

Tapestry Retreat Module – 2006

In the Beginning

Friday Evening through Sunday Morning Worship

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THE RETREAT (listed by session)

Friday Night Session 1

Gathering Activity

1. Journal for each person (people may be invited to bring their own or the retreat planners may choose to provide a new one for each person as a gift to emphasize that new beginnings can be a gift just as we start a new journal given to us by someone.

Name Bandanas

1. Variety of solid color fabrics the size and shape of a bandana – approximately 1 foot square.
2. Pinking shears to trim fabric or someone to sew the edges of the bandana in advance or purchase plain ones in advance.
3. Markers

Graffiti Clay – an ongoing option to be available throughout the retreat.

1. Clay, handy wipes, bowls of water, drying paper
2. Posted Instructions
3. Candles
4. Bibles
5. New Century Hymnals
6. Clothes of various colors and patterns, some with geometrical images to drape over the worship center
7. Copy of the Liturgy for Friday Evening- Session 1

Friday Session 2

1. Journals
2. Bandanas
3. Newsprint and markers

Saturday Session 3

1. One copy of In The Beginning : Perspectives on Genesis for each person.
2. Journals

Saturday Session 4

1. In the Beginning
2. Journals and pens

Saturday *Session 5*

1. Items to be described in Merry-Go Round Game
2. Finger paint paper and paint
3. Hand wipes

Saturday *Session 6*

1. Gather all resources to be used at the retreat for planning of worship

Saturday *Session 7*

Sunday *Session 8*

1. Two note cards per person
2. Stamps
3. Address list of participants

Friday Night Session 1 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.

Gathering Activity 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Gathering activities are ways of beginning, that is true. They are also ways of gathering the fragments of our spirits severed from the routines of life by our journey to this retreat. Each person had to take steps to create this time apart. It is a beginning of something yet to be, something probably not anticipated by the writer of this design but something that emerges through the gathering of women who venture out into a new relationship with one another in faith. Encourage each person to reach out to others. Encourage hospitality to the reality that this is a new opportunity, even if you have participated in women's retreats before. No one stays the same and each moment together is a new one....a beginning.

Name Bandana

1. Invite each woman to pick out a piece of fabric and write her name in one of the corners so that when it is tied around her neck or head some one can read the tag to learn her name.
2. Invite women to decorate the bandana with symbols of moments in their lives when beginnings happened...perhaps only one or two and then label the moment with a word that describes the feeling or thought and perhaps the date of the event.
3. Each woman will be invited to share one of her stories during the BREAKING OPEN CIRCLE later.

Graffiti Clay – *An on going option to be available throughout the retreat*

1. We are accustomed to graffiti boards. However, clay, because of its molding quality engages us in creativity. There is a connection between creativity and beginnings. Let's explore some of the connections women may make.
2. Somewhere in the gathering space arrange a table with supplies and their chairs scattered about. On the table place mounds of clay enough for a human hand to hold. Have a bowl of water available for moistening the clay and hand wipes for clean up. You may also choose to provide baggies in case someone wants to keep theirs moist and return to work on it throughout the retreat. Others may appreciate having paper laid out on the table to dry their creation.
3. Post instructions that read:
 - a. Graffiti Clay: Please take clay and play with it freely.
 - b. When you are ready select one of the quotations listed on the next poster and allow your creativity to be your commentary on that quote. You may also choose to copy the quote in the journal you received at registration.
 - c. The quotes are:
 - i. "It is only the first step that is difficult." Marie De Vichy-Chamrond, Marquise Du Deffand, letter to d'Alembert (1763)
 - ii. "Nothing, of course begins at the time you think it did". By Lillian Hellman, *An Unfinished Woman* (1969)

- iii. “The world is round and the place which may seem like the end may also be only the beginning.” Ivy Baker Priest in *Parade* (1958)
- iv. “But the beginning of things, of a world especially, is necessarily vague, tangled, chaotic and exceedingly disturbing.” Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (1899)
- v. “In my end is my beginning- that’s what people are always saying. But what does it mean? Agatha Christie, *Endless Night* (1968)
- vi. “Beginning is the act of starting.” Webster’s Dictionary

Devotions 7:30 to 8:00 p.m.

1. Make sure the worship center is set up and ready for worship times. Keep the center barren at the beginning for Friday night. Invite women as they arrive to assist you by participating in the beginning ritual to dress the center. Give each person one of these articles: a bible, a candle, fabrics of a variety of colors (one color per person participating), lighter to light the candle.
2. Be sure to place a copy of the Litany in each chair. This is a sign that each person is expected and welcomed and that someone has prepared to welcome her.
3. Have New Century Hymnals at each place as well. If you do not have enough consider borrowing some from a church.
4. Liturgy for Friday Evening

LITURGY FOR FRIDAY EVENING WORSHIP

Opening

Worship leader reads this adapted passage from the Introduction to *IN THE BEGINNING*:

LEADER: This year, your group will spend its time with selected text that appear in the beginning pages of the Bible. This study will ask you to examine familiar stories, often in new ways. This study also will call your attention to stories that are less familiar. The Study recognizes that there are stories embedded within larger stories, that there are characters who have been ignored, and that there are voices in the text that are muted, if not outright silenced. At times the readings will lift up and focus on women. We will look for relationships between women, between wives and husbands, between mothers and children.

Each one of you brings her unique perspective to the group. Each of you has an outlook, a context (your place in the world), a history of her own. Each of you has a way of noticing the relationship of parts of scripture to each other and to the whole. Each of your viewpoints is celebrated.

We will draw on a number of sources, ancient and modern and see them as guests in our circle, who also bring a unique voice. Some may even seem strange. Recognizing that Hebrew, the original language of the

texts, is open to a variety of meanings, we welcome ancient sages (wise people) and contemporary scholars who read the texts in different ways.

An ancient commentator said of scripture, “Turn it over and [again] turn it over, for all therein. And look into it; and become grey and old therein; neither move thou away there from, for than it thou hast no better standard.” This is from the Talmud.

In Rabbi Ishmael’s school it was taught: “And like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces (Jer. 23:29): i.e. just as [the rock] is split into many splinters, so also may one biblical verse convey many teachings” This is from the Sanhedrin. Later we will look more closely at the names and resource from ancient writers and learn more about the wisdom they can inspire.

For now. Let us bring to our time of worship an awareness that our time together affords us the opportunity to open up our own stories to engage them with the ancient story and then a new beginning is born.

Hymn #391 In the Midst of New Dimensions (first 2 verses)

Scripture Jesus Heals the Deaf Person Mark 7:31-35

Voice One: Jesus then left the neighborhoods of Tyre and went on through Sidon to Lake Galilee, going by the way of the territory of the Ten Town. Some people brought him a man who was deaf and could hardly speak,

Voice Two: We have to start somewhere to interrupt the cycle of unknowing, the cycle of spiritual dryness, the cycle of agony.

Voice Three: and they begged Jesus to place his hands on him.

Voice Two: We have to start by touching the raw places.

Voice One: So Jesus took him off alone, away from the crowd, put his fingers in the man’s ears, spat and touched the man’s tongue.

Voice Three: We have to break open the surface to find the places where new beginning can begin.

Voice One: Then Jesus looked up to heaven, gave a deep groan and said to the man, “Ephatha”, which means “be opened!”

Voice Two: We have to be and can be open-ed by others if we allow ourselves to be.

Voice Three: At once the man was able to hear, his speech impediment was removed, and he began to talk without any trouble.

**ALL VOICES: We can be able to hear. We can be able to speak. We can be opened!
We can begin again!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Unison Prayer

Holy God of new dimensions,

be with us to open ourselves to begin again.

Holy God of new dimensions, embrace this journey into retreat.

Retreat, from the hustle and bustle of life, beyond the space, but not retreat from our inner selves.

We bring our tentativeness, our spirits as they are to this time together.

Holy God of new dimensions, break open our stories to find that place where you can touch us to bring us to new speech and hearing. Amen.

Hymn #391 In the Midst of new Dimensions (Last two verses)

Break

Friday Night Session 2

Breaking Open Circle 8:00 to 9:00 p.m.

1. *Distribute Journals. As each woman listens to others the journal will offer an opportunity to take notes and make personal reflections on other perspectives in life and could be a resource in a later exercise in the retreat.*
2. *Share Name Bandanas. Invite women to introduce themselves now in light of what they have experienced so far.*
 - ✓How is it resonating?
 - ✓What are the struggles? *Allow each to share her story to bring depth to the introductions.*
3. *Share a time when you have had to break open your understanding of a situation or person in order to see more...and that was a new beginning.*

Closing 9:00 to 9:30 p.m.

Hammer and rock breaking open ritual

1. Invite women to make a fist as we would to play the game ROCK, PAPER SCISSORS.
2. Invite each woman to mediate quietly on the rock she has made with her fist. Ask each person to reflect on the following questions allowing a full minute between each for personal reflection.
 - a. Name the rock you hold in your hand. Name the rock as a moment, a person and event that seems frozen, hardened in your spirit. Something you have not been able to penetrate. You will not be asked to share this.
 - b. Hold your finger of the other hand up as if it were a hammer in place to break open the rock.
 - c. Examine that finger and then the rock. Name the finger. Name the finger something you believe will be able to break open the rock. What would it take?

- d. If you cannot imagine what it would take then pray for the image to come to you as you move into the night's rest. Ask God to lead you into the tools to break open your story for healing, for renewal for new insight. Whatever you need to move toward God in wholeness.

Good Night!

Saturday

Breakfast 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Prepare for the day

Devotions 9:00 to 9:30 a.m.

Light candle on worship center

Sing Hymn #34 NCH Alabanza

(As the rain is Falling)

Hammer and Rock Breaking Open Ritual – repeat from last night

One Prays for all: Creating and Recreating God. We open our selves to you this day to receive the rain that falls as nourishment for renewal. We acknowledge our need to allow you to move within us as well as our resistance. For the moment, we give thanks for your willingness to walk with us and to shower us with the blessings of this day. We give thanks for the night that has past and receive the light of day as your gift. Amen

Sign Hymn #34 Alabanza once more...

Session 3 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

1. *Gather everyone in the circle. Invite them to bring their journals, bandanas.*
2. Invite the women to create circles and share their thoughts about naming the rock and what it may take to break things open in their own stories. Remind them that they do not have to share specifics unless they want to do so. It is discussion about grappling with the idea of breaking open old issues or beliefs or perspectives to allow something new to happen.
3. Ask the women to be prepared to share.
4. Draw a rock on newsprint and then a figure or hammer above it. Then as the women share their discoveries from the conversation label the rock or hammer with the descriptions they offer.
5. Conclude by asking the women to summarize what they have heard and seen. Acknowledge that opening up to new things is not simple. We expect others to open up to us but we must admit the difficulty in the task when we are asked to open up to other perhaps conflicting views.
6. Now ask the group to name the positive things that can happen by first reflecting on the personal rocks everyone named yesterday and then imagine what their lives would be like if that rock were to open up and something new began to take its place that was life-giving.
7. Ask people to bring their copy of IN THE BEGINNING to the next session.

Break 10:30 to 10:45 a.m.

Session 4 10:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Leader says:

1. Let's put our conversation into a place we can call foundation and now look at some of the exciting options available to us when we open up scripture and allow perspectives from our spiritual ancestors to speak to us.
2. Open your study guide to page 3 and look at the terms on that page. Invite women to share what they know of these terms beyond what is written, if they have any experience with the words invite them to share them.

As the leader you might take this opportunity to share your own research or thoughts about these terms. Some URL resources are:

- a. http://mentsh.com/pirkei_avot.html for information on Pirke Avot
 - b. <http://lexicorient.com/e.o/talmud.htm> for information on the Talmud or <http://www.come-and-hear.com/tcontents.html>
 - c. <http://lexicorient.com.e.o/haggada.htm> for information on the Haggada
 - d. <http://www.faqs.org/faqs/judaism/FAQ/03-Torah-Halacha/section-25.htm>; for more information about Midrash
 - e. *My Jewish Learning.com* will offer a broad and easy understanding of these texts and their use as well.
4. Invite the participants to think about each of the descriptions of the course terms for faithful story and identify an example that coincides out of her experience. For example, something like the Pirke Avot is a collection of saying, she may recall some wise sayings from some one in her family...or perhaps some not so wise saying that revealed a teaching, a lesson she learned about life or taught her to shape a perspective on life happenings. Make notes on the examples in the journal.
 5. Then journal:
 - ✓What impact did this teaching have on the rock I identified?
 - ✓What would it take to break that open?
 - ✓How will I do that?
 - ✓Where will be the beginning?

Lunch and relax time 12:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Consider using this time for the clay graffiti or drawing on the bandana or writing the journal or finger painting.

Session 5 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

1. Invite each person to select one of the lessons *IN the BEGINNING* based on the scripture passage and "key idea" mentioned that seems to appeals to her at first glance. Try not to spend a lot of time on the selection process. It should be about first impressions.
2. Ask people to work in groups of two or three.

3. Invite each group to use the following steps for their time together.
 - a. If you were going to paint a picture of this scripture passage what would your painting look like? If participants would like to draw a sketch or paint encourage them to use their journals for that purpose.
 - b. Invite each person to share their passage, key idea and thoughts about their sketch with others in the group.
 - c. After each person has shared., the others in the group share their perspectives on what they have heard that person say.
 - d. When sharing is finished each person then returns to her thoughts or sketch and reflects on the thoughts of others around her reflections. After doing so she draws a sketch of what she now sees in the passage or in her sketch.
 - e. As a group the participants discuss how their perspective or sketch changed based on the thoughts of others. OR they may want to discuss the resistances they had and why? The final question could be: How did I benefit from sharing and opening myself up to others perspectives of my view of the story?
4. Share the experience with the whole group: What was it like to have others give input to your perspective on things? Were you able to accept their perspectives? Is that always helpful? How do you decide what to take in and what to leave out of your understanding? How do you use other perspectives to your advantage?

Dinner 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Session 6 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Merry –Go Round Warm up Game

1. Gather everyone in a circle . One person is the caller.
2. The caller places an item in the room at the center of the circle.
3. Each person shouts out a word that describes the item.
4. The Caller blows a whistle and everyone shifts over two chairs.
5. Each person shouts out another word that describes the item.
6. This continues until everyone has gone full circle.
7. Point out that where we sit in the world effects what we see.
8. Ask the group if anyone was influenced by what others said?
 - ✓Was it helpful?
 - ✓Not?
 - ✓Get in the way?
 - ✓Opened something up?

Looking at our Rocks

1. Let's look back at the rock you are trying to break open. What connections can you make between the scripture lesson you chose to

read this afternoon and the conversations with your group that can help you break open your rock?

2. ✓Where will you begin?
- ✓How does God figure into your beginning?

Break 8:00 to 8:15 p.m.

Session 7 8:15 to 9:00 p.m.

Plan Sunday Worship

1. Invite people together to create groups with each group assigned a different portion of worship service. For example, scripture, hymns, prayers, call to worship, reflections and any other portion of the worship service you would like to include. Perhaps the group would like to list the portions they would like to see in their closing worship.
2. Remind the groups of the resources they have to create worship. Their own ideas, their journals, resources from IN THE BEGINNING, the clay graffiti pieces, the name bandanas.

Social Time 9 p.m. GOOD NIGHT!

Sunday Morning

Breakfast 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Session 8 How can we stay connected

1. Distribute 2 note cards and envelopes to each person
2. Have each person write a card to themselves to serve as a reminder of the strategies they will employ to break open a new idea, solve a problem and make a new beginning.
3. With the second card have them write a note of encouragement to another woman in the group to do the same.
4. Leaders will distribute addresses and letters will be mailed by leaders shortly after the retreat.

Fill out evaluation forms that you create

Preparation Worship 9:30 to 10:00 a.m.

1. Consider laying name bandanas on the worship center to symbolize each woman's presence in the midst of your time together.
2. You may also consider inviting each woman to offer one insight from the lesson they reviewed that captured their interest to continue in the study when they return home.

Closing Worship 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.