



Week Six:

Let your life speak of God's way of loving

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In loving others Jesus never violates their personal integrity. He invites their full participation and contribution but does not insist or take away their responsibility for themselves.

Group facilitator welcomes everyone. Each person introduces themselves. Leader reminds people of the guidelines. Leader begins by reading out the session title and two sentence explanation.



Connect (5 minutes)

Share experiences of giving to and receiving from others as you lived with attention to God this week. Have you had any sense of keeping going even when it has been difficult?

Share your experience of your risky venture.



Contemplate (5–8 minutes)

Sit as comfortably as possible.
Become aware of the rhythm of your breathing.

Begin with the second verse of Timothy Dudley Smith's hymn. (StF 470)

Lord, for that word, the Word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us,
Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.

Remember one word or phrase or story of Jesus that comes into your mind and spend a few minutes letting it richly dwell in your mind and heart. Repeat the word over and over to yourself slowly. Remember the story and consider how it is speaking to you. Thank God for this time to remember the words of Jesus.

End by saying slowly again the words of the verse you began with.



Consider: (15 minutes)

John 5:1-9 or the Gospel passage just used in worship.

Someone reads the setting. Two people read the passage slowly one after the other.

Setting.

Jesus is in Jerusalem for a festival. There are many in need beside a pool. These include a man who has lain there for 38 years. Jesus does not presume to know the man's mind and desire. He asks him if he really wants to be healed. Only when the man says "yes" does Jesus speak decisively and tell the man to do what he really wants to do.

John 5:1-9 (NRSV)

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralysed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a sabbath.

Three minutes' silence to think about the passage individually. Guard this time of silence for personal reflection. Each person has the opportunity to share a word, phrase or idea which lights up for them or a question raised for them. You may want to do this in twos or threes, rather than as a whole group. Listen carefully without comment to each person's contribution.

Only when everyone has had the opportunity to share, let a conversation develop. The conversation may develop from the contributions or a focus for the conversation might be:

What do we learn about loving other people from this story of Jesus?



Commit (5 minutes)

How are you going to pay more attention to God to live with intentional generosity this week?
What next step are you taking on your risky venture?

Close with the series prayer.

*God of amazing grace,
you entrust to us the gift of your life.
You invite us to notice and treasure you.
May the threads of our lives,
mundane and spectacular,
speak of you, that your love may overflow to others
and the whole world.
Amen.*