

FACILITATOR GUIDE

INTO LIFE

- LOVE CHANGES EVERYTHING -

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INTO LIFE

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WELCOME

Welcome to the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* formation program! We're happy you're here. This program invites both facilitators and participants into a new approach to pro-life ministry, one based on the model of accompaniment developed by the Sisters of Life.

Throughout this program, participants will be introduced to the theological foundations and the pastoral framework used by Sisters of Life in their ministry to pregnant women. Participants will have the opportunity to pray and reflect on what it means to live a “spirituality of life” and also to reflect on walking with a woman through an unexpected pregnancy. The goals of the program are to cultivate and deepen a spirituality of life, to learn about the heart of the pregnant woman—her fears and her hopes—and to develop practical pastoral skills for effective listening and genuine accompaniment.

Both the Facilitator Guide and the Participant Guide have been designed by the Sisters of Life and the McGrath Institute for Church Life to provide a framework for moving through the 12-part video series. In the following pages you will find helpful information about the series, suggestions on facilitating small group discussions, and guides to accompany each video.

PROGRAM MATERIALS

- 12-part video series:
 - Summoned to Life: Spiritual Foundations
 - Seeing Reality: The Contemplative Outlook
 - This is God's Work: The Power of Prayer
 - Vulnerability: An Identity Crisis
 - Hope and Fear: Understanding the Heart of a Pregnant Woman
 - Exodus from Fear: Accompanying Her to Life
 - Rejoicing in Her: Our Disposition of Heart
 - Maternity is Forever: Hope and Healing After Abortion
 - Maternity is Forever: Adoption
 - Listening a Person into Life: The Art of Being Present
 - Listening a Person into Life: How to Listen Well
 - Listening a Person into Life: Reflective Listening
- Facilitator Guide
- Participant Guide
- Parish toolkit (optional)

PREPARING FOR THE PROGRAM

Recognizing that each group is unique, the following are suggestions for program preparation:

- Recruit participants. We recommend a group size of between 5-8 participants. You may use the resources in the parish press kit to recruit participants as they are helpful.
- Reserve a space(s) for sessions, ensuring, insofar as possible, that the space is one that is conducive for viewing the videos, for praying, and for conversation.
- Review the Facilitator and Participant Guides. In the Facilitator Guide you will find video summaries, an opening and closing prayer, personal reflection questions, and group discussion questions. A comprehensive review of both guides allows you to make notes about any adjustments you would like to make for your group in advance and helps facilitation run smoothly.
- Preview the series. Time permitting, viewing the entire series prior to the start of the program is highly recommended. This will help you tailor your facilitation to the particular needs of your group.

FACILITATION

● Role of the Facilitator

As the facilitator, your role is to guide participants through reflection on and discussion of the program content. In general, the facilitator's role is distinct from that of participants. Your main objective is to hold the space for prayer and dialogue. Your insights and observations on participant engagement with the program materials will inform how you encourage, gently challenge, and adjust the delivery of the program's content. When possible, we recommend that facilitators participate in the program before leading a small group.

● Suggested Format of Program

The *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* formation program consists of 12 videos, personal reflection questions, and group discussion questions. The program is designed to be completed in small groups over the course of 12 weeks. Each session is divided into three parts: (1) viewing the video content, (2) personal reflection, (3) group discussion. Opening and closing prayers are also included. Of course, you may tailor the delivery of the program content based on the needs of your group. While we recommend meeting in-person to view and discuss each of the videos, we know that this is not always possible, and the program can be adapted to the needs of your group.

● Leading Discussions

Leading discussions on sensitive topics, like abortion, can be particularly challenging. It is likely that someone in the group will have either experienced an abortion, known someone who has experienced an abortion, or lost a child through miscarriage. As the facilitator, your role is to hold the space for fruitful discussion and to intervene in thoughtful and intentional ways as needed to keep the conversation on track. It is also important to set a tone of safety and openness for the group. Real, fruitful conversation can only unfold when participants know and trust one another. One of the goals of the program is to learn new postures of listening and receiving others. Participants should feel comfortable "speaking in first draft," revising their thoughts, and making new discoveries about God, themselves, and others. This is not how we commonly conduct conversation, and therefore may be new to some participants. It may be helpful to remind participants of the shift in interior disposition needed for fruitful conversations.

In order to ensure a fruitful discussion, the facilitator needs to be attentive to group dynamics. It is likely that there will be both introverts and extroverts in your group. You may want to ask participants to be aware of their natural tendencies during group conversation. If someone is naturally an introvert, the facilitator may want to encourage them to "move up" in the conversation. If someone is naturally an extrovert, you may want to encourage them to be aware of how much they are speaking and maybe take a step back at times to allow "air-time" for those who may be more introverted. As the facilitator, you will want to be aware of these dynamics. If one or two participants are dominating the conversation, you may consider gently asking them to limit their responses to only one or two minutes.

You can also intentionally invite participants into the conversation, if you notice that particular people seem hesitant to share. It is also important to give participants permission to choose not to answer a particular question or to “pass for now” and answer later in the conversation. Depending on your group, it may also be helpful to give participants a few moments to process what they want to say before diving into discussion.

Finally, you will want to emphasize the importance of maintaining confidentiality.* We hope participants will learn from one another and the relationships they form with each other. However, in order to establish and maintain open and genuine sharing, it is important that they do not share names and details of what is disclosed in the small group outside the small group.

● **Modifications**

Depending on your group and/or your facilitation style, you may consider the following modifications:

1. Use a Communication Agreement (i.e. ground rules for discussion). You may develop these with the members of the group or prepare them prior to the first session. We have provided a sample Communication Agreement for you:
 - “Pass” or “pass for now” if you are not willing or ready to respond.
 - Allow others to finish speaking and avoid interrupting.
 - Speak in ways that promote connection and learning.
 - Respect time boundaries (if you are using them).
 - “Move up” or “move back” to share airtime.
 - Check assumptions by asking questions.
 - Maintain confidentiality.
 - Attend to cell phones and technology in ways that allow you to be present.
2. Use a round-robin sharing model. If you decide to use this structure, the leader can tell participants that they will have 1 or 2 minutes to answer and then the facilitator can keep time. The facilitator can explain that this structure will allow participants who are more introverted to have a moment to talk and keep those who tend to dominate a conversation more aware of their time frame for sharing.

** While it is important to maintain confidentiality, all diocesan mandatory reporting policies must remain in place for this program. Please consult your diocese’s reporting guidelines and, if necessary, make participants aware of them.*

SESSION OUTLINE

Each session is designed to take anywhere between one hour to 75 minutes. Times indicated below are approximations. The facilitator may tailor timing to best meet the needs of participants.

● Prayer

● Introduction

- **Time:** 10 minutes
- **Materials:** *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide
- **Instructions:** The facilitator may give the participants a few minutes of silence to reflect on the introductory question before asking them to share. The facilitator may also want to remind participants that their answer to this question can be simple or more personal.
- **Reminders:** To ensure that each participant has the opportunity to share, it may be helpful for the facilitator to keep track of time (allowing 1-2 minutes for each participant to introduce him/herself). The facilitator should inform the participants of how much time they will have to answer the question, so that they know how much to share. It is also important to remind the group of the importance of confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group and not be shared with others afterwards/outside the group.

The goal of the introductions is to invite participants to share something meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and builds trust between participants, which is essential for building and sustaining community.

● Introductory Question

- Read the question twice.
- Provide 1-2 minutes for quiet reflection.

● Watch Video

- **Time:** 10 minutes
- **Materials:** Video; if desired, participants may want to take notes in their guide.
- **Instructions:** Introduce video segment. The facilitator may use the sample introduction provided, as helpful.

● Individual Reflection

After participants have watched the video, a period of personal reflection is highly recommended, if time permits. The goal is prayerful reflection, not completion. Whatever assists in prayerful reflection should be used; whatever does not assist prayer should not be used.

- **Time:** 15-30 minutes
- **Space:** If space is available in a church, that may be an ideal place for this period of prayer and reflection. If not, participants may simply be asked to find a place where they can settle into quiet reflection.
- **Materials:** *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide
- **Instructions:** Transition to a period of personal reflection.
- **Reminders:** Before sending participants into this period of prayer, it may be helpful for the facilitator to remind participants that this is a time for their personal reflection. The suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer. There is also a space provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide for participants to jot down notes during prayer.

The facilitator may also want to remind participants that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage but should follow the promptings of God. Someone may spend all of the allotted time reflecting on just one passage from Scripture or one reflection question and not write down a single word, and that's okay!

● Scripture for Reflection

● Reflection Questions

● Discussion

Following personal reflection and prayer, re-gather in the large group for sharing/discussion. During this time of group conversation and reflection, the facilitator holds the space to ensure participants are able to engage in meaningful conversation.

- **Time:** 15-30 minutes
- **Materials:** *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide
- **Instructions:** Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

- **Reminders:**
 - » Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.
 - » Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.
 - » Most of the group discussion will be focused on the discussion questions; participants may jump in and make a comment or ask a question about what someone else has said. Questions or comments should be geared toward genuine and open conversation. It is important for the leader to be aware of these dynamics.
 - » These questions are not intended to restrict the conversation, but to break-open meaningful dialogue and sharing. If there is a fruitful discussion occurring feel free to facilitate that conversation and walk with the participants where they are.

● Discussion Questions

● Closing

At the end of the group discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for sharing and for their involvement in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

- **What's coming up next?** The facilitator should offer a preview of the next video.

● Closing Prayer

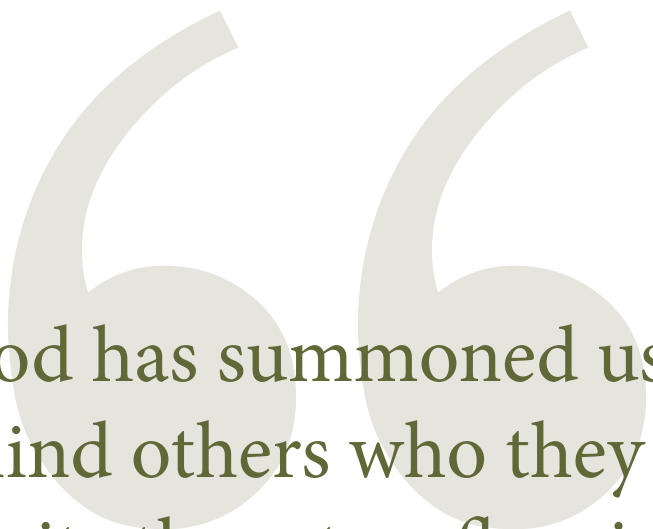
NOTES

[illegible]



VIDEO 1

SUMMONED TO LIFE: SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS



“God has summoned us to remind others who they are, to invite them to a flourishing life, and to share the good news that nothing—and no situation—is beyond the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.”

SUMMARY

In the first video, “Summoned to Life: Spiritual Foundations,” participants explore what it means to be created by God, in his image and likeness. In his goodness, God calls each human person into existence with infinite intention, care, and love.

Every human person is a gift. Recognizing the gift of each person can be difficult because we live in a world that tells us our worth only comes from what we can do, produce, or achieve. This can lead to anxiety, fear, confusion, isolation, addiction, and even death. Every person is summoned not only to recognize him/herself as a gift but also to help others experience themselves as a gift.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

In our culture, we usually introduce ourselves by giving our credentials: where we are from, our job title, degrees, etc. In order to establish bonds of genuine community, however, it is important to go a little deeper.

Using this style of introduction invites participants to share something that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are the groundwork for building community.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Who is the most inspiring person you have ever met and why?

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #1

SUMMONED TO LIFE: SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 1: “Summoned to Life: Spiritual Foundations”

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

As we prepare to watch this first video, I encourage each of you to allow yourself to hear and think about what is being said. We can often get stuck in labels and preconceived ideas. During this time, try to allow yourself the freedom to listen to what is being shared with the ears of your heart. Allow yourself to be moved and maybe even surprised.

NOTES

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this is a time for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

ISAIAH 43:1

“But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.’”

PSALM 139: 13-14

“For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise thee, for thou art fearful and wonderful. Wonderful are thy works!”

GENESIS 1:27

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or story that resonated with me?
2. When was a time when I recognized my own dignity, my own goodness, my own belovedness? What does it mean to me that God desired me from all eternity to live in infinite communion with him?
3. In reflecting on my own life and choices, where do I tend to find my self worth? Do I tend to identify myself with my career, with what I am able to do, etc.?
4. Mother Agnes Mary, SV and Sister Bethany Madonna, SV talk about the reality of fear, darkness, and loneliness in our world. In what ways do I share in that reality? Are there places in my own heart that are touched by pain and anguish? Where do I need to let Jesus' healing light in?
5. Has there been a moment in my life when I was convicted about the dignity of the human person?
6. How is God summoning me? How do I feel that the Lord is inviting me to see others? To uphold others? To build a culture of life? What is he saying to my heart?
7. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

From all eternity,
God desired that you be.
You are good. You are
sacred. You are chosen.

”

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. Is there something that surprised you or challenged you? Or is there something that was new to you?
3. What struck you about the summons stories shared by Mother Agnes Mary and Sister Bethany Madonna?
4. In the video, Sister Bethany Madonna says, “Pro-life isn’t about labels, it’s about people” and “abortion is more than a political issue or a legal term or a medical procedure. Abortion had a face and it was it was the face of my own friends and sisters in Christ.” How do Sister Bethany Madonna’s observations shed new light on what it means to be pro-life?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

Pro-life isn't about labels.
Pro-life is about people.

”

CLOSING

Thank the participants for sharing and their openness and sharing in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

What's coming up next? Video 2: "Seeing Reality: The Contemplative Outlook"

In this second video, "Seeing Reality: The Contemplative Outlook," participants will be introduced to the idea of having a posture of heart that sees God present in his creation—in the other person, nature, and circumstances.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.

We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world. We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love today, and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be cherished and protected. As we go forward from this place, help us to recognize every person we encounter as a gift.


We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.



VIDEO 2

SEEING REALITY:
THE CONTEMPLATIVE OUTLOOK



“We so often don’t see ourselves rightly, as God sees us. When we don’t see ourselves rightly, we can’t see others rightly.”

SUMMARY

In this second video, “Seeing Reality: The Contemplative Outlook,” participants are introduced to the idea of cultivating a posture of heart that sees God present in his creation—in the other person, in nature, and in circumstances. It is by receiving reality as a gift that we are able to engage with others in encounter, dialogue, and solidarity. It is this authentic relationship and posture of wonder and awe that allows a woman in a crisis pregnancy to receive herself as a gift.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Participants are invited to share something that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are the groundwork for building community.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the “Introductory Question”.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

What is the most beautiful thing you've ever seen/moment you've ever experienced?

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #2

SEEING REALITY: THE CONTEMPLATIVE OUTLOOK



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 2: "Seeing Reality: The Contemplative Outlook"

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

As we prepare to watch this second video, I want to encourage us to listen with the ears of our heart. Many of us may be anxious or worried about things going on in our families and communities. Try to allow yourself the freedom to receive this time with Jesus and one another as a gift. God is present in all of his creation. Let's allow ourselves to begin to cultivate this sense of wonder in all of his gifts to us.

NOTES

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this is a time for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

JOHN 8:32

“And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

**MARK
10:51-52**

“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, ‘Rabbi, I want to see.’ ‘Go,’ said Jesus, ‘your faith has healed you.’ Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me? That was new to me?
2. In the video, one woman shares, "I'm thankful for those who believed in me even when I didn't believe in myself, and I'm grateful for those who saw the good in me, even when I couldn't see the good in myself." How do I see myself? When are times when I have struggled to see my own goodness? What does it mean for me to see myself as a gift, as a beloved child of God?
3. Is there a moment in my life when someone truly saw me and believed in me? How did this experience affect me?
4. Are there ways in which I am tempted to see others as a burden? As competitors? As a threat? As unworthy? How do I want to ask God to heal my vision?
5. What do the words "encounter," "dialogue," and "solidarity" stir up in me?
6. Is my interior posture one of receiving others or do I try to control situations and those around me? What helps me give others, creation, and God the space to unfold and be discovered?
7. In what moments has the beauty of life captured my heart? How can I cultivate this awareness of the presence of God in my daily life?
8. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

In a very real way, every person is holy ground, because every person is an icon of the living God.

”

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. Sister Mariae Agnus Dei, SV says, “We want to be able to look at each woman and see, not a project nor a task to be accomplished nor an argument to be won, nor even a baby to be saved, but first and foremost, a person, a daughter, made in the image and likeness of God, sacred, good, with dignity and a destiny.” Discuss this. How does this give you a new understanding of what it means to serve a pregnant woman?
3. St. John Paul II defines “the contemplative outlook” as “being able to discover in all things the reflection of the Creator and seeing in every person His living image” (*Evangelium Vitae*, §83). He invites us to see others in a new way. How are you able to see others in this light? What about those with whom you disagree or those who you may be tempted to see as unworthy? Are there ways in which this is difficult?
4. In *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), St. John Paul II also writes that the contemplative “outlook does not give in to discouragement when confronted by those

who are sick, suffering, outcast or at death's door. Instead, in all these situations it feels challenged to find meaning, and precisely in these circumstances it is open to perceiving in the face of every person a call to encounter, dialogue and solidarity" (§83). How might embracing a contemplative outlook change the way you encounter people?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

Having a contemplative
outlook leads to
building an authentic
relationship.

”

CLOSING

At the end of the group discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for sharing and their involvement in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

What's coming up next?

Video 3: "This is God's Work: The Power of Prayer"

In this third video, "This is God's Work: The Power of Prayer," participants will be invited to enter into a relationship of prayer with God, who is love, and to reflect on the reality of prayer as the foundation and cornerstone of a culture of life.

CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.
We ask for an outpouring of your spirit upon the whole world.
We pray that every person may powerfully encounter Your
love today, and that all will come to know that life is a gift
to be cherished and protected. Please give us the grace to see
Your presence in every person we encounter, and in all the
circumstances of our lives.*

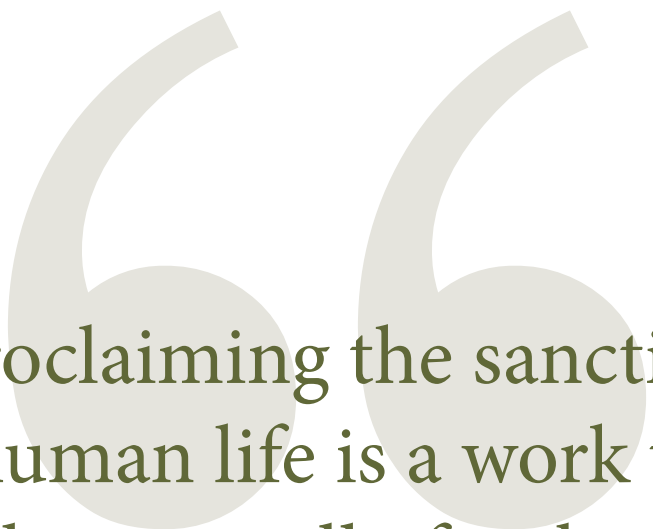
*We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father,
to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever.*

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.



VIDEO 3

THIS IS GOD'S WORK:
THE POWER OF PRAYER



Proclaiming the sanctity
of human life is a work that
belongs to all of us but it
is primarily God's work.
We are his instruments; it's
the Holy Spirit that moves
and makes it all happen.

SUMMARY

In the third video, “This is God’s Work: The Power of Prayer,” participants are invited to enter into a relationship of prayer with God, who is love, and to reflect on the reality of prayer as the foundation and cornerstone of a culture of life. Proclaiming and upholding the sanctity of human life is a work that belongs to all of us, but is primarily God’s work. We can do nothing without him. We need to be grounded in prayer for our actions and efforts to be ultimately fruitful, because it is ultimately Jesus who changes hearts and minds and gives life.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Participants are invited to share something that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are the groundwork for building community.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the “Introductory Question”.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Describe an experience or moment in your life when you realized the power of prayer.

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #3

THIS IS GOD'S WORK: THE POWER OF PRAYER



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 3: "This is God's Work: The Power of Prayer"

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this third video, "This is God's Work, The Power of Prayer," we are invited to reflect on prayer as essential to a culture of life. The work of proclaiming the dignity of life belongs to all of us, but it is first and foremost God's work. We are co-workers, humble instruments in the hands of a loving God. He invites us into this work and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit makes even our smallest works bear fruit in eternal life.

NOTES

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this time is for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

“Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

MARK 11:22-24

“And Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.’”

JEREMIAH 29:12

“Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.”

MARK 9:29

“Lord, why is it that we weren’t able to cast the demon out?” and the Lord said, “This kind of demon can only be cast out by prayer and fasting.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me? That was new to me?
2. In the video, Sister Virginia Joy, SV says, “Prayer is a personal relationship of love with the living God.” Is this how I experience prayer? What does prayer look like in my own life?
3. Sister Virginia Joy also says, “God desires you, your prayer. He desires to live in you. There’s no one who can replace you.” Do I give God the time and space to gaze upon me and to reveal to me how he sees me? Pause for a moment and ask God to show you how he sees you.
4. Do I trust that God cares about my life, my prayers, and the life of others? What are barriers that cause me to doubt God’s infinite care and power?
5. Sister Virginia Joy observes, “There are many ways to pray for the cause of life ... every [prayer] can be an act of love for those who are wounded by the culture of death and, ultimately, for Jesus who said, ‘As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’” How does hearing these words change my understanding of prayer and sacrifice? In what ways do I feel called to pray and offer sacrifice for others?
6. Sister Virginia Joy shares, “Prayer means allowing our own hearts to be converted first, by opening ourselves in loving surrender to Christ. This is why prayer frees us from self-reliance and burnout... because we’re leaning our full weight on the God who created the cosmos, not on our own strength.” Are there areas of my life that I have not surrendered to God and in which I feel overly burdened or burned out? Imagine Jesus is sitting in front of me right now, reaching out to me, and inviting me to place all those things that burden me into his hands. Take a moment to hand over, one by one, all those areas of your life that you have not surrendered to him.
7. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

We need silence to be able to touch souls.
The essential thing is not what we say,
but what God says to us and through us.
All our words will be useless unless they
come from within; words that do not give
the light of Christ increase the darkness.

—MOTHER THERESA

”

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. Sister Maeve Nativitas, SV says, “Praying outside of an abortion clinic is about being a sidewalk contemplative at a modern day Calvary. We approach a clinic as we would approach Jesus hanging on the cross. ... In a real, mystical way the crucified Jesus is there in the frightened hearts of the mothers and in the vulnerable lives of their children.” How do you understand the act of praying outside of an abortion clinic? What new ideas or insights does Sister Maeve Nativitas’ insight raise for you?
3. Sister Virginia Joy says, “Proclaiming the sanctity of human life is a work that belongs to all of us but it is primarily God’s work. We are his instruments; it’s the Holy Spirit that moves and makes it all happen. ... We can do nothing without him.” Is this your experience of pro-life work? How have you or can you allow God to work and speak through you?
4. Do you ever feel burned out? In what areas of your life do you feel burned out? What are ways in which you try to counter burnout? How have you experienced prayer as an antidote burnout?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

Sometimes we may feel insignificant or that our labor has been for nothing, but everything done in and with the Lord carries eternal consequences. He takes our prayer, our love, our faithfulness seriously and allows us to participate in the salvation of the world.

”

CLOSING

Thank the participants for sharing and their openness and sharing in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

What's coming up next?

Video 4: "Vulnerability: An Identity Crisis"

In the fourth video, "Vulnerability: An Identity Crisis," participants will be introduced to the profound vulnerability experienced by a woman who is unexpectedly pregnant. Deep and genuine accompaniment is needed if this experience of vulnerability is to be transformed into an experience of grace and strength.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.

We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world. We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love today, and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be cherished and protected. Please give us the grace of deep prayer, that we may be united to your heart, filled with your love, and radiant with your grace. We give you permission to draw souls to life through us.

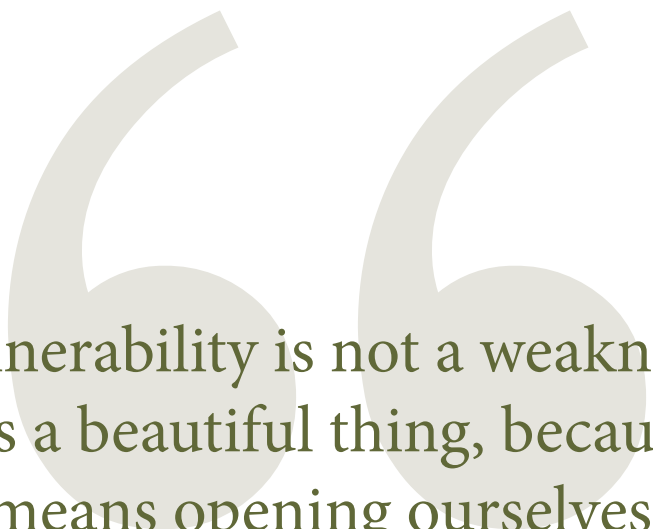
We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.



VIDEO 4

VULNERABILITY: AN IDENTITY CRISIS



Vulnerability is not a weakness.
It's a beautiful thing, because
it means opening ourselves to
relationship with others, even
depending on others in our need.
But this is also risky, because
in relationship, there's always a
chance of being wounded or hurt.

SUMMARY

In this fourth video, “Vulnerability: An Identity Crisis,” participants are introduced to the profound vulnerability experienced by a woman who is unexpectedly pregnant. This experience of vulnerability can lead to a deep identity crisis, which can cause a woman to enter into a mode of self-preservation. This desire to preserve her self-understanding drastically affects her perception of the three options available to her—motherhood, adoption, or abortion. Without the accompaniment of someone who will receive her in her vulnerability and believe in her, she might see abortion as her only option.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Participants are invited to share something that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are the groundwork for building community.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the “Introductory Question”.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Share a time when an experience of vulnerability led to a victory/great communion in your life?

When you look around in your community and the world, who is most vulnerable? Who is easy to forget or ignore?

Facilitator may choose which question to use. Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #4

VULNERABILITY: AN IDENTITY CRISIS



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 4: "Vulnerability: An Identity Crisis"

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this fourth video, we are invited to a deeper understanding of the profound vulnerability experienced by a woman who is unexpectedly pregnant. Her pregnancy and vulnerability can lead to a deep identity crisis. She may feel as though she has lost herself or is going to lose herself because of her pregnancy. In response to this deeply felt loss of self, a pregnant woman may find herself in a mode of self-preservation. In coming to understand her heart and her experience, we can better accompany her to help a woman believe in herself.

NOTES

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this time is for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

**2 CORINTHIANS
12:9-10**

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’”

GALATIANS 6:2

“Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

ISAIAH 41:10

“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me?
That was new to me?
2. How do I view vulnerability? In myself? In others?
3. Have there been times when I felt I lost control of my life? What was my response?
What were my fears? What gave me hope?
4. According to Paul Swope, women in crisis pregnancies generally view adoption as the worst form of death of self. Take a moment to pause and reflect on this. How can I empathize with a woman in crisis? When have I had to make a hard decision that was ultimately for my good, but which felt like a death of self at the time?
5. The Sisters speak about how those who choose life make an act of faith in themselves and incorporate motherhood into their self identity. Has there been a time(s) that I have experienced questions or doubts about my identity, for example, as a spouse, a parent, a student, a leader? How did I respond to these doubts? Was I called to make an act of faith in myself?
6. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

Women considering abortion who chose life do not necessarily have a greater love for children, but rather a stronger sense of self. They don't feel threatened by their pregnancy, rather, they believe in themselves and their capacity for motherhood.

”

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. In the modern world vulnerability is viewed negatively, but in the Christian life it's essential for communion with others. How do you tend to view vulnerability? When have you had an experience of vulnerability that was transformed from something negative into an opportunity of encounter?
3. In the video we heard that, for many women, abortion is a response to the interior question: "How can I preserve my own life?" How do you react to this? How does this perception of abortion as self-preservation impact your understanding of women who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant? How can you build empathy for a woman who has this experience?
4. Sister Maria Cristina, SV says, "If we begin to wrap our minds around this perception of abortion as self-preservation, we can start to understand the extent of the pressures and temptations a pregnant woman in crisis faces. This allows us to prepare our hearts to receive her, ...to give her the space to reflect honestly and ponder the questions tugging at her heart. If she feels understood, she will begin to trust, and once that happens we can respond, ... with a real friendship and practical support—housing, clothing, options for continued education—the list goes on." How does this approach to walking with a woman in crisis strike you? Does it resonate or not? Explain.

NOTES

[illegible]

“

At the heart of what it means to be pro-life is to see the goodness, the beauty, the capacity in each of the women who come to us; to reflect back to her the truth of her identity, so that she can make an act of faith in herself—and incorporate motherhood into her self-identity.

”

CLOSING

At the end of the group discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for sharing and for their involvement in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before moving onto the closing prayer.

What's coming up next?

Video 5: "Hope and Fear: Understanding the Heart of a Pregnant Woman"

In the fifth video, "Hope and Fear: Understanding the Heart of a Pregnant Woman," participants will be invited to more deeply understand the five main fears in the heart of a pregnant woman: (1) I am all alone, (2) I am not enough, (3) It's all up to me, (4) There is no room for this baby in the heart of the father, (5) There is no room for this baby in the hearts of my family members.

CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.
We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world.*

We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love today, and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be cherished and protected. May women who find themselves pregnant and vulnerable feel the presence of your love and your providence, and know themselves to be your beloved daughters.


*We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father,
to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever.*

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.



VIDEO 5

HOPE AND FEAR: UNDERSTANDING THE
HEART OF A PREGNANT WOMAN



One of the most
poignant hurts and fears
that a pregnant woman
faces is the feeling that
she is all alone.

SUMMARY

In the fifth video, participants are invited to more deeply understand the five main fears in the heart of a pregnant woman: (1) I am all alone, (2) I am not enough, (3) It's all up to me, (4) There is no room for this baby in the heart of the father, (5) There is no room for this baby in the hearts of my family members. Understanding these real fears opens up a space in our hearts to receive her, support her, love her, hope with her, and empower her to make an act of faith in herself during this time of crisis.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Hopefully, at this point in the program, participants are beginning to form meaningful relationships with one another. Still, participants are invited to share something that is significant to them because sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are essential for building and maintaining community.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the “Introductory Question”.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

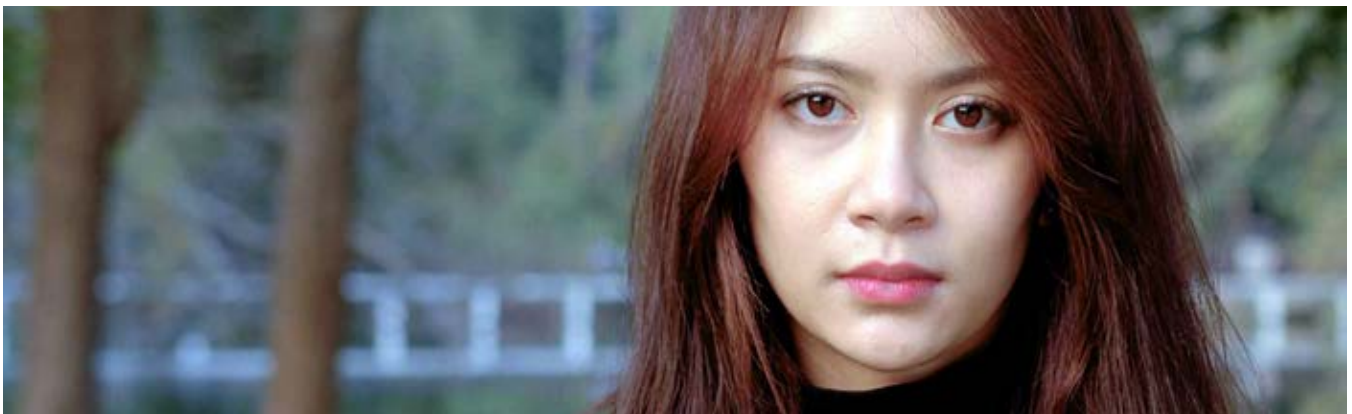
INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Describe a time when you overcame a fear.

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #5

HOPE AND FEAR: UNDERSTANDING THE HEART OF A PREGNANT WOMAN



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 5: "Home and Fear: Understanding the Heart of a Pregnant Woman"

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this video, we will ponder the realities of fear and hope. Specifically, we'll explore in detail the five main fears in the heart of a pregnant woman: (1) I am all alone, (2) I am not enough, (3) It's all up to me, (4) There is no room for this baby in the heart of the father, (5) There is no room for this baby in the hearts of my family members. Only by understanding these real fears can we open our hearts to receive her, love her, help her to recognize her own goodness, and empower her to make an act of faith in herself.

NOTES

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this time is for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

1 JOHN 4:18

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”

“For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you.’”

1 PETER 5:7

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

PSALM 34:4

“I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”

DEUTERONOMY 31:8

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me? That was new to me?
2. Sister Magdalene, SV says, “Fear is a natural response to a situation where you feel powerless and overwhelmed.”
 - When have I felt powerless or overwhelmed? What were my particular fears?
 - What fears do I hold onto now? Have I ever spoken about my fears with Jesus? Give yourself the space to reflect on this, and invite Jesus to shine his light into these places. His love casts out all fear.
3. The fears of a pregnant woman in crisis are: the fear of being alone, the fear of being not enough, the fear of having to figure it all out, and the fear that there is no room in the hearts of others for the baby or herself. How have I experienced those fears in my own life, even if I have not experienced an unexpected pregnancy? Can I relate to this experience in some way?
4. Sister Magdalene shares, “Jesus promised that ‘perfect love casts out all fear’. It’s really true. We see it all the time in our own hearts and in our missions. However, we must first know somebody before we can love that person. That’s why it is so important to know and understand the common fears that crowd and overwhelm a woman’s heart when she discovers that she is in an unplanned pregnancy.”
 - Who is someone I have gotten to know more deeply over time? How has my love for that person changed as I have come to know him/her more deeply?
 - How has understanding more of the interior realities of a woman in crisis affected me? How does it change my understanding of what it means to accompany a woman in an unexpected pregnancy?
5. Has there been a time in my life when someone gave me love and support to help me out of a place of fear? How did that feel? What did I learn from that experience?
6. When was a time in my life when I have made an act of faith in myself? Did others believe in me? How did that make me feel?
7. Are there people in my life whom I might feel like the Lord is calling me to accompany and love in a more intentional way?
8. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

Every woman desires to love and be loved. And a woman who knows she is loved can do anything.

”

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

At the beginning of the discussion, it may be helpful to review the five common fears of a woman who is pregnant and in crisis.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. Discuss the five main fears of a woman who is pregnant and in crisis. Are any of them surprising to you? How do they impact your understanding of what is helpful to a woman in crisis?
3. Sister Magdalene shares, “Women often tell us, ‘My boyfriend told me he would support me whatever I decide’. But no matter what he means by the statement, the woman hears in that: he really wants me to have an abortion.” How does this highlight the importance of language in affecting a woman’s decision for life or not? What does a woman really want to hear as she is struggling?
4. Sister Grace Dominic, SV says, “We [Sisters of Life] try to help her see that she is not alone. ... We are with her, others believe in her and want to assist her; many others have gone before her on a similar challenging but beautiful journey.” In light of the fears that a woman experiences, how does this approach help alleviate these fears? How does it help her to flourish?
5. Sister Magdalene says, “Women have the incredible capacity to suffer for another. They are altruistic. Unfortunately, some women will even suffer an abortion in order to save a relationship.” In what ways does this quote shift your perspective of the choice a woman is making when she chooses abortion? Is she really free in her choice?
6. How does understanding the interior realities of a woman in crisis affect you? Does it change or nuance your understanding of what it means to be pro-life?
7. What are some ways that you can help support and encourage women who are pregnant and struggling?

[illegible]

1. I'm all alone.
2. I'm not enough.
3. It's all up to me.
4. There's no room for this baby in the heart of a father.
5. There's no room for this baby in the heart of family members.

“

How many a young couple have found themselves fearful, not necessarily that there wouldn't be a physical place, a room, a clinic, a hospital, for a baby to be born, but that there would be no place in the hearts of the people that mattered; there would be no room in the hearts of the young girl's parents. How often has a young girl gone wandering, confused knowing that there was no room in the heart of the man who had made her pregnant. What poverty.

—CARDINAL O'CONNOR

”

CLOSING

At the end of the group discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for sharing and their involvement in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

What's coming up next?

Video 6: "Exodus From Fear: Accompanying Her to Life"

In the next session, participants will explore the importance of our disposition of heart in the work of accompaniment. A woman who is struggling with the reality of her pregnancy needs someone who believes in her and her goodness, someone who can give her the time and space to grieve, hope, and express her heart.

CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.
We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world.
We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love
today, and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be
cherished and protected. May the clarity and power of your love
cast out the fears of any women who are pregnant and vulnerable
to abortion, and give them the courage to move forward in hope.*

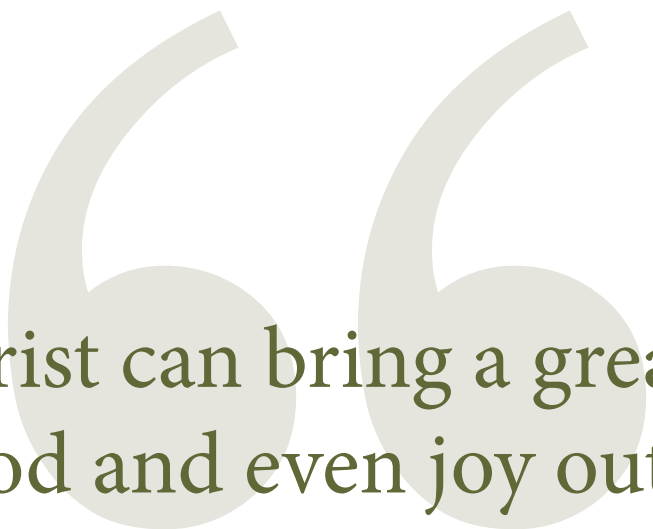
*We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father,
to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever.*

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.



VIDEO 6

EXODUS FROM FEAR:
ACCOMPANYING HER TO LIFE



Christ can bring a greater
good and even joy out of
our suffering. He, who is
love, is the answer to the
question of suffering.

SUMMARY

In this sixth video, participants are invited to contemplate the necessary posture of heart one needs to walk with a pregnant woman through her fears. A woman who is struggling with the reality of her pregnancy can often find herself in turmoil, tossed between anxiety and hope. She needs someone who will accompany her and believe in her goodness, so that she can believe that she is strong, capable, and beautiful. It is by giving her space to grieve, dream, hope, express her heart, and experience the movements of grace in her situation that she will be able to move through fear and into life and flourishing.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Participants are invited to continue to share something that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are essential for maintaining community.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the “Introductory Question”.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

What is one of the victories in your life? An obstacle you overcame?

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #6

EXODUS FROM FEAR: ACCOMPANYING HER TO LIFE



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 6: "Exodus From Fear: Accompanying Her to Life"

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this video, we are encouraged to enter ever more deeply into the heart of a woman who is unexpectedly pregnant. We have all experienced moments of suffering and turmoil, and we are invited to recognize the turmoil and suffering of the woman before us who may be struggling with anxiety, grieving the loss of dreams and hopes, and living in fear, but also finding moments of grace and beauty. We are called to recognize that she needs someone who will accompany her and believe in her goodness, so that she can believe that she is strong, capable, and beautiful, so that she will be able to move through fear into life and flourishing.

NOTES

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this time is for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

EXODUS
14:13, 14

“Moses answered the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. ... The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.’”

2 CORINTHIANS
3:17

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

PSALM 118:5

“Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free.”

ISAIAH 61:1

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.”

JOHN 8:36

“So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me? That was new to me?
2. In what ways have I tried to avoid, escape, or reject suffering? In what ways have I seen Christ bring good out of suffering?
3. Sister Grace Dominic says that “no one is able to be totally self-reliant. We are made in the image of God who is communion. No person should be self-sufficient because we were made to live in community.” What are the communities I live in? How do I feel upheld and valued by my community? What would I do if those communities didn’t exist?
4. Sister Magdalene says, “We try to walk through the turmoil with [women who are pregnant and struggling]—listening well, discerning the voices speaking into her life. Who are these voices? Where do these voices come from? Who is talking? Is it God? Is it the evil one? What is her heart saying? The answer is really within her heart, we just have to help her to uncover it.” Am I familiar with the dynamic of trying to discern between voices in my own heart? What are examples of times when I struggled in discerning between the voice of God, the voice of the evil one, and my own voice? When have I experienced the accompaniment of someone who was able to speak truth into spaces or situations of confusion?
5. Sister Magdalene encourages us to “ask the Lord of life to place in you a supernatural love for her” (the woman with whom you are walking). Take a moment now to recall people in my life who are struggling or with whom I struggle. Ask Jesus to give you his grace to accompany them well.
6. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

Our lives are not a success
because we don't have
difficulties—the measure of
the success of our lives is how
we respond to difficulties.

”

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. Sister Magdalene shares that “women who are pregnant and struggling often experience a sort of ‘flip-flopping’ in their hearts... ‘one day I want to be a mother and the next day I cannot even imagine it.’” How does this turmoil reveal the depth to which this pregnancy affects a woman’s self-understanding? How does this affect your understanding of the conditions and disposition of heart a woman needs to make a free decision? How does it prepare your heart to walk with a woman in crisis?
3. We have to let God cast out our fear, too. What do you fear when serving others? In serving those who are struggling with an unexpected pregnancy? In serving others whom you find difficult?
4. Sister Magdalene says that “we can be a voice of faith, believing enough in her [a woman in crisis] goodness for the both of us until she is able to make an act of faith in herself.” When have you experienced someone believing in you? How did this shape your self-understanding? How are you being called to help others believe in their goodness and in the graces the Lord is giving to them?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

The woman before you needs to know that she is strong, good, trustworthy and capable of love. Believing this truth can give her the courage to choose love in freedom.

”

CLOSING

At the end of the group discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for sharing and their involvement in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

What's coming up next?

Video 7: "Rejoicing in Her: Our Disposition of Heart"

In this seventh video, "Rejoicing in Her: Our Disposition of Heart," participants will be invited to explore the three essential dispositions of the heart necessary to accompany a woman in crisis: prayer, leisure, and delight. This allows us to see her not as a project, an obstacle, or an argument to be won, but as a beloved daughter of God, with dreams and a destiny.

CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.
We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world.
We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love today,
and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be cherished and
protected. Please free from bondage, confusion, and chaos any women
who are pregnant and vulnerable to abortion, and give them your peace.*


*We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father,
to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever.*

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.



VIDEO 7

REJOICING IN HER:
OUR DISPOSITION OF HEART



There are three essential
dispositions of the heart
when speaking with a
woman in crisis: prayer,
leisure, and delight.

SUMMARY

In the seventh video, “Rejoicing in Her: Our Disposition of Heart,” participants are invited to explore the three essential dispositions of the heart necessary when speaking with a woman in crisis: prayer, leisure, and delight. It is essential to root ourselves in prayer, and to allow ourselves to be moved by the goodness of the woman before us. This allows us to see her as a beloved daughter of God, with her own dreams and destiny, not as a project, an obstacle, or an argument to be won. It is when a woman is able to see herself as a gift, as beautiful and good, that she is able to move forward in hope and receive the life of her child as a gift.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Participants are invited to share something that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are essential for maintaining community.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the “Introductory Question”.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Describe a time when you felt celebrated and that someone else delighted in you.

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #7

REJOICING IN HER: OUR DISPOSITION OF HEART



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 7: "Rejoicing in Her: Our Disposition of Heart"

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this video, we are invited to explore the three essential dispositions of the heart we need when we accompany a woman in crisis: prayer, leisure, and delight. By cultivating these interior dispositions, we are able to encounter her as a beloved daughter of God, with her own dreams and her own destiny, not as a project, an obstacle, or an argument to be won. Our posture of humility before the dignity and beauty of another is essential. When a woman is able to see herself as a gift, as beautiful and good, she is able to move forward in hope and receive the life of her child as a gift.

NOTES

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this time is for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

ISAIAH 62:4

“Lord delights in you.”

MATTHEW 3:17

“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

**ZEPHANIAH
3:17**

“The Lord your God is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.”

PSALM 18:19

“He brought me forth into a broad place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.”

PSALM 149:4

“For the Lord takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with victory.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me? That was new to me?
2. Sister Bethany Madonna says, “I once read a poem that said, ‘Tread softly because you tread on my dreams’. As we accompany a pregnant woman, that is our very experience: all she has are her dreams and she will lay them out at our feet and then ask us to tread softly. This is why it’s so important for us to position ourselves humbly before those we encounter.” When was a time when my best-laid plans or dreams went awry? How did I feel? How did I get through it? Was there anyone in particular or a specific moment when I experienced genuine accompaniment?
3. Sister Bethany Madonna says, “Love is first an act of having my heart moved by another—I feel drawn to another. Loving the other is manifesting that delight. Allowing myself to be moved by another.” When have I truly delighted in someone else? How might I describe this moment?
4. Sister Virginia Joy says that it’s important not to approach the other person as a task: “I’m agreeing to open my heart and enter into a relationship of love, and to do that I must approach each encounter with an inner state of leisure. ... My goal is to leave her with an experience that she has been loved.” Have I ever had the experience of being received by someone who seems to have nothing but time for me? What was the experience like?
5. Developing a disposition of leisure can be challenging in our fast-paced, task-oriented world. How might I begin to cultivate an inner state of leisure in my own life and relationships?
6. Sister Virginia Joy says, “It is truly a privileged work to be with another, to sit in their presence so that we may discover with the eyes of God and his grace, the goodness he created, the beauty he made, the strength he desires to give, and we will, on our part rejoice, in his gifts.” Have I considered my time spent serving another as a privilege or as a burden? How might Sister Virginia Joy’s words help me to receive the gift of the other, who entrusts his/her heart to me?
7. How does prayer allow me to engage in the posture of seeing the other as a gift?
8. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

Dispositions of the Heart

1. Prayer

2. Leisure

3. Delight

NOTES

[illegible]

“

When someone opens up to you, shares with you their vulnerability and frailty, that, in a real way, they are entrusting their heart to you. What a tremendous privilege!

”

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. In her work as a clinical psychologist, Mother Agnes Mary and her colleagues discovered that mothers who had the added pressure of caring for a child with autism were better mothers when their husbands delighted in them and affirmed their ability as mothers. This allowed the mothers to pour themselves into their mothering with even greater love and confidence. How does this insight about the importance of delighting in the other impact the way you might approach your family, your church, your community, and the individuals you serve?
3. Sister Virginia Joy explains that if the woman we serve doesn't feel that we love her for who she is, she will believe that our actions are not motivated by her worth and goodness, but are motivated by our goodness. In other words, she will feel like a project. How might you guard yourself against viewing people as projects? Against viewing yourself and your own goodness as the focus of your service?
4. Sister Bethany Madonna says that "delight is not a work that drains us, but rather that we are encouraged, and the effort becomes almost effortless." Do you allow yourself the time and space to delight in those you serve? If yes, how has this impacted you? Do you experience this delight as uplifting?

5. Delighting in the other can become a cure for burn out. In order to have the time and opportunity to delight in another we need to recognize and know our own limitations. As Sister Bethany Madonna says, “We are not the savior. Jesus is. And we need to let Him be.” Are you able to recognize your own limitations? Are there things in your life that you need to let go of in order to have the time and space to delight in others?

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

“

It's so important for us to position ourselves humbly before those we encounter: she is a person of infinite dignity, and like me, has human frailties and vulnerabilities.

”

CLOSING

At the end of the group discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for sharing and their involvement in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

What's coming up next?

Video 8: "Maternity is Forever: Hope and Healing After Abortion"

In the next video, "Maternity is Forever: Hope and Healing After Abortion," participants will consider the effects of abortion in the heart of a woman and will be introduced to the elements accompaniment she needs to grieve, heal, and encounter God's mercy.

CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.
We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world.
We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love today,
and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be cherished and
protected. Please help women who are pregnant and vulnerable to know
the truth of themselves as a gift—chosen, beloved, and beautiful—and
give them every grace to choose life and flourishing for themselves and
their children.*

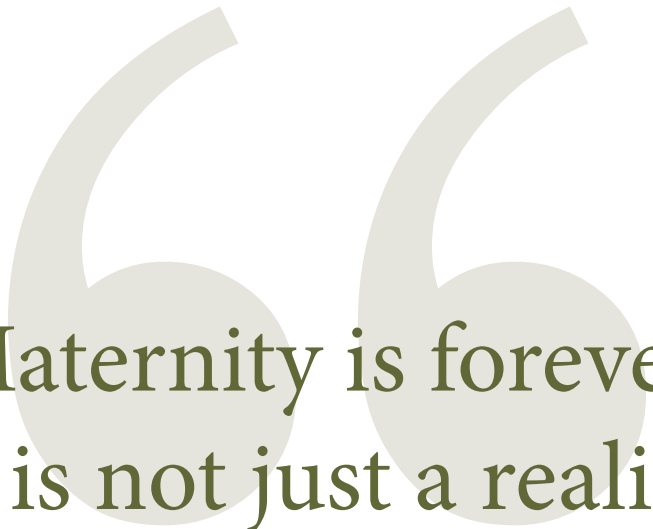
*We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father,
to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever.*

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.



VIDEO 8

MATERNITY IS FOREVER:
HOPE AND HEALING AFTER ABORTION



Maternity is forever.
It is not just a reality
in this world. It is a
reality in eternal life.

SUMMARY

In this eighth video, “Maternity is Forever: Hope and Healing After Abortion,” participants are invited to understand the reality of what happens in a woman’s heart after the experience of abortion, and how to approach and gently journey with a woman who has suffered this experience. Although the video clearly focuses on accompanying women, men can also often suffer deeply after the experience of abortion. Abortion often brings a sense of loss, and deep emotional, spiritual, psychological, and relational pain. Someone who has experienced abortion needs to be met with mercy, kindness, and solidarity, and given the space to grieve. She often needs to be invited to encounter Jesus, who seeks her with his infinite love and mercy, eager to forgive, heal, and restore.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Participants are invited to share something that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are essential for maintaining community.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the “Introductory Question”.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

What do you see in the world that gives you hope?

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #8

MATERNITY IS FOREVER: HOPE AND HEALING AFTER ABORTION



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 8: "Maternity is Forever: Hope and Healing After Abortion"

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this video we are invited to contemplate what happens in a woman's heart after the experience of abortion. Abortion brings a sense of loss, and deep emotional, spiritual, psychological, and relational pain. This video may be more challenging to view and process than the previous videos. We are invited to enter into this video and the experience of those suffering after an abortion as much as we are able to, given our own wounds and losses. It is important to remember, that just as anyone with wounds, one who has experienced abortion needs to be met with mercy, kindness, and solidarity, and be given the space to grieve.

NOTES

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this time is for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

PSALM 147:3

“He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.”

MATTHEW 11:28-30

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

JEREMIAH 30:17

“For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal.”

MICAH 7:19

“He will again have compassion upon us, he will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me? That was new to me?
2. Imagine Jesus standing before you, looking at you with kindness and the gaze of profound love. No matter what you have done or not done in your life, he looks at you like this. Allow yourself to meet his gaze.
3. Are there wounds, sins, or memories from the past that I want to bring to Jesus? Is there something that is weighing on my heart that I want to be free from? Invite Jesus into those places. He will not force himself; he awaits your invitation. He wants to forgive, heal, and make all things new.
4. There is no sin or darkness greater than the mercy of Jesus Christ. How is the Lord inviting me to be healed by his love? Can I allow myself to believe in his infinite mercy, which is always being offered to me?
5. Have I or someone I know experienced the wound of abortion? Am I open to walking towards healing? Am I open to speaking with someone about this? Am I open to allowing the Lord to love me and restore me?
6. How is the Lord calling me to be a witness and an instrument of grace and healing in my family? My communities? The world?
7. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others? (Please know that this set of questions is potentially more difficult to share, and it is fine to share as little or much as you feel comfortable with.)

For information about healing after about abortion:

Sisters of Life

sistersoflife.org/healing-after-abortion

USA: 866-575-0075

Canada: 416-463-2722

International: hopeandhealing@sistersoflife.org

Project Rachel

hopeafterabortion.com

An initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, with resources and support at the national and diocesan level

Local Resources

Provide participants with information about any local resources offered in your area (you may consider preparing a supplemental handout with local resources and associated contact information).

It is highly recommended that if the facilitator does provide a supplemental handout, it is handed to each participant so that participants don't need to ask for these resources in front of the group.

NOTES

[illegible]

“

God does not condemn
us to live in our sins or
failings. In his mercy,
he acts to bring new life
into our wounds.

”

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share. This is a particularly sensitive topic to broach, and it is likely that someone in the group will have suffered an abortion or know someone who has. Participants should be encouraged to share only to the extent they are comfortable.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
(Please know that this set of reflection questions are potentially more difficult to share, and it is fine to share as little or much as you feel comfortable with.)
2. How is the approach to the experience of abortion in this video different from the way the world often approaches abortion?
In particular, what struck you?
3. Sister Mariae Agnus Dei says that, regarding the discussion of abortion, “we always want to speak from a place of mercy, not judgment. ... Judgmental statements can be very harmful to someone who may be suffering from fear of rejection or self-condemnation. We want to invite people to encounter the face of mercy in the Church, not drive them away.” How might you be tempted to judge women who have experienced the wound of abortion? Why is it important to be so sensitive to the reality of the wound left by abortion? How does acknowledging the truth of the wound of abortion with mercy create a culture of healing?
4. How and why is our language about abortion so important?

5. Sister Mariae Agnus Dei says that “no matter what choice a woman makes regarding her pregnancy, whether she chooses to parent, places for adoption, or suffers an abortion—maternity is forever. It is not just a reality in this world but it is a reality in eternal life.” How can understanding maternity as eternal bring hope?
6. Sister Maeve Nativitas says, “We must also never push someone to seek help with her journey of healing. We may see someone we love suffering, but it often takes decades before a woman is ready to face a past abortion. We want to be a compassionate, listening ear, and let her know that help is available, but to be gentle and let God work in his timing.” Why is it so important to give someone the space to move at their own pace on the journey of healing?
7. In *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, St. John Paul II acknowledges the deep pain that abortion leaves, and speaks about the importance of “radical solidarity” with a woman who has suffered after abortion and says it is “not right to leave her alone.”
What are new ways to respond to the call to this solidarity, and to “pick up the pieces lest they be lost” (John 6:12)?
8. It is also important to recognize that men suffer deeply after the experience of abortion. How can we help create a culture in which both women and men are given the space to grieve past abortions, to encounter the mercy of Jesus Christ, and to be welcomed into a journey of healing?

NOTES

“

God has a unique and beautiful plan of healing for each person. He wants to make all things new in our hearts, our mind, our souls—not just once, or twice, but every day.

”

CLOSING

At the end of the group discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for sharing and their involvement in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

What's coming up next?

Video 9: "Maternity is Forever: Adoption"

In this ninth video, "Maternity is Forever: Adoption," participants will be invited to look at the reality of adoption, and the tremendous discernment, maturity, and strength it requires. Adoption can only rightfully come about as a personal discernment, initiated by the woman herself. It can only emerge as an answer to the question, "What is the most loving thing I can do for my child?"

CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.
We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world.
We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love today,
and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be cherished and
protected. We pray for all those who are suffering after abortion, that they
may know your tender love, forgiveness, and mercy. May they know deeply
that you love them, that you have never stopped loving them, and that you
have a plan for their freedom, healing, and flourishing.*


*We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father, to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.*

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.



VIDEO 9

MATERNITY IS FOREVER:
ADOPTION



Adoption is not a
denial of feeling but
an act of love.

SUMMARY

In this ninth video, "Maternity is Forever: Adoption," participants are invited to look at the reality of adoption. A woman needs to know her own goodness and worth so that she can discern before God whether to parent or place her child for adoption. Only she can answer the question, "What is the most loving thing I can do for my child?" She needs accompaniment and support in freely being about to make the best decision for the life of her child and for her own heart.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Participants are invited to share an experience that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are essential for maintaining community.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the “Introductory Question”.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

When was a time when you felt welcomed into someone's life/home/heart?

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #9

MATERNITY IS FOREVER: ADOPTION



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 9: "Maternity is Forever: Adoption"

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this video, we are invited to explore the complex reality of adoption, as a decision that may emerge as a woman contemplates what she wants for her child. While adoption is often seen as an obvious answer in pro-life circles, the reality of adoption is much more complicated and requires tremendous discernment, strength, and love. During the course of the video, we'll have an opportunity to better understand the obstacles to adoption and contemplate what it means to accompany a woman considering adoption.

NOTES

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this time is for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

ROMANS 8:15-17

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’, it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

ROMANS 8:22-25

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”

2 CORINTHIANS 6:18

“I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

GALATIANS 4:4-5

“But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

JEREMIAH 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me? That was new to me?
2. St. Paul writes, “We have received the spirit of sonship” (Romans 8:15). As baptized Christians, we are adopted sons and daughters of God. Have I pondered the profundity of this reality? Take time now to ponder the awesome truth that you are a beloved child of God, ransomed from death by the blood of Jesus. How does this understanding change the way I approach my life?
3. Sister Marie Veritas, SV says that “women often perceive adoption as the worst of their options, because they see it as being a ‘bad mother’, one who ‘gave their child away’. A woman often equates adoption with failure.” What are the times in my life when I felt that I failed? Was I tempted to let myself be defined by that perceived failure? How can my experience of failure help me to better understand many women’s struggle to consider adoption?
4. Sister John Mary says, “It is...important to know that, although it might be tempting or seem like good advice, we have found that it is never helpful to suggest to a mother that she consider adoption, no matter how desperate her circumstances.” Does this come as a surprise to you? Why is it so important to allow a woman to initiate any discussion about adoption? What might a woman likely hear about her own self if we suggest she place her child for adoption? How is this different than if a woman brings up considering an abortion?
5. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

Adoption can only
rightfully come about as
a discernment. It only
comes about in answer to
the question, ‘What is the
most loving thing I can
do for my child?’

”

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. Sister John Mary describes the three categories of women who typically place their children for adoption: those with a capacity for self-sacrificial love; those for whom the conception was traumatic; and those who are deeply connected to their faith and desire their child to be raised within a marriage. Discuss why these three groups might be most likely to choose adoption.
3. Sister Marie Veritas speaks about how “placing for adoption does not mean renouncing motherhood. Maternity is forever. Therefore, it is important to be sensitive to this reality when speaking about adoption. We never use the language of ‘giving up’ or ‘giving away’ a child, but rather ‘making a plan for the child’s life’ or ‘placing or entrusting the child with a family.’” Why is it so important to be sensitive in our language regarding adoption? How can the way we speak about adoption change the understanding of adoption?
4. Sister John Mary says, “It is...important to know that, although it might be tempting or seem like good advice, we have found that it is never helpful to suggest to a mother that she consider adoption, no matter how desperate her circumstances.” Does this come as a surprise to you? Why is it so important to allow a woman to initiate any discussion about adoption? Why must

we never suggest adoption to a woman? How is this different than if a woman brings up considering an abortion?

5. Sister Marie Veritas says, “Our role is to allow ourselves to deeply experience the goodness of this woman, to reflect that goodness back to her, to be a place and person of encouragement, and most importantly, to hold out hope that God’s plans for her and her child are good and beautiful.” How does our availability and openness create the space for a woman to discern freely and truly?

NOTES

[illegible]

NOTES

[illegible]

CLOSING

At the end of the group discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for sharing and their involvement in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

What's coming up next?

Video 10: "Listening a Person into Life: The Art of Being Present"

During the next video, "Listening a Person into Life: The Art of Being Present," participants will have the opportunity to reflect on the power of listening and presence in the work of accompanying another person into life. They will also explore concrete skills for more effective listening.

CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.
We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world.
We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love today,
and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be cherished and
protected. We pray in a special way for all those who are discerning
adoption at this time; may they know your powerful presence, and trust
deeply in your love for them and their children.*


*We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father, to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.*

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.



VIDEO 10

LISTENING A PERSON INTO LIFE:
THE ART OF BEING PRESENT



The primary work of
accompaniment is
listening with the ears
of the heart.

SUMMARY

In the 10th video, “Listening a Person into Life: The Art of Being Present,” participants explore the power of listening and presence in the work of accompanying another person into life. Listening is a set of skills that demonstrate we understand the thoughts and feelings, from the other person’s point of view. By sharing in a person’s story and receiving the other, one can find the strength and support to move through the journey of the heart that God has planned for them.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Participants are invited to share an experience that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are essential for maintaining community.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the “Introductory Question”.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Have you ever met someone who was totally present to you in a conversation? How did that make you feel?

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #10

LISTENING A PERSON INTO LIFE: THE ART OF BEING PRESENT



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 10: “Listening a Person into Life: The Art of Being Present”

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this video we will begin to unpack the skill of listening to others. Truly and deeply listening to another person requires the listener to hear what the other person is saying from her perspective. When a person feels as though she or he is heard, really heard and understood, then she can find strength and support as we accompany another in her journey.

NOTES

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this time is for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

ROMANS 12:15

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

GALATIANS 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

ROMANS 15:5

“May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus.”

JOHN 15:13

“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me? That was new to me?
2. Sister Amata Filia, SV says that “how we speak and listen to others is essential to the health of a relationship.” In order to develop a fruitful and meaningful relationship, we must uncover the heart of the other, we must know and understand the other. Is there a moment in my life when I have felt truly heard and understood by another? How did I know the other person really heard me? How did this make me feel?
3. Sister Amata Filia explains that “the primary work of accompaniment is listening with the ears of the heart.” What does this mean to me? When another person speaks to me, how often am I doing something else at the same time? Are there times that I stop everything I’m doing and just listen? What compels me to give my undivided attention to another?
4. Prior to this video, would I have said I am a good listener? After learning more about the skill of listening, where can I identify room for improvement in my capacity to listen?
5. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), explains that accompaniment “teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other ... [and] to make present the fragrance of Christ’s closeness and his personal gaze” (§169). In the presence of Jesus, take a moment to bring to mind those with whom you work or serve. Ask Jesus to help you see the sacredness of those you encounter.
6. Sister Gianna Maria, SV says, “Demonstrating our understanding also earns us ... the right to offer advice, to speak into her situation, because she trusts us. We trust those most who we know understand us.” Think of those times when someone has offered me advice or when I offered someone else advice, and it was not received well. What was it about those moments that prevented advice from being received well? What helps me to receive advice well? Why is that?
7. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

Listening

A set of skills that demonstrate we understand the thoughts and feelings from the other person’s point of view.

NOTES

[illegible]

“

[Accompaniment] teaches
us to remove our sandals
before the sacred ground of
the other ... [and] to make
present the fragrance of
Christ's closeness and his
personal gaze.

—POPE FRANCIS

”

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. Sister Gianna Maria speaks about the fears of those who work with pregnant women—fears about saying the wrong thing or not knowing what to say. She also says that rather than being worried about what you say, your goodness and sincerity will shine through. How does a posture of receiving the heart of another and accompanying her (as opposed to fixing a project) allow you to let go of potential fears you may have?
3. Cheryl Richardson, a life coach, said “people start to heal the moment they feel heard.” How do you try to demonstrate that you understand someone you’re listening to in order to truly make that person feel known and heard? Are there any new listening techniques you’re curious to try?
4. How is listening different from being able to repeat back word for word what another person has said?
5. Why is it important to speak from a “you” perspective? How does this shift the conversation away from ourselves?
6. Sister Amata Filia talks about the importance of understanding a situation from the other person’s perspective. How can we ensure that we understand what the other person has said from their perspective rather than our own?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

To accompany someone
means to journey with them,
to provide companionship
and support along the way, to
spend time with the other.

”

CLOSING

At the end of the group discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for sharing and their involvement in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

What's coming up next?

Video 11: "Listening a Person into Life: How to Listen Well"

During the next video, "Listening a Person into Life: How to Listen Well," participants will explore the process of active listening, the five levels of listening, and common barriers to listening. Participants will also have the opportunity to reflect on our own listening habits and skills and identify ways we'd like to grow in our capacity to listen well.

CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.
We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world.
We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love today,
and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be cherished and
protected. We pray for the grace to be truly present to those whom we
encounter, that through us, they may experience your loving presence.*

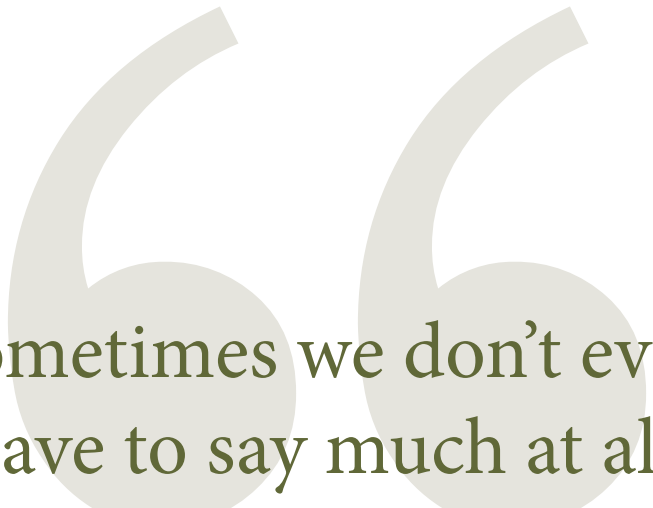
*We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father, to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.*

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.



VIDEO 11

— LISTENING A PERSON INTO LIFE:
HOW TO LISTEN WELL



Sometimes we don't even
have to say much at all.
... We just have to listen
and be willing to step into
someone's world.

SUMMARY

In this 11th video, “Listening a Person into Life: How to Listen Well,” participants explore the process of active listening, the five levels of listening, and common barriers to listening. Listening well to another involves intentional body language, silence, and verbal/physical cues that demonstrate understanding. Good listening also requires empathy, which allows us to listen without applying the filter of our own experience, judgment, values, and needs. Listening well to another opens a beautiful space for the Holy Spirit to work in the situation.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Participants are invited to share an experience that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are essential for maintaining community.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the “Introductory Question”.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Describe a time in your life when you have felt unheard or misunderstood.

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #11

LISTENING A PERSON INTO LIFE: HOW TO LISTEN WELL



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 11: “Listening a Person into Life: How to Listen Well”

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this video, “Listening a Person into Life: How to Listen Well,” we’ll break down some of the essential elements of listening, including the process of active listening, the five levels of listening, and common barriers to listening. We will also have the opportunity to reflect on our own listening habits and skills and identify ways we’d like to grow in our capacity to listen well.

NOTES

[illegible]

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this time is for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

JAMES 1:19

“Know this, my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.”

LUKE 11:28

“But he said, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!’”

JEREMIAH 29:12

“Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me? That was new to me?
2. Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* says, “Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.” Is this how I listen in my day-to-day life? Honestly reflect on your listening tendencies. Looking at the 5 Levels of Listening, which level most accurately describes how I listen most of the time?
3. Do I take time to listen to God each day? Do I give myself time to be silent? Or am I constantly exposed to noise?
4. When have I felt listened to in my life? What effect did it have on me?
5. Sister Gianna Maria says, “When someone is in crisis or distress, or they are vulnerable, or sharing an intimate part of themselves, they deserve to be heard and understood. When we actually listen and understand someone this gives us the perspective we need to best help them out of their crisis!” How have I experienced this to be true in my own life and relationships?
6. Sister Amata Filia says, “Level 5 listening requires empathy. It shows that we don’t have to have all the answers, and sometimes we don’t even have to say much at all. ... We just have to listen and be willing to step into someone’s world.” Am I willing to step into someone else’s world, to try to see the world as they do? Am I willing to let Jesus step into my world? Will I give him permission to do so?
7. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?

Steps of Listening

1. Attending
2. Following
3. Reflecting
4. Silence

Levels of Listening

- Level 1: Not Really Listening at All
- Level 2: Distracted Listening
- Level 3: Listening to Respond
- Level 4: Listening to Interpret in Our Own World
- Level 5: Empathic Listening

Barriers to Communication

1. Giving Advice too Soon
2. Agreeing and Disagreeing
3. Assurance
4. Adding Our Own Story
5. Asking Questions that Take the Speaker off Course

NOTES

[illegible]

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. The Sisters describe the four steps of listening as attending (showing someone we are present to them by our body language), following (demonstrating our attention through verbal cues), reflecting (described more in the next video), and silence (giving someone the space to respond). Have you thought about listening in this way before? Is it new to you? How does it resonate with you? Reflect on each of the steps. Are there ways you can apply these steps in your life? How would listening like this change your conversations and relationships?
3. Sister Amata Filia says, “Don’t give in to the temptation that we have to fill in every moment with more words! Pauses or silence in a conversation can be a powerful moment of just resting in what the other has said, showing empathy, or just giving us the opportunity to take it all in and to come up with a meaningful reply, not just one that is off the cuff.” What is your experience of silence in conversations? How can silence create a helpful space for deeper communication? Are you open to trying to make more room for silence in your conversations?
4. Sister Amata Filia says, “We never want to come across as that person who looks down on someone, giving our own one-sided perspective or advice, but as someone who understands the real struggles [others] are experiencing.” Why is empathy so important in listening well?

5. Untimely advice, agreement/disagreement, and assurance are three common barriers to communication. Which of these barriers am I most likely to engage in? How can these well-intentioned comments dissuade someone from sharing more? Have you ever had an experience like this yourself? Why is it so important to let someone “empty the bucket” before offering our own thoughts?

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

“

Pauses or silence in a conversation can be a powerful moment of resting in what the other has said, showing empathy, or giving us the opportunity to take it all in and to come up with a meaningful reply.

”

CLOSING

At the end of the group discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for sharing and their involvement in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

What's coming up next?

Video 12: "Listening a Person into Life: Reflective Listening"

In the last video, "Listening a Person into Life: Reflective Listening," participants will explore the power of reflective listening in their own lives and in the lives of others. Participants are also invited to continue to reflect on their own tendencies in communication and how they might like to grow.

CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.
We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world.
We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love today,
and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be cherished and
protected. Please give us the peace, trust, and interior silence to be able
to listen deeply to the hearts of our brothers and sisters.*


*We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father, to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.*

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.



VIDEO 12

— LISTENING A PERSON INTO LIFE:
REFLECTIVE LISTENING



When we listen
reflectively, we're taking
in what a woman is telling
us, sorting it out, and
summing it up.

SUMMARY

In this 12th and final video, “Listening a Person into Life: Reflective Listening,” participants are invited to understand how to listen reflectively to another person. Reflective listening means giving space for another person to share, and then to briefly state, in our own words, her thoughts and feelings, without evaluation or judgment. In reflective listening we act as a mirror for the other person, helping her to uncover what is really in her heart. This video includes two role-plays that demonstrate the difference between typical listening and reflective listening, and invites participants to reflect on their own tendencies in communication.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Participants are invited to share an experience that is meaningful to them. Sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are essential for maintaining community.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the “Introductory Question”.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Describe an experience in which a conversation with another person helped you discover and articulate your own thoughts and feelings?

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #12

LISTENING A PERSON INTO LIFE: REFLECTIVE LISTENING



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 12: "Listening a Person into Life: Reflective Listening"

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this final video, we are invited to understand reflective listening more deeply. When we engage in reflective listening, we act as a mirror that allows the other person to better understand her own feelings and uncover the fears, anxieties, and joys deeply hidden in her heart. With reflective listening, we listen without evaluation or judgment, and in a manner that supports another in her journey.

As participants view the video, it may be helpful to pause briefly after each of the example conversations to discuss the elements of reflective listening and identify barriers. You might ask the following questions:

First conversation:

- *In what ways did Martha make the conversation about herself rather than Patricia?*
- *Did Martha appear to be listening or distracted?*
- *What kind of advice did Martha give? Did it seem helpful or well-received?*
- *In what ways did Martha show judgment?*
- *How did Martha wrap up the conversation?*
- *How did Patricia respond to the conversation?*

Second conversation:

- *How did Martha demonstrate reflective listening?*
- *What kind of advice did Martha give? Did it seem helpful or well-received?*
- *In what ways did Martha reflect the goodness of Patricia back to her?*
- *How did Martha wrap up the conversation?*
- *How did Patricia respond to the conversation?*

NOTES

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this time is for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

PROVERBS 20:5

“The purpose in a man’s mind is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.”

PROVERBS 18:13

“If one gives answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.”

MATTHEW 7:12

“So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.”

REVELATION 3:22

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me? That was new to me?
2. Sister Amata Filia says that we don't always need to solve a problem or have an action step at the end of a conversation. Some conversations may just be about venting—a time that gives a person a sense that she isn't alone. Who do I turn to when I need to vent? How does venting to that person make me feel?
3. How do you typically respond when you're facing a big problem or challenge? Are there any techniques you've found helpful in resolving major life obstacles or challenges? Think about an experience in which a conversation with another person helped you discover and articulate your own thoughts and feelings. How did this experience help you understand yourself more deeply? How did it help you understand the situation and help you move forward? How exactly did that happen in the course of the conversation?
4. What listening skill(s) do I want to focus on in my daily conversations with others?
5. What areas of authentic listening can I work on in my own prayer life—my dialogue with God?
6. Take a moment to pray again the prayer from the end of the video:
*Thank you, Lord, for the gift of our capacity to listen.
Thank you for the gift of being heard and understood, by others, and by you.
Help us to give the gift of ourselves in really listening to others, to reverence them and communicate to them your love and their infinite worth.
Help us to train the ears of our heart by listening to you in prayer, by steeping ourselves in your love for us so that we can give that same love to every soul we encounter.
Amen.*
7. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

Reflect

To briefly state, in our own words, the speaker's thoughts and feelings, without evaluation or judgment.

1. Identify the Problem
2. Clarify the Goal
3. Ask for Their Ideas
4. Provide Input and Resolve

NOTES

[illegible]

“

Authentic listening
makes true
dialogue possible.

”

DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. Sister Gianna Marie clarifies that reflecting is low risk because if we are wrong, the other person will likely correct us. How might this understanding of reflective listening give you the freedom to listen authentically?
3. Why is it so important to withhold judgment and act as a mirror for the other person?
4. How have these videos on listening inspired you to listen to others in a new way?

WRAP-UP QUESTIONS

Because this is the final session, it is recommended to take a few moments to allow participants to debrief their experience of the program, articulate new insights, and reflect on their growth. The questions below are provided as aides to reflection. The facilitator may want to include the wrap-up questions in the general discussion time or may want to transition to a new moment for the wrap-up discussion.

1. How has this program changed your understanding of what it means to live the charism of life?
2. Has this program deepened your understanding of the experience of women in unplanned pregnancies? How?
3. How has this series inspired you to uphold life in a new way?
4. Has this experience impacted your own personal relationship with God? In what ways?
5. Has participating in this program changed the way you see yourself, others, and God?

NOTES

[illegible]

“

Reflective listening
is an expression of
empathy.

”

CLOSING

At the end of the wrap-up discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for their sharing and their involvement in the program, and ask participants to complete the online survey. The facilitator may also ask if there are any final questions, comments before concluding the program in prayer.



CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.
We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world.
We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love today,
and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be cherished and
protected. May our words and actions ever reflect your presence
and the deep goodness of those we encounter.*

*We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father, to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.*

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.

McGRATH INSTITUTE FOR CHURCH LIFE

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

The McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame bridges the Catholic intellectual life and the life of the Church, in order to form and empower faithful Catholic leaders for service to the Church and thereby the world.

SISTERS OF LIFE

The Sisters of Life is a Catholic religious community of women dedicated to caring for vulnerable pregnant women and their unborn children, to inviting those wounded by abortion into the healing mercy of Jesus, to fostering a culture of life through evangelization, and to upholding the beauty of marriage and family life.

CAMPCAMPO FILMS

CampCampo is a full scale content creation, digital marketing, and media company that prides itself in the art of storytelling. Its founder, Michael Campo has worked as a professional filmmaker since 2006 and founded CampCampo in 2016.

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