance, difference between what I can change and what I cannot change.
9. God's Path Exercise: From Companion Study Guide, top of page 16, questions for reflection and discussion. Use the visual "God's Path" on page 29 in same guide – also in handout/visuals section in this guide.
10. Closing Prayer
11. – Break – *if doing Session 3 immediately following Session 2. If doing all four hours in one day, this would be a good time for lunch.*

** Omit if doing Session 1 and Session 2 together. Only need to do at the beginning of the session. If doing all four hours in one day long session, do 1, 2 and 3 once at the start of the day.

SESSION PLAN: CHAPTER 2 ACCEPTANCE - Example

Finding Peace in an Anxious World: A Virtual Mission Study

ALL LEADERS ARE CO HOSTS

HOSTs Cell/Text No.: _____

Presenters: (List who is doing what, so there is no confusion)

- Name and Section
- Name and Section
- Name and Section

Tech Support: Name(s) to help people with audio/video, "Ask to Start..."

Chat Box Responder: Names (2 recommended)

Meeting Admins: Names (admit attendees, re-name and watch for raised hands, etc.)

(Facilitators NEED to be cohosts to mute/unmute in Breakouts)

When there are participants that do not have video: Have to 'say' what we are seeing to include them in the conversation.

SESSION 2 PLAN: Acceptance (Chapter 2 of text)

6:00 pm Team Meets: Breakout Assignments, Co Host Assignments, Prayer

6:15 pm Chat/Q & A Time – Team and all participants. Have fun.

- Have attendees RENAME themselves: First and Last Names.
 - Remind of Mute and Unmute.
 - Remind to connect to power supply – batteries will drain.
 - Remind if connection is unstable, 'stop video' for a minute, restart.
 - Use Chat: **Team, help attendees remember how to use chat, by asking them in private chats if they did their Mission Convo.**
-

6:30 pm **Welcome – Confidentiality Statement:** Announce muting & recording.
[NAME TBD]

6:33 pm **Prayer Calendar/Opening Prayer:** **[NAME TBD]** Brief 1 Minute Prayer Calendar (Do NOT read everything) and follow with Opening Prayer.

Opening Prayer: (Prayer below or similar).

"Constant God, you who never change, morning through night, season upon season, from time before and forever after, help us who are always being called to be transformed and become more like

you. Help us to be infused with your light so that we can be points of light in and for this world. Amen (*United Methodist Women's Bible*, 18).

6:36 pm **Virtual Group Covenant [SLIDE] (Concise Version) [NAME TBD].**

This Covenant is the agreement that will govern our behavior and norms during our Virtual Study together.

1. Every class member is valued. Listen and focus on truly hearing what your neighbor is saying.
2. Everyone has a right to speak. If you find yourself speaking several times in a session, consider letting others speak next.
3. Participate. You get 'out' of the class, what you put 'in' to the class.
4. Be prepared. Help your group by doing 'home-work' at home.
5. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts, feelings and actions.
6. Respect other's feelings. Treat everyone with empathy and care.
7. Confidentiality: What's shared in class stays in class.
8. The main class recording will be done by the Host – no one else. Break out groups WILL NOT be recorded. See #7.
9. Offensive language has no place in a Christian small group.

6:38 pm **Overview and Where We Are: [NAME TBD]**

In this session we will explore the next line of "The Serenity Prayer" by asking ourselves the following questions: How do we "accept the things we cannot change," particularly as Christians who are called to act for the transformation of the world...

We will also ask: How can we practice acceptance in order to reduce anxiety, and how can we move from acceptance to courage?

6:39 pm **Reading Proverbs 3: 3-8 NRSV: [NAME TBD]**

Follow along in your Bible as I read Proverbs 3: 3-8 out of the New Revised Standard Version.

3 Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and of people. 5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. 8 It will be a healing for your flesh and a refreshment for your body.

6:40 pm

What Is Acceptance? – Story Time: [NAME TBD]

It's Story-Time. This story is from the section of our text titled "Accepting Our Limitations: Trusting God". Listen... and hear... the story about the cicadas.

[in story-teller voice...taking your time – speak slowly]

One night, my five-year-old daughter and I were on an evening walk. We walked in silence but were surrounded by the sights and sounds of nature, lightning bugs beginning to signal one another, cicadas rhythmically chanting, and the rustling of leaves.

Of course I didn't notice any of this because I was lost in my thoughts about a future worry that some might call anxiety.

"Mama," Ruby broke the silence. "Sometimes when I have too many ideas in my head, I listen to the cicadas and it calms me down."

[story ends]

6:42 pm

A Good Fear: [NAME TBD] – could be done by the story teller

Orienting ourselves toward something bigger than us—the sounds of God's creation, the numerous stars in the sky, a never-ending view of the ocean—can ground us and remind us that God is to be feared.

It may seem strange to use the word *fear* when talking about reducing anxiety, since one definition of fear is to feel anxiety or apprehension on behalf of something. But fear is the word that we find in scripture, so instead of throwing it out let's reclaim it for its intended meaning.

To fear the Lord means to have great awe and reverence. It is an act of worship to fear God. It reminds us that human wisdom and knowledge is really only a gift from God—the source of all wisdom and knowledge (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 42–43).

CHAT BOMB: What does little Ruby see (or not see) in this moment? What is the message about acceptance in Ruby's Story?

6:47 pm

Session 2 Breakout Group Set UP: [NAME TBD]

Now it's time for our Breakout Session. You will want your handout, open to the page with the quotes from our Finding Peace text. Let's ask ourselves: What is acceptance? Your leaders will guide you.

6:48 pm **SESSION 2 BREAKOUT (20 Minutes): Acceptance Quotes**

Discuss: What does this quote say to us about acceptance?

Group Leaders – PICK ONE PRIOR TO CLASS.

If you end 'early', choose another quote to discuss.

- “Many people think that acceptance is a passive, doormat stance. . . . But, acceptance is much deeper and more spiritually active than a stance of resignation. Acceptance allows us to see the world, ourselves, and our loved ones as they really are” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 36).
- “The prayer cannot begin with ourselves and our ability to control things. That is a self-centered prayer. The first step has to be about serenity and acceptance. These two actions ground us in the idea that something bigger—God, God's creation, and God's sovereignty—is at play” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 35).
- “There are reasons why many people have rejected the practice of this kind of acceptance in their spiritual lives. For one, it can be very hard to give up control of a situation that we desperately want to turn out differently. Another significant reason is that this line of reasoning has been used to excuse harm after harm in the name of God” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 37).
 - “Acceptance can be an extraordinary gift for several reasons. First, it is actually quite impossible to change everything that we cannot accept. Accepting the things we cannot change releases us from the anxiety of living in a false reality” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 38).

7:08 pm **Main Session Welcome Back [ALL LEADERS TBD]**

7:08 pm **Sharing from the Breakout [NAME TBD]**

What is REAL Acceptance? As we are beginning to understand, there is a difference between what I can change and what I *cannot* change.

Would a few people care to BRIEFLY share an insight you found during your Breakout? Keep it to ONE sentence, please. Don't forget to stay Muted and use the Spacebar to unmute... Everyone else please feel free to respond via CHAT, and use REACTIONS to encourage those who share.

7:18 pm **God's Path Exercise [NAME TBD]**

Proverbs frequently mentions following God's path. The *Finding Peace* text identifies several steps on that path. The first step is moving from a place of anxiety to acceptance. Part of arriving at acceptance means to accept the call of God to work for justice and righteousness. Then, we must also continue on the path from acceptance to courage. Let's take a moment and visualize that path (Use Handout).

As you look at your handout, reflect on these questions:

- How do we travel this path? (Fill in the blanks: Anxiety, Acceptance, Courage.)
- What do we bring with us in our "spiritual tool kit"—what spiritual practices or items accompany us on this journey?
- What challenges do we encounter on this path? What challenges us as we move from one step to the next?
- What does it mean to not just passively accept things as they are, but to instead accept the call of God to kin-dom work? (*If time, note the use of "kin-dom" in place of the traditional "kingdom."*)

Now: Using your handout, create a visual representation of what it looks like to follow God's path, from anxiety to acceptance to courage. Be as creative as you like, adding pictures and symbols as well as words.

7:28 pm **Closing Prayer [NAME TBD]**

Eternal God, grant us peace in this anxious world. May we trust in you with all of our hearts, and may you bring us insight and refreshment. Help us to practice Christian acceptance of the things we cannot change, and give us the courage to take action when we are called to act. Your ways are ways of righteousness, justice, and equity. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Last Things: Thank you for being part of the Study. We will cover Chapter 3 next session. Your next Handout will arrive _____.

OVERVIEW: **Session 3 Courage (1 hour):** Include Praising in Song in Handout.

1. **Welcome & Confidentiality Statement
2. **Prayer Calendar and Opening Prayer
3. **Virtual Covenant – CONCISE Version
4. Matthew Reading with Different Voices/Translations
5. Courage Breakout Session – Questions: What issues have I already faced with courage? What issue do I need courage to address now? What can I do to make a difference?
6. Sharing from the Breakout CHAT BOMB: What or how can you or your unit or church do to make a difference?
7. Courage Testimony (know topic/planned ahead).
8. Options: Maybe use Charter for racial Justice as an option. Pushout study.
9. Closing Prayer
- 12.– Break – if doing Session 4 immediately following Session 3.

** If doing Sessions 3 & 4 together, include 1, 2 and 3 in this session – no need to repeat it in Session 4. If you are doing ALL four sessions in one day, omit. You would only need to do 1, 2 and 3 once at the start of the day.

SESSION PLAN: CHAPTER 3 COURAGE - Example

Finding Peace in an Anxious World: A Virtual Mission Study

ALL FACILITATORS ARE CO HOSTS

HOSTs Cell/Text No.: _____

Presenters: (List who is doing what, so there is no confusion)

- Name and Section
- Name and Section
- Name and Section

Tech Support: Name(s) to help people with audio/video, "Ask to Start..."

Chat Box Responder: Names (2 recommended)

Meeting Admins: Names (admit attendees, re-name and watch for raised hands, etc.)

(Facilitators NEED to be cohosts to mute/unmute in Breakouts)

When there are participants that do not have video: Have to 'say' what we are seeing to include them in the conversation.

6:00 pm Team Meets: Breakout Assignments, Co Host Assignments, Prayer

6:15 pm Chat/Q & A Time – Team and all participants. Have fun.

- Have attendees RENAME themselves: First and Last Names.
- Remind of Mute and Unmute.
- Remind to connect to power supply – batteries will drain.
- Remind if connection is unstable, 'stop video' for a minute, restart.
- Use Chat: **Team, help attendees remember how to use chat, by asking them in private chats if they did their Convo.**

6:30 pm **Welcome – Confidentiality Statement:** Announce muting & recording.
[NAME TBD]

6:33 pm **Prayer Calendar/Opening Prayer:** **[NAME TBD]** Brief 1 Minute Prayer Calendar (Do NOT read everything) and follow with Opening Prayer.

Opening Prayer: (This prayer below or similar).

God who gives life to all, be with us today as we continue to study your wisdom. Prepare our hearts and minds to work together with each other. Give us courage as we continue to do the holy work of learning. How good it is to center down, and to spend time with you! Amen.

6:36 pm **Virtual Group Covenant [SLIDE] (Concise Version) [NAME TBD]**

This Covenant is the agreement that will govern our behavior and norms during our Virtual Study together.

1. Every class member is valued. Listen and focus on truly hearing what your neighbor is saying.
2. Everyone has a right to speak. If you find yourself speaking several times in a session, consider letting others speak next.
3. Participate. You get 'out' of the class, what you put 'in' to the class.
4. Be prepared. Help your group by doing 'home-work' at home.
5. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts, feelings and actions.
6. Respect other's feelings. Treat everyone with empathy and care.
7. Confidentiality: What's shared in class stays in class.
8. The main class recording will be done by the Host – no one else. Break out groups WILL NOT be recorded. See #7.
9. Offensive language has no place in a Christian small group.

6: 38 pm **Overview [NAME TBD]** In this session we explore and define the idea of courage in a Christian framework and consider what it is we need courage to face and where that courage may be found.

CHAT BOMB: Everyone type in the CHAT: **How would you define "Courage"?** Watch the CHAT.

6:42 pm **Courage in Scripture - Matthew 14: 22-29: [NAME TBD]**

Let's discover what courage in Scripture looks like. We will work with a passage from Matthew 14 and ask: What does this tell us about courage?

Listen to the story commonly referred to as "Peter Walks on Water". If it helps you to visualize the story better, feel free to close your eyes and listen with heart and ears to Matthew 14: 22-29.

[Different Leaders read each verse]

[NAME TBD] Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. *[pause]*

[NAME TBD] And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. *[pause]*

[NAME TBD] When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. *[pause]*

[NAME TBD] And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. *[pause]*

[NAME TBD] But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. *[pause]*

[NAME TBD] But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.” *[pause]*

[NAME TBD] Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” *[pause]*

[NAME TBD] He said, “Come.” *[pause]*

[NAME TBD] So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. *[pause]*

6:44 pm **Breakout Intro:** **[NAME TBD]** We are about to go into our breakout session. But first, take a moment to consider the Mathew Scripture you just heard: What does this story tell us about courage?

Secondly, consider the questions: What issues have I already faced with courage? What issue do I need courage to address now? What can I do to make a difference?

6:45 pm **SESSION 3 BREAKOUT ON COURAGE** (20 minutes):

Breakout Group Questions:

- What issues have I already faced with courage?
- What issue do I need courage to address now?
- What can I do to make a difference?

7:05 pm **Welcome Everyone Back** **[ALL LEADERS]**

7:06 pm **Main Session – What We Can Change:** **[NAME TBD]**

It takes wisdom and discernment to know what things one can change. We can effect change: change in ourselves, for sure. Change in our surroundings, sometimes, including being advocates for justice by standing with the marginalized and adding our voices to theirs' to make sure they are heard. Change in our relationships, with God's help. Change can happen. It stems from the ordinary courage that all of us have the strength and ability to muster. *(Finding Peace in an Anxious World, 66)*

United Methodists, along with many other faith traditions, have a long tradition of working toward personal and social holiness.

As an organization, United Methodist Women (UMW) has four mission priorities: climate justice, maternal and child health, criminalization of communities of color and mass incarceration, and economic inequality. UMW engages in social action to try to alleviate these pressing problems and improve the lives of women, children, and youth around the world.

There are hundreds of other faith-based social justice organizations across the country, like Green Faith, Sojourners or Compassion International, who do similar work. These faith-based organizations are working for the betterment of all people, making a difference with the time we're given by leaving the world better than we found it, keeping faith at the center.

7:07 pm **Sharing From the Breakout CHAT BOMB: [NAME TBD]**

Our CHAT BOMB question: What or how can you or your unit or church do to make a difference?

Everyone please use the CHAT to type your ideas on how we can make a difference. Let's also have a few people share directly. Gentle Reminder: Let's be brief, so more people can share. Don't forget to stay Muted and use the Spacebar to unmute... Everyone can also use REACTIONS to encourage those who share.

7:23 pm **Courage Testimony. [NAME TBD]** *(One of the leaders shares a brief testimony of an issue she or he faced with courage.)*

Optional Ideas: Use a 'highlight' of one of the following (or similar) if have time:

1. **50 Days of Action: Poor People's Campaign**, A National Call for Moral Revival. See: Poorpeoplescampaign.org
2. **Charter for Racial Justice**. See: <https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/racialjusticecharter>.
3. **Push Out!** Study (United Methodist Women)
4. **Opportunity to give to United Methodist Women:** Your donations help fund our Mission Giving social justice projects in the United States and around the world.

7:29 pm **Closing Prayer [NAME TBD]** *(Use your own prayer, ending with this one.)*

God of many names, we are grateful for this time we spent together. Give us the courage of Peter, to follow where you say “come.” And grant us serenity, acceptance, and wisdom as we move through the world and act for justice. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Last Things: Thank you for being part of the Study. We will cover Chapter 4 next session. Your next Handout will arrive _____.

OVERVIEW: Session 4 Wisdom (1 hour): Put Labyrinth in Homework.

1. **Welcome & Confidentiality Statement
2. **Prayer Calendar and Opening Prayer
3. **Virtual Covenant – CONCISE Version
4. Proverbs Wisdom Scripture
5. Body Prayer Exercise
6. Wisdom and Tools Breakout Session
7. Sharing from the Breakout: What tools we use in prayer.
8. Study Wrap up
9. Closing Prayer: The Serenity Prayer full version, Share Screen Slide. (all except leader muted)
10. Closing.

SESSION PLAN: CHAPTER 4 WISDOM - Example

Finding Peace in an Anxious World: A Virtual Mission Study

ALL LEADERS ARE CO HOSTS

HOSTs Cell/Text No.: _____

Presenters: (List who is doing what, so there is no confusion)

- Name and Section
- Name and Section
- Name and Section

Tech Support: Name(s) to help people with audio/video, "Ask to Start..."

Chat Box Responder: Names (2 recommended)

Meeting Admins: Names (admit attendees, re-name and watch for raised hands, etc.)

(Facilitators NEED to be cohosts to mute/unmute in Breakouts)

When there are participants that do not have video: Have to 'say' what we are seeing to include them in the conversation.

6:00 pm Team Meets: Breakout Assignments, Co Host Assignments, Prayer

6:15 pm Chat/Q & A Time – Team and all participants. Have fun.

- Have attendees RENAME themselves: First and Last Names.
- Remind of Mute and Unmute. **WILL NEED PROVERBS**
- Remind to connect to power supply – batteries will drain.
- Use Chat: **Team, help attendees remember how to use chat, by asking them in private chats if they did their Mission.**

6:30 pm **Welcome – Confidentiality Statement:** Announce muting & recording. **[NAME TBD]**

6:33 pm **Prayer Calendar/Opening Prayer:** **[NAME TBD]** Brief 1 Minute Prayer Calendar (Do NOT read everything) and follow with an Opening Prayer.

6:34 pm **Virtual Group Covenant [SLIDE] (Concise Version) [NAME TBD]**

This Covenant is the agreement that will govern our behavior and norms during our Virtual Study together.

1. Every class member is valued. Listen and focus on truly hearing what your neighbor is saying.
2. Everyone has a right to speak. If you find yourself speaking several times in a session, consider letting others speak next.
3. Participate. You get 'out' of the class, what you put 'in' to the class.
4. Be prepared. Help your group by doing 'home-work' at home.

5. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts, feelings and actions.
6. Respect other's feelings. Treat everyone with empathy and care.
7. Confidentiality: What's shared in class stays in class.
8. The main class recording will be done by the Host – no one else. Break out groups WILL NOT be recorded. See #7.
9. Offensive language has no place in a Christian small group.

6: 35 pm

Wisdom and the Christian Life: [NAME TBD]

. . . while knowledge and wisdom are close cousins, they are not one and the same. Knowledge—even knowledge about ourselves—is information, at its base level. It is information derived through learning, experiencing, listening, or observing. Knowledge can be accumulated, stacked, and measured, and give us the things we need to make educated decisions. However, knowledge alone is not enough; it must be shepherded carefully and thoughtfully (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 73).

Knowledge, intelligence, and logic are all part of wisdom, but wisdom is more than any of these things. “We are limited in our understanding and knowledge and experience,” the author writes. “Knowledge, intelligence, and logic are important. But there is still something missing that keeps it from passing into the realm of wisdom: morals and compassion. As followers of Jesus, we call this Christian wisdom” (*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, 73).

6: 36 pm

Reading: Wisdom Scripture Proverbs 2:1–11 [NAME TBD]

Compare the Proverbs passage with following statements from our text. Do you agree with the statements? **USE REACTIONS/CHAT.**

- Christians work for wisdom, but it is God who grants wisdom.
- Christians build a tolerance for disappointment, but maintain determined hope.
- Wisdom is a practice in which we participate, but it is a gift granted by God.
- Wisdom does not do away with anxiety, but provides tools to manage anxiety.

6: 41 pm **Spiritual Exercise: “Body Prayer” [NAME TBD]** Right now, we will practice an ancient Christian Prayer Discipline called “Body Prayer”. Many other faith traditions practice a form of this as well.

We’ve talked about how anxiety and wisdom, as well as other qualities, often manifest in the body. What would it feel like to embody prayer, rather than anxiety? Body Prayer is an experience of centering our minds and our bodies.

You can stand or sit, whatever is most comfortable for you. I will guide your actions throughout, simply listen to my voice.

Begin by standing or sitting in a comfortable position, with feet about shoulder width and hands at your sides.

Close your eyes, center yourself. Breathe deeply in and deeply out. Rest. (Pause)

Holy God, you call us to lives of courage and wisdom, not lives of anxiety.

Raise both arms above your head.

We raise our hands high, because you ask us to work with willing hands.

Stretch your hands out in front of you, palms up.

We stretch our hands in front of us, because you call us to reach out to those in need.

Bring your hands to your brow, above your eyes, as if searching the distance.

We bring our hands to our brow, that we may face the future without fear.

Slowly bring your hands to your chest, pressed together in the traditional prayer pose.

We move to a posture of centering prayer, because we ask for your wisdom. Amen.

Let’s share our reactions to that prayer experience.

CHAT BOMB: Everyone type in the CHAT: **What does it feel like to embody prayer, rather than anxiety??** Watch the CHAT.

6:47 pm **SESSION 4 BREAKOUT Intro: [NAME TBD]** Wisdom and Prayer Tools

During this Study, we've experienced several different Spiritual Disciplines and Prayer Practices – we like to think of them as 'Tools' for us to use when we find ourselves in an Anxious or Fearful place.

In this session, we've thought about Wisdom and how to see it. (Hint: By using the Spiritual Disciplines and our Tools!

So for our Breakout Session: Consider and discuss the following:

6:48 pm **SESSION 4 BREAKOUT (20 Minutes):** Wisdom and Prayer Tools

Group Leaders: Encourage all to share...

- Think about a time you have sought, or helped someone seek, Christian wisdom. What was that process like?
- How can Spiritual Disciplines and Prayer Practices (our Tools!) like these help us to combat anxiety and center on God?

7:08 pm **Main Session Welcome Back [ALL LEADERS TBD]**

7:10 pm **Sharing from the Breakout: [NAME TBD]**

Would a few people care to BRIEFLY share: What other "tools" do you use in prayer? Everyone else please feel free to respond via CHAT, and use REACTIONS to encourage those who share.

Keep it to ONE sentence, please. Don't forget to stay Muted and use the Spacebar to unmute...

7:25 pm **Study Wrap Up. [NAME TBD]**

We are coming to the end our Study. Amazing time, right? You will receive (via email) a few more materials from this Study.

1. **Details and how to give to United Methodist Women:** Your donations, help fund our Mission Giving social justice projects around the United States and the world.
2. **Evaluation Survey via link in email.**

7:28 pm **Closing FULL Serenity Prayer [NAME TBD] [SLIDE]**

Let's close by reading together – the full Serenity Prayer (in your handout). **[Remind to stay muted]**

The Serenity Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did,
this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will
make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be
reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever
in the next.

Amen.

- Reinhold Niebuhr

Last Things: Thank you for being part of the Study. You can unmute and say goodbye.

Additional Handout Pages and Session Share Screen Pages

Additional pages for Participant Handouts and items to show on Share Screen during your Zoom Study Sessions.

Virtual Group Covenant

This Covenant is the agreement that will govern our behavior and norms during our Virtual Study together.

1. **Every class member is valued.** Listen and focus on truly hearing what your neighbor is saying rather than immediately thinking about your own response.
 2. **Everyone has a right to speak.** If you find yourself speaking several times in a session, consider letting others speak next.
 3. **Participate.** You get 'out' of the class, what you put 'in' to the class.
 4. **Be Prepared.** Help your group, do 'home-work' at home.
 5. **Keep your sharing focused** on your own thoughts, feelings and actions.
 6. Anxiety is a hard thing. **Respect other's feelings.** Treat everyone with empathy and care.
 7. **Confidentiality:** What's shared in the class or group stays in the class or group. No one's story shall be shared without that person's permission.
 8. **The main class recording will be done by the Host – no one else.** Break out groups WILL NOT be recorded. Class recordings will only be used if a participant needs to miss a class. See #7 above.
 9. Offensive language has no place in a Christian small group.
 10. Add your thoughts: _____
-

Virtual Group Covenant (Concise)

This Covenant is the agreement that will govern our behavior and norms during our Virtual Study together.

1. Every class member is valued. Listen and focus on truly hearing what your neighbor is saying.
2. Everyone has a right to speak. If you find yourself speaking several times in a session, consider letting others speak next.
3. Participate. You get 'out' of the class, what you put 'in' to the class.
4. Be prepared. Help your group by doing 'home-work' at home.
5. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts, feelings and actions.
6. Respect other's feelings. Treat everyone with empathy and care.
7. Confidentiality: What's shared in class stays in class.
8. The main class recording will be done by the Host – no one else. Break out groups WILL NOT be recorded. See #7.
9. Offensive language has no place in a Christian small group.

[Share on Screen every session]

Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity

to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,

enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it;
trusting that You will make all things right
if I surrender to Your will;
so that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with You forever in the next.

Amen.

Reinhold Niebuhr

Your Mission CONVO Assignment - Example

Small Group Rosters will arrive tomorrow. These are the people in YOUR Group. During the week, try to contact at least two people on your small group roster (Email, Phone, Text, etc.). **You MUST get an actual response**, that is, you must have an *actual* conversation (a CONVO). If someone doesn't return the contact – move on! Reach out to someone else.

A Convo (conversation) can happen differently for different people. A Convo is a dialog, that is: an exchange or interaction between people using a mutually agreeable method: Messenger, email, phone, texting, Skype, Zoom, etc.

So, BEFORE the Class – Here is your Mission...

2. **Connect with two people from your small group. Have a Convo by whatever means is appropriate and mutually agreeable.**
3. During your CONVOS:
 - a. Introduce yourself.
 - b. Then discuss **your choice of two of the Small Group Questions** found in your Journal and Small Group Questions (below). Limit your discussions to 15 minutes each.
4. If someone from the group contacts YOU; be sure to return the contact.

(Note: There are different Convo Questions per Session that correspond to each chapter in the text. Configure your Convo Questions as needed for your particular 4 hour program.)

Suggested Mission Convos for each Session are included in the Session Participant Handouts.

Examen Journal

Our spiritual practice this week is called, The Examen. See pages 29-30 in your text for the explanation and guide (for Kindle users, it's at the end of Chapter 1).

Do this every night this week, starting tomorrow tonight and continuing through *to the next session*. Included here are simple Examen Journal pages. Print as many pages as needed to help guide your Examen each night.

Then....

1. Sit down at the end of the day.
2. Have your text, the Examen, your journal pages and pencil/pen.
3. Experience (do!) the Examen each night. Think, pray and write down your thoughts. Describe what you feel and see. Notice patterns in what you write. Your Examen Journal is for you. No one will see your Examen Journal unless you choose to share it.

Before the next session, answer the following questions: *(Also found at the end of Chapter 1 on page 31 in your text.)*

6. What were you thankful for upon remembering God's work in your life?
7. Upon reflection, where did you find God? Where did you feel God's absence?
8. When were times you knew peace? When were times you were out of peace?
9. Thinking about your next week, where do you hope to experience God's peace?

The Examen Journal

Sit down at the end of each day and think through what has happened, looking for places where you particularly felt the presence or absence of God.

Invite God in

I come into your presence, oh God, with gratitude.

Gratitude

I look back over my day. *What am I thankful for in this moment?*

Review

When did I feel especially close to God today?

Review

When did God feel far away today?

In God's hands

Thank you, God, for your presence in my life. I give everything that I have considered today into your hands, letting go of worry or pride and readying myself for another day. I pray that I will go into the next day with the wisdom and serenity that comes from you. Amen.

The Examen Journal

Sit down at the end of each day and think through what has happened, looking for places where you particularly felt the presence or absence of God.

Invite God in

I come into your presence, oh God, with gratitude.

Gratitude

I look back over my day. *What am I thankful for in this moment?*

Review

When did I feel especially close to God today?

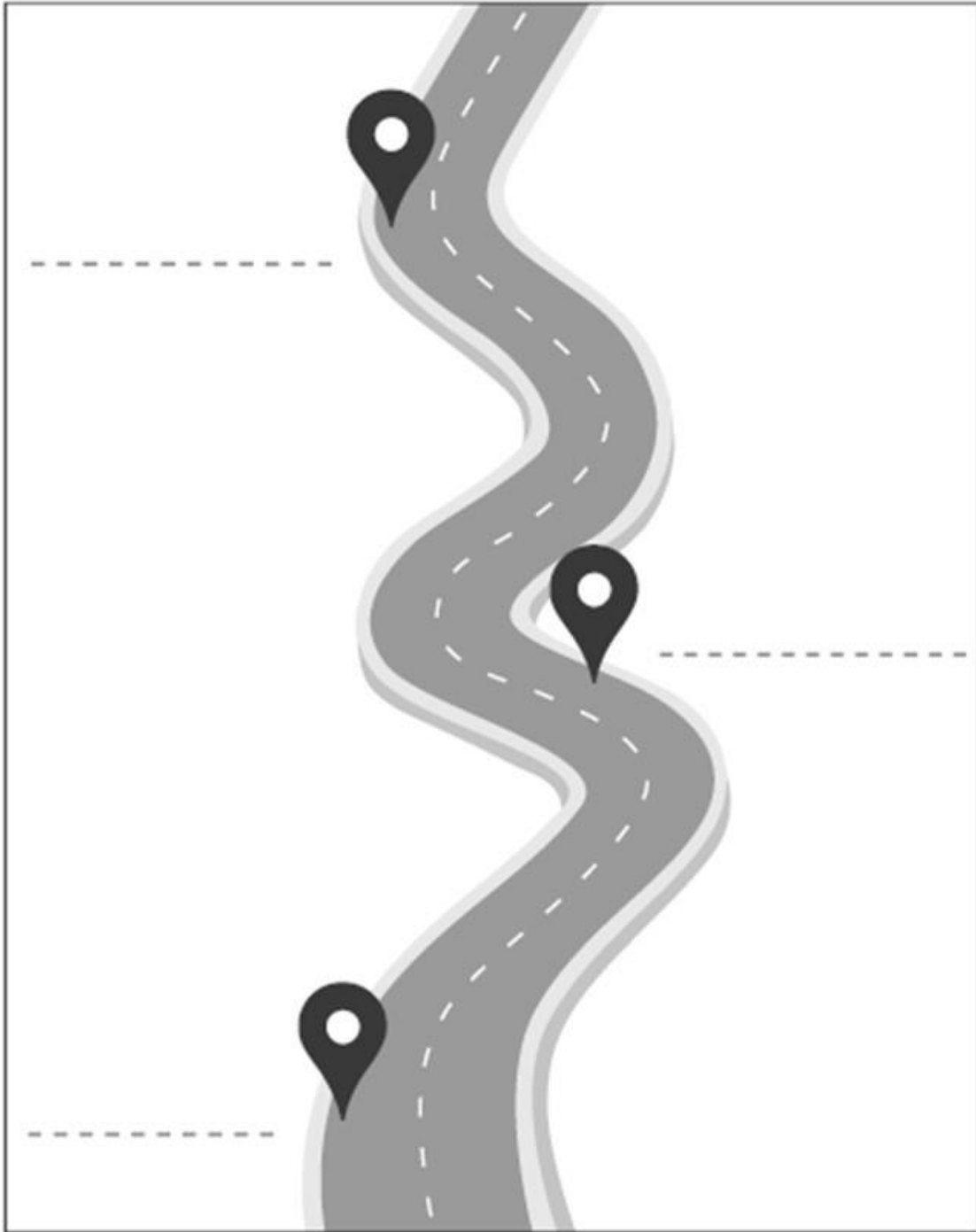
Review

When did God feel far away today?

In God's hands

Thank you, God, for your presence in my life. I give everything that I have considered today into your hands, letting go of worry or pride and readying myself for another day. I pray that I will go into the next day with the wisdom and serenity that comes from you. Amen.

Session 2: Visual Representation of God's Path



Session 4: Finger Labyrinth

