

# Entering the Kingdom

## A Fresh Look at Prayer

**Developed by Reverend Jane Beach**

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## A Fresh Look at Prayer

Dear Facilitator Colleague,

This curriculum is designed as an introduction to a way of prayer that embraces a consciousness of God instead of the challenging situation. It is created from the textbook *The Gathering ~ A 40-Day Guide to the Power of Group and Personal Prayer*, by Unity minister Jim Rosemergy. Jim reminds us that our needs serve their purpose by turning us to Spirit, “We do not need to know how a consciousness of God as our Source will manifest Itself in our lives, but it will.”

The textbook has within it a Forty-Day Guide which we will follow during the course of the class, as well as responses to each of the nine steps of prayer and relevant articles in the workbook.

I have made the teaching agendas as easy to follow as possible, so that every facilitator is successful. As in my other classes, you will see an italicized section preceded by “Say:” or “Ask:” This is your signal that the following material can be read. Hopefully it will help you lead the discussion, if you would like. Page references include a decimal number that refers to the position of the paragraph on the page, for example p. 35.2 means page 35, second paragraph.

Please use the facilitator guides as *guides*. Pick and choose what works best for you, and let the experience be fluid. The sharing of your personal experiences with the class is invaluable; your honesty and vulnerability make it safe for others to do the same.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestion please don't hesitate to contact me.

With gratitude and love,  
Jane

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# Week 1 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-Class Checklist

- Registration forms, payment guidelines
- Whiteboard, markers
- Name tags, markers
- Extra pens
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes for marking special pages in textbook or workbook, colored pencils and crayons – sometimes words cannot convey the experience (make sure colored pencils are sharpened)
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups
- Facilitator copy of *The Gathering*
- “Notes” handouts (3-hole punched) on table at door entrance – available each week for general note-taking

## Week 1: Turning to God

### Opening Prayer

#### Welcome

- Say:
  - *In this class we will study nine steps of a prayer practice explained in Jim Rosemergy’s book, The Gathering. It is a new and powerful way to look at prayer and your personal relationship with the God of your understanding. If you commit to spending quality time and intention to this practice, a deeper experience of the Presence will unfold. The experience will be unique to you and at the same time, you will see similarities with others as they share their insights and revelations.*
  - *At this time I would like to go over the logistics of the class and give you a chance to ask questions.*

#### Class Logistics

- **Introduce teaching assistant**
  - On whiteboard or flip chart, write down the teaching assistant’s phone number and email address.
  - Explain the teaching assistant’s function in keeping all records of attendance, makeup work and other requirements.

- The TA is also available to help with class work and homework questions. Feel free to call her/him/them for prayer.
- **Go over Student Agreements** – Workbook pp. 5-6.
  - Take special care to cover the **Final Thought Paper** on p. 5. Students may want to tag this page with a colorful Post-It note for reference.
- **Take care of yourself**
  - Say: *Take restroom breaks as needed, stand if you need to; whatever works is fine.*
  - *We will have a short break about half-way through the class time.*
- **Journal**
  - Say: *You may want to keep a journal for this class, as new thoughts are going to come up for you. You can also use the “Notes” handouts for general note-taking during class.*
- **My Intention**
  - Say: *It is my intention to create an open and safe atmosphere for you so that you may consciously explore the practice called “The Gathering.” The experience will be different for everyone, and every experience is perfect. In this class you will be met with acceptance, support, and unconditional love. It is a judgment-free zone.*
- **Are there any questions or comments?**

### **Introductions / Sharing**

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. Tell us your name.
    - Classes are community-building, and making sure everyone knows each other’s names is imperative. If the class is small, students may only need to say their names for the first couple of weeks. If it is large, this practice may be continued each week.
    - Name tags are good!
  2. What is one gift I bring to the world? (compassion, laughter, etc.) Explain
- Say: *The opening whiteboard questions are intended for everyone to answer. It is always okay to pass instead of sharing, but do say your name so we can get to know you.*

### **Discussion – Your Experience of God and Prayer**

- Depending upon the size of the class, the discussion that comes from the questions below will take 30-40 minutes. It is important to take the time, as it lets others see that they are not alone in this community of like-minded people. It opens up an avenue to honest, authentic, vulnerable sharing for the rest of the course. Be ready to share your own experiences and insights.

- 1) Ask: *As a child, what did you believe about God?* (It may be different than what they were taught in Sunday school.) Everyone answers.
  - 2) *What did you believe about God and prayer?* Everyone answers.
  - 3) *What do you want to know about God today? What questions do you have? It is okay to have doubts; that may be the reason you were drawn to this class!* Everyone answers.
    - Ask the teaching assistant to write down people’s questions/doubts so they can be addressed during the course of the class.
- *Now we are going to take a look at both the textbook and the workbook. We will walk through this week’s readings together so that we all have a clear understanding of what to do with the Home Studies.*

### ***The Gathering***

- **Read the Forward** p. x.3 (page x, third paragraph) beginning, “Here is the premise: ...” and ending “... with God nothing is impossible!” on p. xi.
  - Say: *This week you will read the entire Forward as part of your Home Studies. At this point it’s important for you to have the basic foundation upon which the textbook stands. Are there any questions at this point?*
- **Read the Introduction** pp. xiii-xvi.
  - Have students take turns reading the introduction, beginning on p. xiii.
  - I have found that going around the circle/table, having each student read one paragraph works well.
  - If a student doesn’t want to read they just say, “Pass” and the next student picks it up.
  - Say: *Together, we will investigate what it means to release our human needs and the other steps laid out for us. Tonight we prepare to do the work in this course. We began with some of our thoughts about how we know God. After the break we will consider how we turn toward God in our daily life.*

### **Break**

### **Workbook exercises**

- Have students turn to workbook pp. 8-9 “A Morning Prayer in a Little Church” by Helen Hayes.
  - 1) Ask them to read the article on their own and then respond to it in writing under “My Thoughts” at the end of the article (you might want to play very quiet meditative music).
  - 2) **The importance of writing/journaling:** Emphasize that it is essential to write their response to each article in complete sentences, as opposed to simply thinking about it or making quick bullet-point notes.
    - The flow of writing out our thoughts opens a gateway to revelation.

- This sets the example for what the students will do at home, giving adequate time to all writing opportunities.
- 3) When it appears that most people are done writing, say: *Take another two minutes to complete your thoughts for now, knowing you can finish at home.*
- 4) Ask 2-3 volunteers to share their thoughts.
- If time, do the same for “God is the Rock” by Marianne Williamson pp. 10-11.
  - 1) If you are short on time, this can be completed at home.

### **Taking a look at the Home Study for Week 2**

- Be sure to leave 10-15 minutes to go over the Home Study on workbook p. 13 to ensure that the students understand the set-up for each week’s Home Study.
- **Workbook**
  - After looking at the Home Study page on workbook p. 13, walk the students through each page of the Student Workbook for Week 2.
  - They are to read and respond in writing to each of the articles.
  - Point out workbook p. 20 on which they will respond to “Taking the Step” for Step 1.
    - Students may find that as their thoughts deepen as the week goes on, they will come back to “Taking the Step” with renewed revelation.
    - Encourage as much writing as possible.
- **Spiritual Practice**
  - Ask if there are questions or comments about the daily spiritual practice, which is essential to this course.
- **The Gathering**
  - Take a quick look at Step 1, the first chapter of the textbook beginning on page 1, “I Release My Human Need.”
  - Point out “Taking the Step” on p. 10, which is the springboard for the workbook exercise bearing the same title.
  - Say: *Jim Rosemergy has given us a Forty Day Guide with reflection questions that correspond to each step/chapter of the book. We will use those questions to guide us through each week’s concepts, along with your responses to the articles and “Taking the Step” in the workbook.*
    - Take a moment to go through each of the Forty Day Guide exercises for Week 2: Days 1 – 7, pp. 94-107, once again, encouraging the students to get into the habit of writing full thoughts.
    - Because of the small writing space in the book, a journal may be invaluable for writing.
- Ask if there are questions or comments.
- End with remarks about gratitude for being together to do this amazing work; each person being a vital part of the whole.

# Week 2 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Name tags, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups
- Facilitator copy of *The Gathering*
- “Step 1” handout

## Week 2: Human Needs

### Opening prayer

**Before introductions and sharing** have students turn to *The Gathering* p. 102.2 (page 102, second paragraph) beginning “Here is the image ...”

- Ask someone to read that paragraph aloud.
- Give them a moment to contemplate the question, “What is one experience you have had with being a wick in God’s candle?” (A time when God’s love, peace, joy, etc. radiated through you)

### Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. Name
  2. What is one experience you have had with being a wick in God’s candle?
- Everyone answers.

### Discussion Step 1: *I release my human need.*

- Have students turn to *The Gathering* p. 5 “Needs Serve a Purpose,” and ask a student to read that section. Ask: *What does this mean to you personally? Do you struggle with the idea that you can turn away from your need and turn to God instead or is this something you have tried and found to be true, that turning to God actually works?* Volunteers share.

**Small group sharing** – 60 minutes (Groups of three) This can also be done in dyads for 30-45 minutes.

- Say: *You have done a lot of prayer, contemplation and writing about Step 1 “I release my human need,” this week. We are now going to share your insights, questions and possible next steps in small groups.*
- Ask students to get into groups of three to discuss their responses to the articles and Step 1 in their workbook, as well as the exercises from the Forty Day Guide in *The Gathering* that they did for homework.
- Say: *Try to get into a group of people you do not know well.*
- *Remember that everything said in your small group is confidential.*
- *Also remember that there is no “fixing;” please don’t offer well-meant suggestions.*
- *After each person shares, the response is “Thank you,” and then the next person begins.*
- *You have 60 minutes, and there is a lot to talk about. Kindly make sure that those who speak up easily make time for those who tend to be quiet to talk. If you are one who tends to stay quiet, use this time to stretch a bit out of your comfort zone and let your voice be heard.*
- *I will join your groups, spending a few minutes with each group. This helps me get a sense of the flow of the class and where we are individually and as a whole.*
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left. We will take a break after this time of sharing. Are there any questions?*

## Break

### Whole group sharing

- Say: *I’d like to have everyone share one insight from the textbook, the Forty Day Guide exercises, from the workbook, or from their dialog with their small group. Everyone shares.*
- If time is short ask 2-3 volunteers to speak.

### “The Gathering” process – Step 1 handout (quiet meditative music)

- Pass out the Step 1 handout. This gives the students a visual reminder of Step 1 as we begin this process, as well as a place to put their thoughts once The Gathering process is completed.
- Say: *Now is the time when we affirm the power of personal and group prayer in what Jim Rosemergy calls “The Gathering.” We have come together as a group because we believe in the power of prayer and meditation. We take this time to affirm our Truth, both individually and as a group.*
- *Here is how it will work: I will help settle us into an open, receptive state. Then we will go around the circle, and each person will declare Step 1 “I release my human need,” until it comes back to me, at which time I will say it, as well.*
- *There are two things to remember:*
  - *1) You needn’t rush to state Step 1. Feel free to take a moment to become fully grounded before saying the words, “I release my human need.”*
  - *2) As the handout reminds you, you may want to add your specific need to your declaration, such as “I release my human need for employment.” It is up to you; please speak to what is in your heart.*

- *Are there any questions?*
- Ask students to become quiet, allowing their breathing to guide them to their center, where the presence of their own inner wisdom resides. (pause 1-2 minutes)
- Then quietly say to the person on your left, “John, when you are ready to affirm Step 1, please do so.” Each person continues around the circle until it comes back to you, at which time you state Step 1.
- Keeping the quiet sacredness of the circle, close the sharing time with words of gratitude for the declarations of truth that have been spoken. For instance, “With gratitude, we accept the truth of what has been spoken.”
- Then, with the same sacred quiet, ask the students to take a few moments to write or draw their thoughts about Step 1 on the handout. Very likely, there will be new revelation as a result of tonight’s class. Sometimes it is hard to put into words, and that is why the colored pencils and felt pens are available – images may be the best avenue to what is being felt.

### **Review Home Study for Week 3**

- As you share the Home Study for next week, have students turn to the last page of the week’s Student Workbook on p. 22, which focuses on Step 2.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

### **Closing prayer**



# Week 3 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Name tags, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups
- Facilitator copy of *The Gathering*
- “Step 2” handout

## Week 3: Human Condition

### Opening prayer

### Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. Name
  2. How were you kind to yourself today?
- Everyone answers.

### Discussion Step 2: *I accept my human condition so that I can express my spiritual nature.*

- Have students turn to *The Gathering* p. 112-113, Day 10. Say: *It’s helpful to better understand and practice the process of acceptance once we know what we need to accept. In this exercise you listed at least 10 things you need to accept. At this time choose three of them to share.* Everyone says three things they need to accept.
- *As you can see, you are not alone! That is the beauty of coming together as a group to do this work.*

### Small group sharing – 60 minutes (Groups of three) This can also be done in dyads for 30-45 minutes.

- Say: *You have done a lot of prayer, contemplation and writing about Step 2 “I accept my human condition so that I can express my spiritual nature,” this week. We are now going to share your insights, questions and possible next steps in small groups.*
- Ask students to get into groups of three to discuss their responses to the articles and Step 2 in their workbook, as well as the exercises from the Forty Day Guide in *The Gathering* that they did for homework.

- Say: *Once again try to get into a group of people you do not know well.*
- *Remember that everything said in your small group is confidential.*
- *Also remember that there is no “fixing;” please don’t offer well-meant suggestions.*
- *After each person shares, the response is “Thank you,” and then the next person begins.*
- *You have 60 minutes, and there is a lot to talk about. Kindly make sure that those who speak up easily make time for those who tend to be quiet to talk. If you are one who tends to stay quiet, use this time to stretch a bit out of your comfort zone and let your voice be heard.*
- *I will join your groups, spending a few minutes with each group. This helps me get a sense of the flow of the class and where we are individually and as a whole.*
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left. We will take a break after this time of sharing. Are there any questions?*

## Break

### Whole group sharing

- Say: *I’d like to have everyone share one insight from the textbook, the Forty Day Guide exercises, from the workbook, or from their dialog with their small group. Everyone shares.*
- If time is short ask 2-3 volunteers to speak.

### “The Gathering” process – Step 2 handout (quiet meditative music)

- Pass out the Step 2 handout. Say: *Once again this is the time when we affirm the power of personal and group prayer in what Jim Rosemergy calls “The Gathering.” We have come together as a group because we believe in the power of prayer and meditation. We take this time to affirm our Truth, both individually and as a group.*
- *Here is how it will work: I will help settle us into an open, receptive state. Then we will go around the circle, and each person will declare Step 2 “I accept my human condition so that I can express my spiritual nature,” until it comes back to me, at which time I will say it, as well.*
- *Remember that you needn’t rush to state Step 2. Feel free to take a moment to become fully grounded before saying the words, “I accept my human condition so that I can express my spiritual nature.”*
- *Are there any questions?*
- Ask students to become quiet, allowing their breathing to guide them to their center, where the presence of their own inner wisdom resides. (pause 1-2 minutes)
- Then read *The Gathering* pp. 20-21 “The Banquet” aloud, ending in the middle of the second paragraph on p. 21 after the words, “Notice there is no judgment of what has been said. You do not need to contend with guilt or justify behavior or actions. Your role is acceptance, and it is healing.” (pause 60 seconds)
- Then quietly say to the person on your left, “When you are ready to affirm Step 2, please do so.” Each person continues around the circle until it comes back to you, at which time you state Step 2.

- Keeping the quiet sacredness of the circle, close the sharing time with words of gratitude for the declarations of truth that have been spoken. For instance, “With gratitude, we accept the truth of what has been spoken.”
- Then, with the same sacred quiet, ask the students to take a few moments to write or draw their thoughts about Step 2 on the handout. Again, it is likely that there will be a new deepening of consciousness as a result of tonight’s class. Sometimes it is hard to put into words, and that is why the colored pencils and felt pens are available – images may be the best avenue to what is being felt.

#### **Review Home Study for Week 4**

- As you share the Home Study for next week, have students turn to the last page of the week’s Student Workbook on p. 32, which focuses on Step 3.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

#### **Closing prayer**



# Week 4 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Name tags, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups
- Facilitator copy of *The Gathering*
- “Step 3” handout

## Week 4: Release

### Opening prayer

### Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. Name
  2. What is one old thought, belief or pattern of behavior you have released in your life? What was the result? (From the workbook article “Breaking Patterns” – smoking, excessive shopping, sarcasm, impatience, etc.)
- Everyone answers.

### Discussion Step 3: *I willingly release any part of my human self that is a barrier to God.*

- Give the students a couple of minutes to review their thoughts about “Open Your Present” by Melody Beattie on workbook pp. 34 – 36.
  1. Ask: *Thinking about your personal response to this article, what does free will have to do with releasing barriers to God?* Volunteers answer.
  2. *How have barriers kept you from experiencing the God of your understanding?* Volunteers answer.
  3. *Melody Beattie says: “Gee, I really can trust God, we think. And we think that not because we get what we want, because as most of us know that can be an illusion. We think that because for that moment we feel the order, the aliveness, the connectedness. The Reason behind things happening shows its face ...” Think back to the last few years. How has your connection with the divine grown?* Volunteers answer.

- *One step at a time, the more we can release, the more we open up to our own Truth. Releasing is a big step, one that is taken daily. You are now getting ready to share the process with your classmates in small groups.*

**Small group sharing** – 60 minutes (Groups of three) This can also be done in dyads for 30-45 minutes.

- Ask students to get into groups of three to discuss their responses to the articles and Step 3 in their workbook, as well as the exercises from the Forty Day Guide in *The Gathering* that they did for homework.
- Say: *Again I will join your groups, spending a few minutes with each group.*
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left. We will take a break after this time of sharing. Are there any questions?*

### **Break**

### **Whole group sharing**

- Say: *I'd like to have everyone share one insight from the textbook, the Forty Day Guide exercises, from the workbook, or from their dialog with their small group. Everyone shares.*
- If time is short ask 2-3 volunteers to speak.

### **“The Gathering” process – Step 3 handout** (quiet meditative music)

- Pass out the Step 3 handout. Say: *Once again this is the time when we affirm the power of personal and group prayer as each person speaks Step 3 aloud.*
- Ask students to become quiet, open and receptive to their own inner wisdom. (pause 1-2 minutes)
- Then quietly say to the person on your left, “When you are ready to affirm Step 3, please do so.” Each person continues around the circle until it comes back to you, at which time you state Step 3.
- Keeping the quiet sacredness of the circle, close the sharing time with words of gratitude for the declarations of truth that have been spoken. For instance, “With gratitude, we accept the truth of what has been spoken.”
- Then, within the same sacred quiet, ask the students to take a few moments to write or draw their thoughts about Step 3 on the handout.

### **Review Home Study for Week 5**

- As you share the Home Study for next week, have students turn to the last page of the week’s Student Workbook on p. 42, which focuses on Step 4.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

### **Closing prayer**



# Week 5 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups
- Facilitator copy of *The Gathering*
- “Step 4” handout

## Week 5: Forgiveness of Others

### Opening prayer

### Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. Name (If everyone knows each other’s names by this point, this can be omitted.)
  2. How are you giving Love in your life today?
- Everyone answers.

### Discussion Step 4: *I willingly forgive others.*

- Ask: *What have you learned about yourself and forgiveness this week?* Give students a few minutes to look over their responses to the workbook articles and Step 4 in the workbook, the exercises in the Forty Day Guide and the Returning to Love exercise before asking each to respond to the question. Everyone answers.
- *There is no right or wrong, no place in the process where you are ‘supposed’ to be. Wherever you are on your journey of forgiveness is held in unconditional love by a God that knows you better than you know yourself and loves you completely, just as you are.*

**Small group sharing** – 60 minutes (Groups of three) This can also be done in dyads for 30-45 minutes.

- Ask students to get into groups of three to discuss their responses to the articles and Step 4 in their workbook, as well as the exercises from the Forty Day Guide in *The Gathering* that they did for homework.

- Say: *Again I will join your groups, spending a few minutes with each group.*
- **As facilitator:** As you visit each group, pay attention to each individual's sharing. If it looks like someone is not actually doing the writing – or is not putting much effort into it – review the importance of setting aside time to complete the exercises/writing thoroughly throughout the course of the week with the entire class as you go over the homework at the end of class. This will address the issue without calling attention to any one person.
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left. We will take a break after this time of sharing. Are there any questions?*

## Break

### Whole group sharing

- Say: *I'd like to have everyone share one insight from the textbook, the Forty Day Guide exercises, from the workbook, or from their dialog with their small group.* Everyone shares.
- If time is short ask 2-3 volunteers to speak.

### “The Gathering” process – Step 4 handout (quiet meditative music)

- Pass out the Step 4 handout. Say: *Once again this is the time when we affirm the power of personal and group prayer as each person speaks Step 4 aloud.*
- Ask students to become quiet, open and receptive to their own inner peace, the place that knows only loving-kindness, where forgiveness has never even been an issue. (pause 1-2 minutes)
- Then quietly say to the person on your left, “When you are ready to affirm Step 4, please do so.” Each person continues around the circle until it comes back to you, at which time you state Step 4.
- Keeping the quiet sacredness of the circle, close the sharing time with words of gratitude for the declarations of truth that have been spoken. For instance, “With gratitude, we accept the truth of what has been spoken, knowing all is well.”
- Then, within the same sacred quiet, ask the students to take a few moments to write or draw their thoughts about Step 4 on the handout.

### Review Home Study for Week 6

- As you share the Home Study for next week, have students turn to the last page of the week's Student Workbook on p. 54, which focuses on Step 5.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

### Closing prayer

# Week 6 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups
- Facilitator copy of *The Gathering*
- “Step 5” handout

## Week 6: Forgiveness of Self

### Opening prayer

### Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  - How are you giving Love *to yourself* today?
- Everyone answers.

### Discussion Step 5: *I willingly forgive myself. I am precious to God.*

- Say: *Think back to times in your life when you knew God was real. It may have been when looking at a sunset, walking on the beach, finding just the right words when consoling someone in pain, finding your way home when you took a wrong turn, getting through a difficult time in your life or being so happy you jumped for joy. What happened? How did you feel?*
  - Give students a few minutes to think back on times when they knew there was *something* greater than their intellectual thinking at work.
  - You may want to ask them to journal about it either in their journal or on the “Notes” paper.
  - Then ask each to respond to the question; everyone answers.
- *How does experiencing God help you accept the fact that you are precious to God?* Everyone answers.
- *What does knowing you are precious to God feel like?* Everyone answers.
- These conversations bring the reality of God home to those who may not believe that they have a personal relationship with the God of their understanding. When they hear the stories that others share, they begin to see that they have always had a relationship with Spirit – they just didn’t realize it.

**Small group sharing** – 60 minutes (Groups of three) This can also be done in dyads for 30-45 minutes.

- Ask students to get into groups of three to discuss their responses to the articles and Step 5 in their workbook, as well as the exercises from the Forty Day Guide in *The Gathering* that they did for homework.
- Say: *Again I will join your groups, spending a few minutes with each group.*
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left. We will take a break after this time of sharing. Are there any questions?*

## **Break**

### **Whole group sharing**

- Say: *I'd like to have everyone share one insight from the textbook, the Forty Day Guide exercises, from the workbook, or from their dialog with their small group.* Everyone shares.
- If time is short ask 2-3 volunteers to speak.

### **“The Gathering” process – Step 5 handout (quiet meditative music)**

- Pass out the Step 5 handout. Say: *Once again this is the time when we affirm the power of personal and group prayer as each person speaks Step 5 aloud.*
- Ask students to become quiet, open and receptive to knowing how loved they are by a God that cherishes them. They are precious to God. (pause 1-2 minutes)
- Then quietly say to the person on your left, “When you are ready to affirm Step 5, please do so.” Each person continues around the circle until it comes back to you, at which time you state Step 5.
- Keeping the quiet sacredness of the circle, close the sharing time with words of gratitude for the declarations of truth that have been spoken. For instance, “With gratitude, we accept the truth of what has been spoken, knowing all is well.”
- Then, within the same sacred quiet, ask the students to take a few moments to write or draw their thoughts about Step 5 on the handout.

### **Review Home Study for Week 7**

- As you share the Home Study for next week, have students turn to the last page of the week’s Student Workbook on p. 63, which focuses on Step 6.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

### **Closing prayer**

# Week 7 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups
- Facilitator copy of *The Gathering*
- “Step 6” handout

## Week 7: Consciousness of God

### Opening prayer

### Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. What brings you a sense of sacred presence?
  2. How can you know this presence all the time?
- Everyone answers.

**Discussion Step 6:** *I acknowledge that a consciousness of God is the answer ... that life is a consciousness of God.*

- Give students a few minutes to look back at their thoughts about Gregg Levoy’s “The Turn of Events” on workbook pp. 68-70. Read the following portion of the last paragraph on p. 68 : “Enter each day,” Sam Keen instructs in *Hymns to an Unknown God*, “with the expectation that happenings of the day may contain a clandestine message addressed to you personally. Expect omens, epiphanies, casual blessings, and teachers who unknowingly speak to your condition.”
- Ask: *What omens, epiphanies, casual blessings, and teachers who unknowingly speak to your condition have shown up in your life? What happened? How did you feel?* Invite each student to share one event. Be ready to share a personal experience.
- *Although the event may be different, each brings us to a greater consciousness of God. How does this shift in consciousness change our lives?* Volunteers answer.

**Small group sharing** – 60 minutes (Groups of three) This can also be done in dyads for 30-45 minutes.

- Ask students to get into groups of three to discuss their responses to the articles and Step 6 in their workbook, as well as the exercises from the Forty Day Guide in *The Gathering* that they did for homework.
- Say: *Again I will join your groups, spending a few minutes with each group.*
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left. We will take a break after this time of sharing. Are there any questions?*

## **Break**

### **Whole group sharing**

- Say: *I'd like to have everyone share one insight from the textbook, the Forty Day Guide exercises, from the workbook, or from their dialog with their small group.* Everyone shares.
- If time is short ask 2-3 volunteers to speak.

### **“The Gathering” process – Step 6 handout (quiet meditative music)**

- Pass out the Step 6 handout. Say: *Once again this is the time when we affirm the power of personal and group prayer as each person speaks Step 6 aloud.*
- Ask students to become quiet, open and receptive to an ever deepening consciousness of God. (pause 1-2 minutes)
- Then quietly say: *This week we are going to affirm Step 6 in unison. We will do so now. Together we say, “I acknowledge that a consciousness of God is the answer ... that life is a consciousness of God.”*
- Say: “With gratitude, we accept the truth of what has been spoken, knowing all is well.”
- Then, within the same sacred quiet, ask the students to take a few moments to write or draw their thoughts about Step 6 on the handout.

### **Review Home Study for Week 8**

- As you share the Home Study for next week, have students turn to the last page of the week’s Student Workbook on p. 74, which focuses on Step 7.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

### **Closing prayer**

# Week 8 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups
- Facilitator copy of *The Gathering*
- “Step 7” handout

## Week 8: A Time Beyond Time

### Opening prayer

### Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  - What matters most to you? Why?
- Everyone answers.

### Discussion Step 7: A Time Beyond Time

- Give students a few minutes to look back at their thoughts about the Week 8 workbook articles, each of which asks us to look past our understanding of God to the mystery of God.
- Ask: *What did your thoughts about this week’s reading tell you about your ever-deepening relationship with the God of your understanding?* Everyone shares.
- Ask: *If you can put it into words, how do you sense the Divine? Do you feel it, see it, hear it? Is it a quiet knowing?* Volunteers share.
- *In what instances/circumstances are you most apt to sense the Presence?* Everyone shares.
- *What has been your experience of waiting ... and then waiting some more?* Volunteers answer.
- For each of these questions, be ready to share your from personal experience, emphasizing that our personal relationship with Spirit is unique to each of us.

**Dyad sharing** – 45 minutes (This week’s sharing is a bit shorter, giving us ample time for the meditation after the break.)

- Ask students to partner with one other person to discuss their responses to the articles and Step 7 in their workbook, as well as the exercises from the Forty Day Guide in *The Gathering* that they did for homework.
- Say: *Again I will spend a few minutes with you and your partner.*
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left. We will take a break after this time of sharing. Are there any questions?*

## Break

### Whole group sharing

- Say: *I'd like to have everyone share one insight from the textbook, the Forty Day Guide exercises, from the workbook, or from their dialog with their partner.* Everyone shares.
- If time is short ask 2-3 volunteers to speak.

### **“The Gathering” process – Step 7 handout with a 15-20 minute meditation** (quiet meditative music)

- Pass out the Step 7 handout.
- Ask students to become quiet, open and receptive to an ever deepening consciousness of God. (pause 1-2 minutes)
- Say: *This week we affirm the sacredness of waiting in the following meditation:*
  - *In this sacred space, take a moment to get comfortable in your chair.* (pause)
  - *Take a deep cleansing breath in, exhale and relax.* (pause)
  - *As your breath slows and deepens, notice any tension you are holding in your body and gently let it go.* (pause)
  - *Know that you are in a safe, calm place. You are peaceful and you are loved.* (pause)
  - *Allow each thought presented to be in the stillness within you, with complete acceptance.*
  - *If an image, thought or idea comes up that you want to remember, you may want to quickly jot it down and then return to the stillness. If not, you will have time to write after the meditation.*
    - 1) *My life is a consciousness of God.* (2-3 minutes of silence)
    - 2) *Stop struggling.* (2-3 minutes)
    - 3) *God is enough.* (2-3 minutes)
    - 4) *Wait ... listen ... trust.* (2-3 minutes)
    - 5) *It Is, God Is, I Am* (2-3 minutes)
  - *With gratitude, I close out this time of meditation, accepting without condition or judgment anything that was or was not revealed to me. All is well.*
- Then, within the same sacred quiet, ask the students to take a few moments to continue to write or draw their thoughts about Step 7 on the handout.

### **Review Home Study for Week 9**

- As you share the Home Study for next week, have students turn to the last page of the week's Student Workbook on p. 84, which focuses on Step 8.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

### **Closing prayer**



# Week 9 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups
- Facilitator copy of *The Gathering*
- “Step 8” handout

## Week 9: Consciousness of God

### Opening prayer

### Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  - What blessings are beginning to be made manifest in your life today? (from 40-Day Guide, Day 38)
- Everyone answers.

### Discussion Step 8: *I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. God is enough.*

- Say: *In our opening sharing we talked about the blessings that are being manifest in our lives today. Why do you think this is so? Volunteers share.*
- Ask: *The concept, “God is enough” is powerful. At the same time, our human lives can be very intoxicating. What are you doing to help you remember “God is enough” when very real human challenges occur? Volunteers share.*
- *What is one way that God is real to you today? How do you sense the Presence? If there is someone who has not yet shared their answer to the other questions, say: I’d like to hear from someone we haven’t heard from yet tonight.*

**Small group sharing** – 60 minutes (Groups of three) This can also be done in dyads for 30-45 minutes.

- Ask students to get into groups of three to discuss their responses to the articles and Step 8 in their workbook, as well as the exercises from the Forty Day Guide in *The Gathering* that they did for homework.

- Say: *Again I will join your groups, spending a few minutes with each group.*
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left. We will take a break after this time of sharing. Are there any questions?*

## **Break**

### **Whole group sharing**

- Say: *I'd like to have everyone share one insight from the textbook, the Forty Day Guide exercises, from the workbook, or from their dialog with their small group. Everyone shares.*
- If time is short ask 2-3 volunteers to speak.

### **“The Gathering” process – Step 8 handout (quiet meditative music)**

- Pass out the Step 8 handout. Say: *Once again this is the time when we affirm the power of personal and group prayer as each person speaks Step 8 aloud.*
- Ask students to become quiet, open and receptive to an ever deepening consciousness of God. (pause 1-2 minutes)
- Then quietly say to the person on your left, “When you are ready to affirm Step 8, please do so.” Each person continues around the circle until it comes back to you, at which time you state Step 8.
- Say: “With gratitude, we accept the truth of what has been spoken, knowing all is well.”
- Then, within the same sacred quiet, ask the students to take a few moments to write or draw their thoughts about Step 8 on the handout.

### **Review Home Study for Week 10**

- As you share the Home Study for next week, have students turn to the last page of the week’s Student Workbook on p. 94, which focuses on the Step 9 reminders and the presentation of the final Thought Paper.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

### **Closing prayer**

# Week 10 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Candles, flowers
- Facilitator copy of *The Gathering*

## Week 10: The Kingdom

### Opening prayer

### Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  - I know that I am in the Kingdom of God when \_\_\_\_\_.
- Everyone answers.

### Presentation of Thought Papers

- Before presentations begin, go over the instructions and ask for questions.
- It is an oral presentation of a thought paper entitled, “My Experience of God.” Using *specific, real-life examples* answer **one** of the following three questions:
  1. How do I know that God is real?
  2. How has my relationship with God deepened?
  3. How has my relationship with myself deepened?

Your Thought Paper will last between 4-5 minutes. You can read your paper or talk about it. Optional: You may also include drawings, photos, poems or any other visual representation of your experience of the Divine.

- Ask who would like to begin, and that person will go first. I have found that people will self-select their own turn at presenting their papers – it all works out beautifully!

**Break** Light desserts during the break if this option was chosen for the evening

### Continue with Presentation of Thought Papers

**Discussion** – beginning a Gathering group

- This would be a perfect opportunity to ask who would like to form and conduct a Gathering group. Please see *The Gathering* pp. 175-179.

### **Final Thoughts**

- Say: *As we close this class, knowing it is only a beginning to exploring these 9 steps as our consciousness of God continues to unfold, I'd like to go around the circle/room and ask each person to say one thing that is in their mind and heart at this moment.* Everyone shares.

### **Closing prayer**

The following pages contain the handouts.



# *Notes*

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# Step 1

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Step 1: *I release my human need.*

Sometimes it is good to be specific about the need you are releasing. For instance, *I release my human need to employment* or *I release my human need to be healed*. This surrender may be difficult, but I encourage you to do it. Remember, humanity has brought needs to God for thousands of years with little success. It is time to try something new.

## Step 2

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**Step 2:** *I accept my human condition so that I can express my spiritual nature.*

## Step 3

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**Step 3:** *I willingly release any part of my human self that is a barrier to God.*

It is suggested that you pause and listen to Spirit speaking to you, as if it were asking, “What are you willing to release? What do you need to sacrifice, so you can move forward in your spiritual journey? What burden do you need to let go of before you can soar?” Take the step and listen as answers come from within you, for there is a part of you that knows the answers to the questions above.

## Step 4

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**Step 4:** *I willingly forgive others.*

# Step 5

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**Step 5:** *I willingly forgive myself. I am precious to God.*

## Step 6

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**Step 6:** *I acknowledge that a consciousness of God is the answer ... that life is a consciousness of God.*

# Step 7

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## **Step 7: A Time Beyond Time**

*The time beyond time is the gift of Step 7, for it is when transformation takes place. Seeds are planted in these quiet moments that bear fruit not in our lives, but as our lives.*

- Jim Rosemergy

## Step 8

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**Step 8:** *I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. God is enough.*

- Jim Rosemergy