



## Landscapes of the Soul Small Group Study 2015

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### Session 2: Seas Courage in the Chaos

#### PLANNING YOUR SESSION

Gather items to create space: blue cloth, seashells, pitcher/bowl of water, a candle. You can change the cloth each week to the colour suggested or add a different colour cloth each time to create a varied landscape.

You will need a Bible.

Download Audio Recording #2.

Download/print the Audio Script for participants who need a print copy of the Recording.

Download/print the Participant Sheet for each one. This sheet has questions and the Spiritual Practice.

Choose which **Spiritual Practice** you will do as a group. You may want to read the quote and go outside and do a walking meditation as a group.

If you choose to do the ritual, you will need a bowl of water.

You will need copies of *More Voices* if you choose to sing the  **blessing**.

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

#### Preparing the Space

You may wish to create an “altar-table” with a blue cloth and a seashell or pitcher/bowl of water.

#### Welcome and Check in

*This is a time for participants to check in, make themselves present to the group and share how they are. There is no cross-talk or discussion. As leader, start with yourself and go around the circle. If the group does not know each other well, begin by sharing names.*

**Think about an experience when you acted with great courage.  
What made it so courageous?**

#### Breath Prayer

*The Breath prayer is a tradition rooted in the experience of the Desert Fathers and Mothers of the 3rd century. They fled the cities for a life of solitude in the desert. They wrote little, but quotes and stories give us a glimpse in their desert spirituality. The breath prayer was a short verse, often drawn from scripture, spoken on the breath and repeated as they went about their work. It is a practice for everyday living.*

Here is a practice for this week: (based on Mark 4:39)

On the in-breath pray: Peace

On the out-breath pray: Be still.

**Listening to the Audio Recording: Entering the Landscape**  
*Before listening to the Audio Recording #2, you may wish to ask the group if they want 3-5 minutes of silence at the end of the recording for journaling or jotting down notes.*

## Paths to Explore

*Choose a few questions most relevant to your group or invite participants to respond to a question of their choice. The questions are also on the Participant Sheet.*

1. What did you hear in the Audio Recording that stood out for you?
2. Read Matthew 14:22-33. What is this story really about? Where do you see yourself in it? What title would you give to capture the meaning it has for your life?
3. Recall other "sea stories" in the Bible. What are they saying about living in chaos or invitations to new beginnings?
4. Janice says "so many experiences in life are preparing us for the moment when we have to say 'yes' and step out of the boat." As you look back on some of the 'yes' moments in your life, what helped prepare you to take risks or exercise a daring faith?
5. Where do you feel God is inviting you to step out of the boat right now? What do you see in your own life, or in the life of your faith community, that is similar to Peter's attempt to walk on water?
6. What was the tone in Jesus' voice when he says, "You of little faith ...why did you doubt?"

## Spiritual Practice

### **Group Practice:**

*Choose a time of spoken/silent prayer or use the ritual with water.*

Read the David Whyte poem (see the Resource section of the Landscape webpage.) Ask the participants: Can you picture yourself "inside" the poem, standing with the old man? Does a prayer rise in you that you want to offer to the "turbulent Jesus hidden in the water"?

a) In a time of prayer, invite the group to share their prayers out loud or offer them silently from their heart. End with the Lord's Prayer.

b) Place a beautiful bowl of water on a table in the centre of your group. After listening to the poem and imagining the prayer they want to offer, invite participants, as they are ready, to go to the bowl and offer their prayer out loud or silently. As an 'amen' dip hands into the water.

### **Take it Outside: Walking Meditation**

*"People usually consider walking on water or in thin air a miracle. But I think the real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thin air, but to walk on earth. Every day we are engaged in a miracle which we don't even recognize: a blue sky, white clouds, green leaves, the black, curious eyes of a child -- our own two eyes. All is a miracle." – Thich Nhat Hanh*

As you walk this week, what do you see as you look around? How might you be more mindful of miracles seen by your own two eyes?

### Closing

Close your gathering by singing, *My Love Colours Outside the Lines* (More Voices #138)

Or read Psalm 107: 23-32