

WEEK 1

“Make Ready a People #morehope”

Opening Circle – Once people are seated together, light the candle, then read aloud the scripture and prayer for the day. Can be read by the leader or by a volunteer from the group.

Luke 1: 5-25, 57-80

Let us pray.

Gracious and loving God, as we hear the angel tell how Zechariah’s son John will prepare people for the Lord, we hear the call to prepare our hearts and minds to receive a word today. Open us to see hope anew. **Amen.**

Introduction –

This first week’s video is from a TED Talk that Dr. Brené Brown gave in 2011. In it, she introduces the background of her work and gives new insight into vulnerability.

Video - "The Power of Vulnerability" (21 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCvmsMzIF7o>

Personal Reflection - 3 to 5 minutes of quiet

We will take a few minutes of quiet to reflect. You can journal your thoughts if you like. There is space on the next page. Was there something you heard that made you feel hopeful?

Discussion – Help establish the safe space by reading this invitation aloud:

Leader: “In our conversation, everyone is invited to share, but sharing is not required. Please make room for all voices, keeping your contribution to a respectful time limit so everyone has a chance. Whatever is said here stays here – not because we are telling secrets but because we honor that what a person says here is their story to share. Here are some questions to help start our sharing but we can also just talk about whatever is coming up.”

1. What stood out for you in Dr. Brown’s talk?
2. When have you seen someone be intentionally vulnerable?
3. How does the angels’ call to not be afraid relate to living “wholehearted” lives?
4. How can one person living with more hope make a difference in the world?

Notes:

Closing Prayer

May be said by the Leader or by the whole group.

Holy Living God, Blessed Jesus, Guiding Spirit,
alight within us your flame of hope this day.

Grant us openness to hear your message.
Grant us courage to be your messengers in the world,
creating more hope in the midst of fear. **Amen.**

WEEK 2

"Nothing is Impossible #morepeace"

Opening Circle – Once people are seated together, light the candle, then read aloud the scripture and prayer for the day. Can be read by the leader or by a volunteer from the group.

Luke 1: 26-56

Let us pray.

God of peace, after the angel gave her such astounding news, Mary responded, "Let it be so." Help open us to this radical and peaceful acceptance. **Amen.**

Introduction –

In this 5-minute clip, Dr. Brown talks about choosing to be authentic, showing up and letting yourself be seen, and how perfectionism is about fear.

Video - On Faking It, Perfectionism, and Living Wholeheartedly (5 min)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_YeulUgWNp8&index=8&list=PLCFnCe9wJeSdzOLUF0EJzPD3YHklaWahP

Personal Reflection - 3 to 5 minutes of quiet

We will take a few minutes of quiet to reflect. You can journal your thoughts if you like. There is space on the next page. How does perfectionism keep us from being peaceful?

Discussion – Help establish the safe space by reading this invitation aloud:

Leader: "In our conversation, everyone is invited to share, but sharing is not required. Please make room for all voices, keeping your contribution to a respectful time limit so everyone has a chance. Whatever is said here stays here – not because we are telling secrets but because we honor that what a person says here is their story to share. Here are some questions to help start our sharing but we can also just talk about whatever is coming up."

1. What stood out for you in Dr. Brown's talk?
2. What different ways have you seen fear expressed, or expressed fear yourself that you may not have thought were fear before?
3. How does perfectionism keep us from peace?
4. How can one person living with more peace make a difference in the world?

Notes:

Closing Prayer –

May be said by the leader or by the whole group.

Holy Living God, Blessed Jesus, Guiding Spirit,
alight within us your flame of peace this day.

Grant us openness to hear your message.

Grant us courage to be your messengers in the world,
creating more peace in the midst of fear. **Amen.**

WEEK 3

"Do Not Be Afraid #morejoy"

Opening Circle – Once people are seated together, light the candle, then read aloud the scripture and prayer for the day. Can be read by the leader or by a volunteer from the group.

Matthew 1: 18-25

Let us pray.

Holy one who walks with us through fear and joy, as the angel told Joseph to not be afraid, help us hear the same message. Speak truth into our fears and breathe joy into our worries. **Amen.**

Introduction –

In today's video, Dr. Brown connects her research on vulnerability with our capacity for joy.

Video - The Price of Invulnerability (16 min)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UoMXF73j0c

Personal Reflection - 3 to 5 minutes of quiet

We will take a few minutes of quiet to reflect. You can journal your thoughts if you like. There is space on the next page. Do you have experiences of "foreboding joy?"

Discussion – Help establish the safe space by reading this invitation aloud:

Leader: "In our conversation, everyone is invited to share, but sharing is not required. Please make room for all voices, keeping your contribution to a respectful time limit so everyone has a chance. Whatever is said here stays here – not because we are telling secrets but because we honor that what a person says here is their story to share. Here are some questions to help start our sharing but we can also just talk about whatever is coming up."

1. What surprised you or was a new idea to you in this talk?
2. When have you gone to that mental place of fear instead of experiencing joy?
3. What are you grateful for that brings you joy?
4. How can one person living with more joy make a difference in the world?

Notes:

***Closing Prayer** - May be said by the leader or by the whole group.*

Holy Living God, Blessed Jesus, Guiding Spirit,
alight within us your flame of joy this day.
Grant us openness to hear your message.
Grant us courage to be your messengers in the world,
creating more joy in the midst of fear. **Amen.**

WEEK 4

"This Will Be a Sign #morelove"

Opening Circle – Once people are seated together, light the candle, then read aloud the scripture and prayer for the day. Can be read by the leader or by a volunteer from the group.

Luke 2: 1-20

Let us pray.

God of love and light, you sent an angel with the wonderful news of a savior born in our world – and surprised us that this mighty savior came as a tiny infant. One might have stood by his crib wondering how this little baby would be enough to change the world. Open us to understand that God has made us all “enough.” **Amen.**

Introduction –

In today’s brief video, Brené talk with Oprah about our ego who tells us we have no inherent worth, and living in a culture marked by fear of “never enough.”

Video - "The Two Most Dangerous Words in Your Vocabulary" (4 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XTcB1evO8c>

Personal Reflection - 3 to 5 minutes of quiet

We will take a few minutes of quiet to reflect. You can journal your thoughts if you like. There is space on the next page. How have you filled in the blank? “Never _____ enough.”

Discussion – Help establish the safe space by reading this invitation aloud:

Leader: “In our conversation, everyone is invited to share, but sharing is not required. Please make room for all voices, keeping your contribution to a respectful time limit so everyone has a chance. Whatever is said here stays here – not because we are telling secrets but because we honor that what a person says here is their story to share. Here are some questions to help start our sharing but we can also just talk about whatever is coming up.”

1. What messages have you heard of “never enough”?
2. When have you taken risks to fail, even when you felt you may not be enough?
3. How does love change the “never enough” language?
4. How can one person living with more love make a difference in the world?

Notes:

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Closing Prayer -

Holy Living God, Blessed Jesus, Guiding Spirit,
alight within us your flame of love this day.

Grant us openness to hear your message.
Grant us courage to be your messengers in the world,
creating more love in the midst of fear. **Amen.**

WEEK 5

Get Up and GO #morelife

Opening Circle – *Once people are seated together, light the candle, then read aloud the scripture and prayer for the day. Can be read by the leader or by a volunteer from the group.*

Matthew 2: 1-23

Let us pray.

Gracious and loving God, as the angel told Joseph to “get up and go,” we, too, hear the call. Teach us to get up and go into life wholeheartedly with faith. **Amen.**

Introduction –

In our last video of this series, Dr. Brown speaks on the ways we “armor up” and block ourselves from being vulnerable, while also blocking ourselves from living wholeheartedly.

Video – What Do You Armor Up With? (6 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aakhpC-hhMI&feature=youtu.be>

Personal Reflection - 3 to 5 minutes of quiet

We will take a few minutes of quiet to reflect. You can journal your thoughts if you like. There is space on the next page. What makes you afraid of showing up to life in your fullest way?

Discussion – *Help establish the safe space by reading this invitation aloud:*

In our conversation, everyone is invited to share, but sharing is not required. Please make room for all voices, keeping your contribution to a respectful time limit so everyone has a chance. Whatever is said here stays here – not because we are telling secrets but because we honor that what a person says here is their story to share. Here are some questions to help start our sharing but we can also just talk about whatever is coming up.

1. What do you armor up with?
2. How does your armor keep you from living wholeheartedly?
3. How is vulnerability the birthplace of faith?
4. How can one person living wholeheartedly make a difference in the world?

Notes:

Closing Ritual and Prayer - Put the papers/journals that people have been using in a pile and place the candle on top of them. Invite people to share a word or phrase that describes what this group experience has meant to them. Feel free to pray a prayer of thanks and then close with this prayer from worship:

Holy Living God, Blessed Jesus, Guiding Spirit,
alight within us your flame of life this day.
Grant us openness to hear your message.
Grant us courage to be your messengers in the world,
creating more life in the midst of fear. **Amen.**