



# Practices of Releasing

## Session 3: Lent Small Group Study Leader Sheet #3 Grief & Healing

### Planning Your Session

Gather items to create your space.

You will need stones, nails and ribbons for check-in.

If your group is not finding the suggested check-in helpful, you can ask a check in question instead. It is important to keep the check in. It gives participants a chance to join the circle and hear the sound of their voice.

*Other check in questions:*  
This week I noticed ....  
What kind of a day/week have you had so far?  
What's one thing you did this week that others might not know about?

### Preparing the Space

You may wish to create an “altar-table” with a purple cloth, a candle, and a basket with stones, nails and ribbons.

### Welcome & Candle-lighting

*Light a candle. The group may wish to say these words together:*

Your light is in our eyes.  
Your beauty is in our hearts.  
Your goodness is everywhere.

### Check in

*See the note in the sidebar about Check-in. There is no cross talk or discussion. As leader, start with yourself and go around the circle.*

Invite participants to choose one object from the basket that helps them check in.

- a stone for something in their week that was dull or heavy;
- a nail for something in their week that was piercing;

## Planning Your Session

You will need a Bible. You may wish to explore different translations at [bible gateway.com](http://bible.gateway.com)

Download Audio Recording #3, "Grief & Healing" to your laptop to play to the group.

There is no written script of the recording for this session.

Download and make copies of Participant Sheet #3, "Grief & Healing." The words to the candle-lighting and the prayer practice are on the participant sheet.

Read over the words for the Group Spiritual Practice. Be sure to allow spaces for silence in the prayer.

This session is designed for one hour but you can adapt for a shorter or longer time.

- a ribbon for something in their week that was bright.

It may be helpful to remind participants of the group agreements and check if any need to be changed or others added.

## Scripture Focus

*Share this invitation with participants:*

In the first century, the Temple was the place where God was most present. We hear the story of Jesus' anger in the Temple. Listen for the emotion in this story. Today we wonder about God's presence in our times of loss.

Read John 2:13-22 slowly.

## Listen

*Share this introduction with the participants:*

Lesley Read is a retired Social Worker, a Quaker (Society of Friends) and a leader in Grief Groups. She lives in Sackville, New Brunswick.

Listen to Audio Recording #3: Grief & Healing

## Discussion Questions

*Choose a few questions. Stay with a question as long as there is energy and then move on. Don't rush to complete the list. There are no right or wrong answers. We learn and grow from good conversation.*

What word, phrase or image do you take away from what you heard in the recording?

What are some attitudes to grief that you've encountered? Do you find it hard to talk about death? Why or why not?

What kind of things do you hear spoken when someone has died? Has listening to Lesley changed what you might say or do?

Have you ever shared a conversation with someone who listened to you deeply? What was it about that person's way of being that made the encounter memorable or gratifying?

Lesley says, "The other side of suffering is joy." What do you think about this? Have you had experiences where you know this to be true? How might this make sense of the Mystery of Easter?

Is there life after death? Are there other profound questions you would like to raise? How do we live with questions that don't have certain answers?

What do you think about Lesley's metaphor of the wound and the scar? Does it offer any invitation to you for losses you are experiencing in your life, or in the life of your faith community?

## Group Spiritual Practice

### *Listening in an Open-Hearted Way*

*Share these words of introduction with participants.*

In her book, Conversations, The Sacred Art: Practicing Presence in an Age of Distraction, Diane Millis offers this practice of entering our heart so we bring open-hearted listening to our conversations.

Sit up straight but relaxed and place both feet on the floor.

Close your eyes completely or partially by looking toward the ground. Rest your hands in your lap. Begin breathing slowly and deeply.

Observe your breath as it enters your nostrils and fills your diaphragm. Notice the sensation as your breath is released through your nostrils. As you breath, you may notice your body beginning to relax.

However, your mind may continue to move rapidly. To quiet

and clear your mind, imagine a place deep within you that is filled with peace and stillness.

As you continue to breathe deeply, gently turn your attention from your head to your heart. Continue to breathe in and out as you enter your heart and rest in its stillness and peace.

If you find yourself distracted by thoughts, ever so gently return your focus to your breathing. Remain and rest there for as long as you wish.

When you are ready, open your eyes and bring this heart-filled awareness to your daily activities, especially your conversations with other persons. Practice listening with your heart by re-entering your heart throughout your conversations.

Diane Millis, Conversations, The Sacred Art: Practicing Presence in an Age of Distraction, Skylight Paths. 2013

## Blessing

*You may wish to share this quote, words of the Sufi mystic-poet Rumi or sing the suggested hymn.*

“Make everything in you an ear,  
each atom of your being.

And you will hear at every moment what the  
source is whispering to you, just to you and for  
you without any need for my words or anyone else’s.

You are - we all are - the beloved of the Beloved One,  
and in every moment, in every event of life,  
the Beloved One is whispering to you  
exactly what you need to hear and know. *(Lynn Bauman.)*

*Or you may want to sing or read a few verses of the hymn  
#613 in *Voices United, We Cannot Measure How You Heal.**