

# Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace

**Developed by Reverend Jane Beach**



# Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace

Dear Facilitator Colleague and Friend,

The Prayer of St. Francis brings nearly every faith tradition together. This curriculum, based on the Prayer of St. Francis, is an invitation to say yes to a life of acceptance, love, and service, right smack in the middle of our very human lives.

Within this 8-week curriculum are stories written by some of our ministerial colleagues, authentically showing up as regular people, not holy folks who always have it all together. What a gift to the readers, giving permission to be who we are, learning and growing through every life circumstance, just like the ministers. I invite you to share your life experiences as you facilitate the class.

I have made the teaching agendas as easy to follow as possible. For instance, you may see an italicized section preceded by “Say:” This is your signal that the following can be read aloud. Hopefully it will help as you lead the discussion.

I did my best to give you possible answers (in parenthesis) to questions you might ask, as well as page numbers from the readings which support your discussion points. When you see a reference to a page such as p. 24.3, it means page 24, third paragraph.

Please use the facilitator guides as *guides* – they are not set in stone. Pick and choose what works best for you, and let the experience be fluid.

If you have any suggestion or questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me. To me curriculum is alive, and I am always learning.

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 and “Notes” handouts (3-hole punched) on table at door entrance – available each week for general note-taking
- 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/break
- Facilitator copy of *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*
- “Make Me an Instrument” handout (2 sides)
- “The Music of My Life” handout (2 sides)

## Week 1: Make Me an Instrument

### Opening prayer

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis” found in the very beginning of the textbook, right after the table of contents.
  - Each week the class will begin and end by reading this prayer together.

### Welcome

- Say: *This course is about everyday people living everyday lives, doing the best they can to be a presence for good in the world. In the workbook you will find stories of regular folks, including some of our beloved ministers. Each of us has a story to tell. Each of us has a life filled with meaning. Each of us contains greatness as yet undiscovered.*
- *You will find yourself within the pages of the workbook and within the writings of St. Francis’ Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace. We are more alike than we are different. And we all matter.*
- *This class is based on “The Prayer of St. Francis,” an invitation to become an instrument of God’s peace in the world. Introspective by intention, you may just learn to love and accept yourself at a deeper level.*
- *Are there any questions before we begin?*
- *I would like to cover some class logistics – it’s important that everyone feels comfortable with our physical space and the expectations of the class.*

## Class Logistics

- **Introduce Teaching Assistant**
  - On whiteboard or flip chart write down TA phone number & email address
  - Explain the teaching assistant's function in keeping all records of attendance, homework, 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.
  - Make special note of the final **Thought Paper** due the last week of class.
  
- **Take care of yourself**
  - Take restroom breaks as needed, stand if you need to, etc.
  - We will have a short break midway through the class.
  
- **Journal**
  - Say: *You will want to keep a journal for this class for two main reasons:*
    1. *As part of your homework, you will be asked to incorporate The Prayer of Saint Francis into your meditation practice, followed by journaling about your thoughts, feelings and possible next steps.*
    2. *As you move through this course, new thoughts are going to come up for you. Write them down – Spirit is in the process!*
  - *If you do journaling at home that may be pertinent to class discussions, please bring your journal to class each week.*
  
- **My Intention**
  - Say: *It is my intention to create such a safe atmosphere for you that you can relax into deepening your personal relationship with yourself, with Spirit and with the world around you. As we are each beautifully unique, this process – and outcomes – will be different for everyone.*
  - *In this class you will be met with acceptance, support and unconditional love. It is a judgment free zone, and we will all learn from each other.*

## 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.
    - Nametags are good!

2. What drew you to a class on the Prayer of St. Francis? (What is your intention in taking this class? What do you want to get out of it?)
  - Say: *It is always okay to pass instead of sharing, but do say your name so we can get to know you.*

### Discussion

- **Textbook *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace* Introduction p. 1-3**
  - Have students take turns reading one paragraph each until entire introduction is read. Make it clear that if a student doesn't want to read they can just say, "Pass," and the next person will read.
- Say: *It is clear that this prayer has had an impact on our world. Taking a look at the background information on workbook p. \_\_\_\_, we can see some of the ways it has appeared publically.*
- Ask: *Do any of you have experience with The Prayer of St. Francis? Where have you heard it? Do any of you use it personally?*
  - Be ready to share your own experience to get the discussion going. For instance, after discovering God was real after my life as an atheist, this was the first prayer that I loved enough to memorize. I then used it to build a spiritual practice – I contemplated every line very slowly, seeking to become the person I felt was trying to emerge through this prayer. Then I tried to remember it throughout the day so that it could guide my thoughts and actions. (Volunteers share)
- Ask: *What does it mean to be an instrument of God's peace?* Volunteers share.
  - See textbook Chapter 1, p. 7.4 (page 7, paragraph 4) beginning "When Francis asks to be made ..." (opening up to become a vessel through which God can create)
  - See textbook p. 7.6 – p. 8 (whole page) beginning "I once had a conversation ..." (living authentically, from the heart, without ego)
- Say: *In many ways we are already an instrument of peace. In other ways we are still on the path to becoming more of an instrument. Every journey is unique, and all are perfect, just as they are.*

### "Make Me an Instrument" handout (meditative CD)

- Pass out the handout, go through it together, ask if there are questions.
- Before they begin ask the students to let the answers emerge naturally, without writing what they think is "expected" and instead writing what is authentically honest and real.

### Small group sharing (25 minutes)

- As students finish, ask them to go to the back of the room (or another designated spot) to become a group of 3 to talk about what came up for them.
- They should try to meet with people they do not know well.

- Remind them of confidentiality, and what is said in the small group stays in the small group unless the person sharing wishes to bring it back to the whole class.
- Ask them to be mindful that each person gets an equal time to share.
- Say: *I will come around to let you know when there are 5 minutes left.*

## Break

### Whole group sharing

- Ask each person to share one thing from their handout or something significant from their small group discussion. Remind them that they can only share what they said in the small group.

### Rev. Gayle Dillon's story and "The Music of My Life" handout

- Say: *In our workbook you will find personal stories written by some of our ministers, who are real people with life experiences much like yours. It's often those life experiences that bring them to ministry.*
- Turn to workbook pp. 11-12 and give the students a few minutes to read (or re-read) "The Road to Ministry" by Rev. Gayle Dillon.
- Say: *In many ways Rev. Gayle's story is our story. Many of us have taken difficult paths, stumbled and fallen, learned tools to stand up again, and then used our experiences for good. Our experiences become the music of creation, as we give to the world from what we have learned.*
- Pass out "The Music of My Life" handout, quickly go over it, and have students take a few minutes to answer the questions. (meditative CD)

### Whole group discussion

- As students begin to finish say: *Two more minutes*, as a gentle indication of when we will stop.
- Say: *I'd like to have each person share their answer to one of these questions. As always, if you would like to pass you can do so.*
- If time is tight, ask for 2-3 volunteers to share instead.
- An ending thought can be that we are really more alike than we are different, and each of us is an integral part of the music of creation.

### Review Home Study for Week 2

- As you share the Home Study for next week, have students turn to the last page of the week's Student Workbook information on p. 14.
- Say: *Next week we will begin by discussing passages in the textbook reading that were significant for you. Please highlight them in some way so you will be ready to share them with us, along with why they are meaningful to you.*
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.



**Closing prayer**

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis,” just as they did to begin the class, ending with, “And so it is.”

# *Notes*

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# *Make Me an Instrument*

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*“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.”*

- St. Francis of Assisi

How am I already an instrument of peace?

How can I become even more an instrument of peace?

As an instrument of peace, in what ways might my relationships with others change?

How will my relationship with myself change?

How will my relationship with Spirit change?

# *The Music of My Life*

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“But when Francis calls us to pray to be instruments of God’s peace, he is reminding us to honor our own part in the music of creation, no matter how humble or great... our lives are the music in heart of God.”

*Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace* p. 9

How has my life changed in the last few years? Be as specific as possible – give examples.

Why have these changes taken place?

In what ways am I part of the music of creation?

# Week 2 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Name tags, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts (3-hole punched) on table at door entrance – available each week for general note-taking
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes for marking special pages in textbook or workbook, colored pencils and crayons (make sure colored pencils are sharpened)
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups/break
- Facilitator copy of *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*
- “Loving-Kindness Meditation” handout

## Week 2: Hate/Love, Injury/Pardon

### Opening prayer

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis” found in the very beginning of the textbook, right after the table of contents.

### Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. Please say your name.
  2. In what way have you practiced turning toward love/pardon this week? (This can include loving and pardoning yourself).

### Discussion on textbook reading: *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*

- Say: *The chapters in this book may be short, but they are packed with wisdom! Please take a moment to look back through chapters 2 and 3. When you come to a passage that was significant for you, tell us where it is in the book so that we can look at it with you, read it aloud and then tell us why it was meaningful to you.*
- Discussion follows as volunteers share.

### Small group discussion

- Say: *This week you did some written work with the article “Two Wolves in the Heart” on workbook pages 16-23.*

- *At this time we will break into groups of 3 to discuss your revelations and insights. Try to get into a group of people you do not know well.*
- *You have 30 minutes; please 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, please use this time to stretch a bit out of your comfort zone and let your voice be heard.*
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left.*
- *Are there any questions?*

### **Whole group sharing**

- *Say: I'd like to go around the room and have each person share one insight about sowing love and pardon in your life.*
- If time is limited, ask for 2-3 volunteers, instead.

### **Break**

### **Meditation on Loving-Kindness** (meditative CD)

- Pass out the “Loving-Kindness Meditation” handout.
- Ask the students to make themselves comfortable, becoming ready to sink into an experience of loving-kindness – the place within themselves where love and pardon reside.
- Slowly read the Meditation on Loving-Kindness that follows this week’s teaching agenda, pausing often, giving students a chance to really experience what they are hearing and feeling.
- Once the meditation is done, wait 5-6 minutes while students respond to the meditation on the handout.
- Signal readiness to move on by saying, “*Take about 60 seconds more to finish.*”
- Ask volunteers to share their experiences.
- Ask, “*How can we use loving-kindness to turn toward love instead of hate and pardon where there is injury?*” (When you are kind to someone else, you also benefit. It feels good!)

### **Reading**

- Are there any other questions or comments about this week’s reading, either in the textbook or the workbook?

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

- Have students turn to the last page of the week’s Student Workbook information p. 28.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.



**Closing prayer**

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis,” just as they did to begin the class, ending with, “And so it is!”

# *Loving-Kindness Meditation*

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# Meditation on Loving-Kindness

From *Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love & Wisdom*  
By Rick Hanson

Find a posture that helps you remain relaxed and alert. Settle into the breath.

Be aware of the sensations of the breath in the region of the heart. Bring to mind the feeling of being with someone you love.

Keep feeling that love. Sense that love flowing through your heart, perhaps in a rhythm with breath. Feel how that love has a life of its own, flowing through your heart, not specific to any one person.

Sense your love toward the people you know well, your friends and family. Feel a generous loving-kindness flowing through your heart in rhythm with the breath.

Feel that loving-kindness extending farther outward, toward the many people you know who are neutral to you. Wish them the best, too. Wish that they suffer less. That they be truly happy.

You may sense this loving-kindness like a warmth or light. Or like a spreading pool, with gentle waves extending farther and farther to include ever more people.

Feel your loving-kindness reaching out to include even difficult people; your loving-kindness has a life and a strength of its own. Your loving-kindness understands that many factors affected these difficult people and led them to be a problem for you. You wish that even people who have mistreated you may suffer less. That they, too, may be truly happy.

The peacefulness and strength of this loving-kindness flows outward ever farther to include people who you know exist, though you do not know them personally. Sense loving-kindness for all the people living in your country today, whether you agree with them or not, whether you like them or not.

Take a few minutes to explore extending your loving-kindness to the billions of people living here on earth. Loving-kindness for someone somewhere laughing. Loving-kindness for someone crying. Loving-kindness for someone getting married. Loving-kindness for someone caring for a sick child or parent. Loving-kindness for someone worried. Loving-kindness for someone being born. Loving-kindness for someone dying.

Your loving-kindness is flowing comfortably, perhaps in rhythm with the breath. Your loving-kindness is extending to all living beings on the earth. Wishing them all well. All kinds of animals, in the sea, on the earth, in the air: may they all be healthy and at ease. Wishing well to plants of all kinds: may they all be healthy and at ease. Wishing well to

microorganisms of all kinds, the amoebas, the bacteria, even the viruses: may every living being be at ease.

So that all beings are “us.”

So that all children are my own.

All life, my relatives.

The whole earth, my home.

After a moment say: *When you are ready, please bring your attention back to this room and write or draw about your thoughts, feelings and experiences of this meditation.*

# Week 3 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Name tags, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts (3-hole punched) on table at door entrance
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups/break
- Facilitator copy of *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*
- “Faith/Hope” handout

## Week 3: Doubt/Faith, Despair/Hope

### Opening prayer

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis” found in the very beginning of the textbook, right after the table of contents.

### Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. Please say your name.
  2. Name one way you are living in faith today.

### Small group discussion

- Say: *This week you wrote about a time you lived in faith on workbook p. 33. You wrote about an experience of answered prayer on p. 34. Both articles followed personal stories written by Religious Science ministers.*
- *This week you also did some written work with the article “Your Life is Calling” on workbook page 36.*
- *At this time we will break into groups of 3 to discuss your revelations and insights about your writing, and anything else that came up in the reading. Try to get into a group of people you do not know well.*
- *You have 30 minutes; please 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, please use this time to stretch a bit out of your comfort zone and let your voice be heard.*
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left.*

- *Are there any questions?*

### **Whole group sharing**

- Say: *I'd like to go around the room and have each person share one insight about their experiences with doubt and faith, and despair and hope.*
- If time is limited, ask for 2-3 volunteers, instead.

### **Break**

### **Experiential on Faith and Hope (meditative CD)**

- Pass out the “Faith/Hope” handout.
- Say: *This week you have considered how faith and hope have played a part in your lives. You can also see your life changing as your faith and hope grow.*
- *On this handout you are going to think of a word, phrase or sentence that begins with the letters in FAITH and HOPE. They should be personal to you.*
- *Feel free to decorate the page as you write, using the colored pens and pencils in front of you. Allow your creativity to shine!*
- When most are done (or time is running short) remind them that there are two minutes to finish up.
- Have them turn to their neighbor and partner up for a few minutes to share.

### **Whole group sharing**

- Depending upon time, ask everyone to share their results from one letter of FAITH and one letter from HOPE.
- If time is short ask for 2-3 volunteers to do the same.

### **Reading**

- Are there any other questions or comments about this week’s reading, either in the textbook or the workbook?

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

- Have students turn to the last page of the week’s Student Workbook information on p. 38.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

### **Closing prayer**

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis,” ending with, “And so it is!”

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# Week 4 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Name tags, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts on table at door entrance
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups/break
- Facilitator copy of *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*
- “Darkness, Light and Sadness, Joy” handout

## Week 4: Darkness/Light, Sadness/Joy

### Opening prayer

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis” found in the very beginning of the textbook, right after the table of contents.

### Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. Please say your name.
  2. Did you believe in God as a child? If so, what did you think God was like?

### Discussion

- *This week you read articles about personal stories written by Religious Science ministers.*
- *Take a moment to look back at the article by Dr. Cindy Flor on workbook p. 41 about the death of her husband and then losing her diamond, only to have it found in the sanctuary that had not been vacuumed.*
- *Also look at the following article by Rev. Barbara Leger on pp. 42-43, coming into the light from an absolute feeling of darkness as she set out to establish a ministry in the Ukraine (wait a few minutes while students review these articles).*
- *Think back to your own life. How can you relate to either of these stories?*
  - *For instance, have you ever found something you thought was lost?*

- *Do you own a physical object that brings you happiness because it reminds you of someone dear to you?*
- *Have you ever been “called” to do something difficult – way out of your comfort zone – and you questioned your ability to do it?*
- *Be ready to share a story of your own in order to get the conversation going.*
- Volunteers share
- Ask: *Where do you believe God was in your experience?*
- Question to everyone, even if they didn’t share a story: *How do your beliefs about the presence of Spirit – a Higher Power – affect how you live today?*

### **“Darkness, Light and Sadness, Joy” handout (meditative CD)**

- Say: *It is easier to become a presence of light for others when we have experienced the light of Spirit for ourselves. It is the light that allows us a sense that everything is going to be okay, without any logical reasoning or need to figure it out.*
- Go over the handout and ask for questions.
- Give the students time to complete the handout.

### **Dyads**

- If time, have students break into dyads to discuss the handout.
- If time is running short, they can take the handout to their small group discussion after the break.

### **Break**

### **Small Group Discussion**

- Say: *Our opening question was about your childhood beliefs in God. That was a preface to your small group discussion on what you believe now about the Divine (or whatever word is most comfortable for you) and what you believe Life is asking of you.*
- *At this time we will break into groups of 3 to discuss your revelations and insights about your writing, and anything else that came up in the reading. Try to get into a group of people you do not know well.*
- *You have 40 minutes.*
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left.*
- *Are there any questions?*

### **Whole group sharing**

- Say: *I’d like to go around the room and have each person share one insight that came up for them in the homework, the handout, or in the small group discussion.*
- If time is limited, ask for 2-3 volunteers, instead.

### **Reading**

- Are there any other questions or comments about this week’s reading, either in the textbook or the workbook?

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

- Have students turn to the last page of the week’s Student Workbook on p. 49.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

### **Closing prayer**

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis,” ending with, “And so it is!”

## *Darkness, Light and Sadness, Joy*

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When we have experienced the light of the Divine within ourselves, we can reach for it in times of personal confusion, sadness, and pain.

Write about a challenging time when you experienced the light of God.

How might this experience empower you to become a light for another?

# Week 5 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Name tags, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts on table at door entrance
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups/break
- Facilitator copy of *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*
- Large index cards – at least one for each student
- “Making a Difference” handout

## Week 5: To Console and Understand

### Opening prayer

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis” found in the beginning of the textbook.

### Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. Name
  2. The thing that gives my life meaning is ...

### Discussion

- Say: *This week we read three chapters in our textbook – 8, 9 and 10.*
  - *Chapter 8 asked us to define, the best we can, how we know the God of our understanding. This is a question we also explored last week, and it is an important one.*
  - Have volunteers read pp. 71.2 – 72.4, beginning, “Most of us want this closeness to God.”
  - Ask: *How does giving a name to the Divine help “fit God into the human heart?”*

- *How do you fit God into your heart?* Encourage everyone to share – we learn from each other. Be prepared to answer the question personally to get the conversation started.
- *What else do you do to foster a personal relationship with Spirit?*
- Say: *In **chapter 9** we read about the loss of the mother of the author’s son’s best friend. It was written so clearly that we could easily feel the pain and confusion of Kent Nerberg’s nine-year-old son.*
  - *Kent suggests that his son, “... console Danny in the way that feels best.” (p.78) In the end when the phone rings and it is Danny, Kent’s son whispers, “Oh, Danny, I’m so sorry!” and we know that both young boys have been given a great gift – Danny the gift of being consoled, and Kent’s son the gift of consoling.*
  - *We are reminded that St. Francis kissed a leper’s rotting fingers, even though he felt “nausea and repulsion.” (p. 79)*
  - *Why is it often difficult to step up to the plate to be with someone who is hurting?*
  - *Have you had experiences of consoling another? Again, be ready to speak from your own experience. Volunteers share.*
- *In **chapter 10** we read the heartwarming story of the soldier who returned the samurai sword to its rightful owner. The two men may have been on opposing sides, but in the end they honored the Oneness that is true for all of us – they saw themselves as brothers, not enemies.*
  - Read p. 85.4-86.4 beginning, *“What that ordinary man from Oklahoma did...”*
  - *Has there ever been a time when you were able to see past your differences with another to move toward understanding? Volunteers share. Again, be ready to speak from your own experience.*

**Standards of Integrity Exercise** (adapted from *Mastering Life’s Energies* by Maria Nemeth)

- *On p. 87 Kent Nerberg talks about our world, “Far from being a great system and puzzle that we are asked to comprehend, it is a dynamic, ever-changing reality that we can influence by our every act and gesture.”*
- *This week you completed an exercise about the people you admire and how those same qualities lie within you.*
- *Those attributes you listed are your Standard of Integrity. Standards are principles, and principles are guidelines you can use to bring the best of who you truly are to every situation.*
- *Integrity is the state of being complete, whole and sound. Therefore, your Standards of Integrity are principles that guide us to wake up to our true nature. You can focus on*

*them when everything around you is in flux. They reflect what endures, no matter the situation or circumstance.*

- *Look again at the exercises you did on workbook pp. 57-60. Choose 5 qualities that are now going to become your standards of integrity.*
- On the whiteboard write:

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| <p>These are my standards of integrity. I am<br/>Compassionate<br/>Visionary<br/>Trustworthy<br/>Generous<br/>Creative<br/>I know these are mine because I see them in others.</p> |
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- Pass out a large index card to each student.
- Ask students to write the five qualities they have chosen, along with the beginning and ending sentences on the card. (meditative CD)
  - Students may want to use the colored pens and pencils to complete this exercise, giving it their own creative flair.
  - Encourage students to keep this card with them as encouragement to practice being who they truly are in every circumstance.

### **Dyad Discussion**

- *When you are done please move to the back of the room to partner up with one other person to discuss your revelations and insights about your at-home exercise, and share your Standards of Integrity card. You have 25 minutes.*
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left.*
- *Are there any questions?*

### **Break**

#### **“Making a Difference” handout** (meditative CD music)

- As students return from the break pass out the “Making a Difference” handout.
- Create a sacred space with a short prayer affirming that every person in the room makes a difference in this world.
- Read through the handout and then students answer the questions.

### **Whole group sharing**

- *Say: I’d like to go around the room and have each person share one insight from this handout.*

- If time is limited, ask for 2-3 volunteers, instead.

### **Reading**

- Are there any other questions or comments about this week's reading, either in the textbook or the workbook?

### **Review Home Study for Week 6**

- Have students turn to the last page of the week's Student Workbook on p. 62.
- Say: *Next week we will begin by discussing passages in the textbook reading that were significant for you. Please highlight them in some way so you will be ready to share them with us, along with why they are meaningful to you.*
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

### **Closing prayer**

- In unison everyone reads "The Prayer of Saint Francis," ending with, "And so it is!"



## *Making a Difference*

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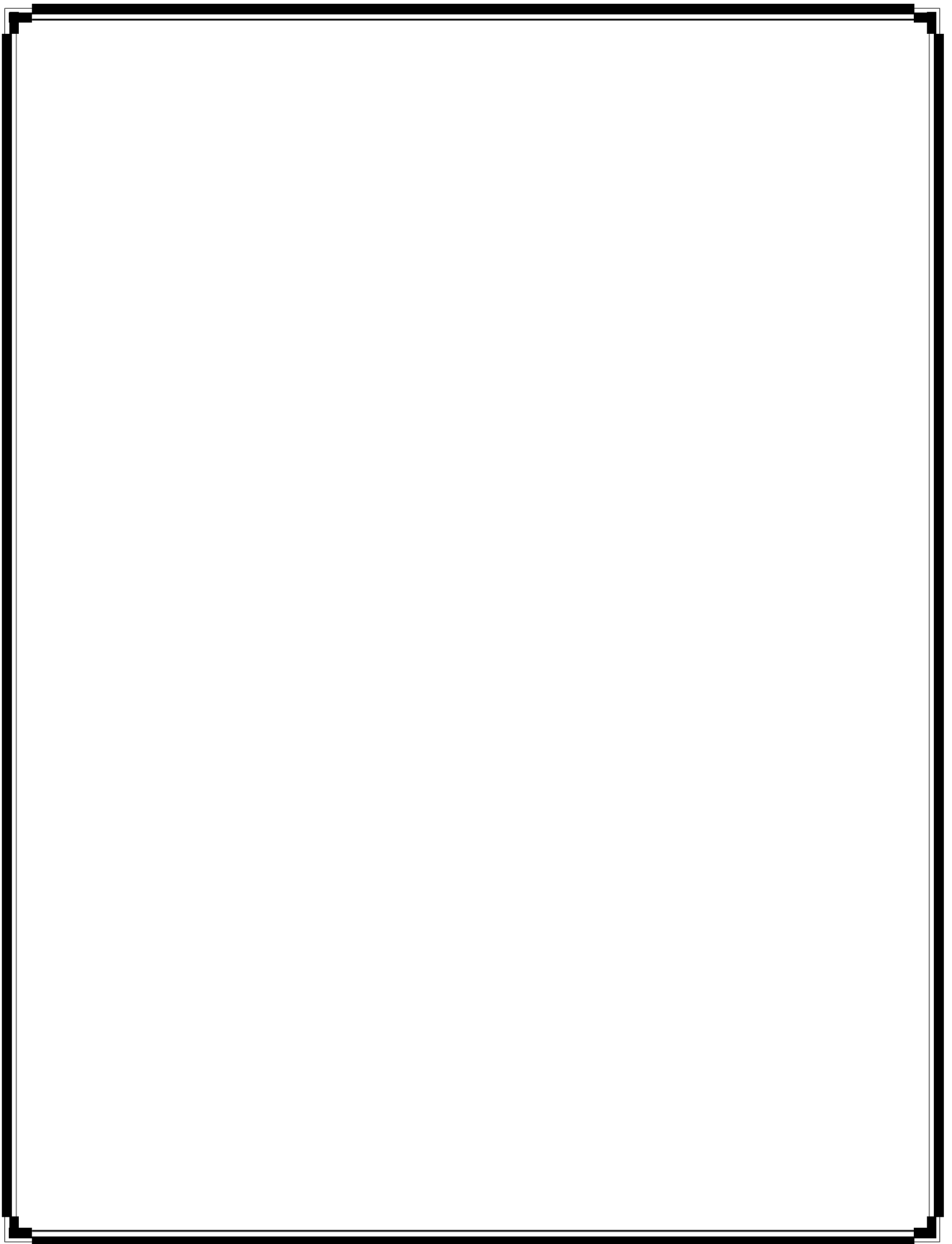
“If an ordinary man from Oklahoma can stand against the horrors of war with only a samurai sword and a quest for understanding, who are we to think that our actions are too insignificant to have an effect in this world?”

*Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace* p. 89

Reread your Standards of Integrity card. What is one tiny next step you can take to make a difference in this world?

Are you willing to take it? Why or why not?

If so, how do you intend to move forward?



# Week 6 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Name tags, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts on table at door entrance
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups/break
- Facilitator copy of *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*
- “Love” handout

## Week 6: To Love and to Give

### Opening prayer

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis” found in the beginning of the textbook.

### Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. Name
  2. Share one thing you gave this week and how you felt as a result. (Explain that this can mean taking the trash out without being asked, putting on a new roll of toilet paper before the old one was gone, letting another have the last word, cleaning out your car, making a phone call to say hi, volunteering, etc.)

### Discussion on textbook reading: *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*

- Say: *Our textbook continues to be packed with wisdom. Please take a moment to look back through chapters 11 and 12 in which we looked at the power of love and the power of giving. When you come to a passage that was significant for you, tell us where it is in the book so that we can look at it with you, read it aloud and then tell us why it was meaningful to you.*
- Discussion follows as volunteers share.

### Small group discussion

- Say: *This week you answered questions from the article “The Spider and the Sage” on workbook pps. 67-68.*
- *You read about Rev. Katherine Revoir’s very real experiences of giving, followed by a final question from Alan Cohen’s article “Filling Up and Spilling Over.”*
- *At this time we will break into groups of 3 to discuss your revelations and insights.*
- *You have 30 minutes.*
- *I will let you know when there are 5 minutes left.*
- *Are there any questions?*

### **Break**

#### **“Love” handout** (meditative CD music)

- As students return from the break pass out the “Love” handout, featuring the prayer called “He Asked for Charity” by St. Francis.
- After turning on the meditative CD music, have several different students read the poem aloud, one at a time, so that the idea that God only asks that we love has a chance to really sink in.
- Ask if there are any questions, and then ask students to spend a few minutes drawing or writing in response to the prayer.
- After several minutes, ask them to contemplate the question, “How can I offer my love?” Write it on the whiteboard and ask students to respond to it on their handout.

### **Whole group sharing**

- Ask each person to either share one thing that this particular St. Francis prayer brought up for them, or they can answer the question, “How can I offer my love?”

### **Reading**

- Are there any other questions or comments about this week’s reading, either in the textbook or the workbook?

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

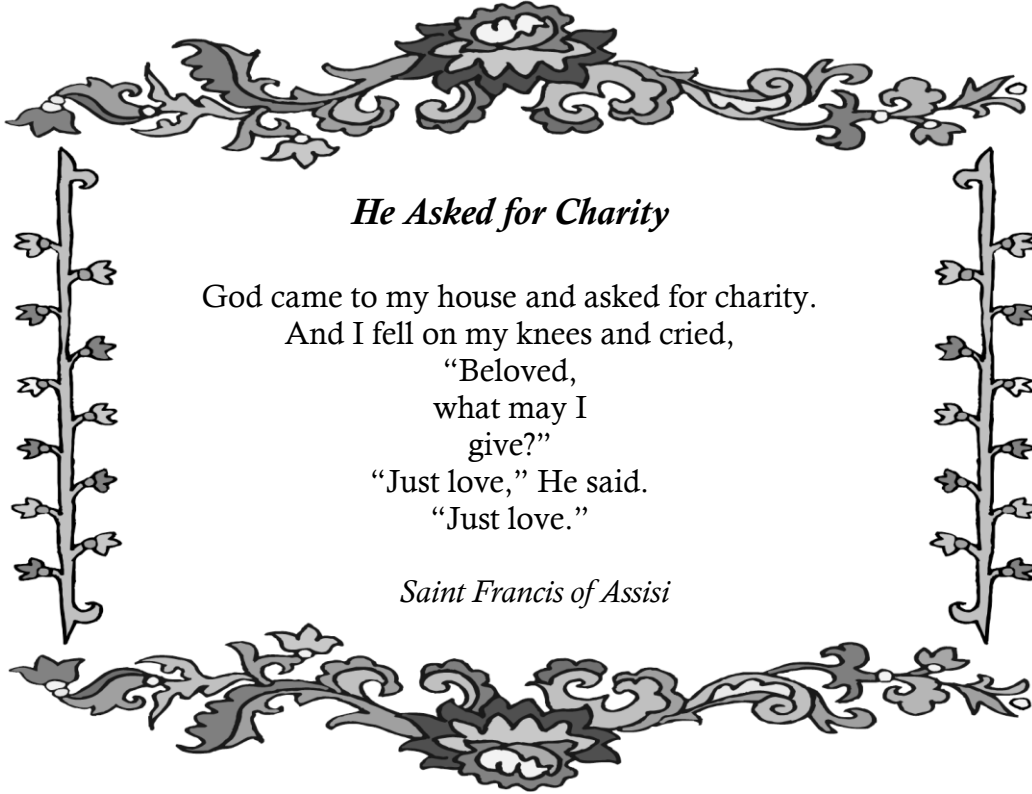
- Have students turn to the last page of the week’s Student Workbook on p. 74.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

### **Closing prayer**

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis,” ending with, “And so it is!”

# *Love*

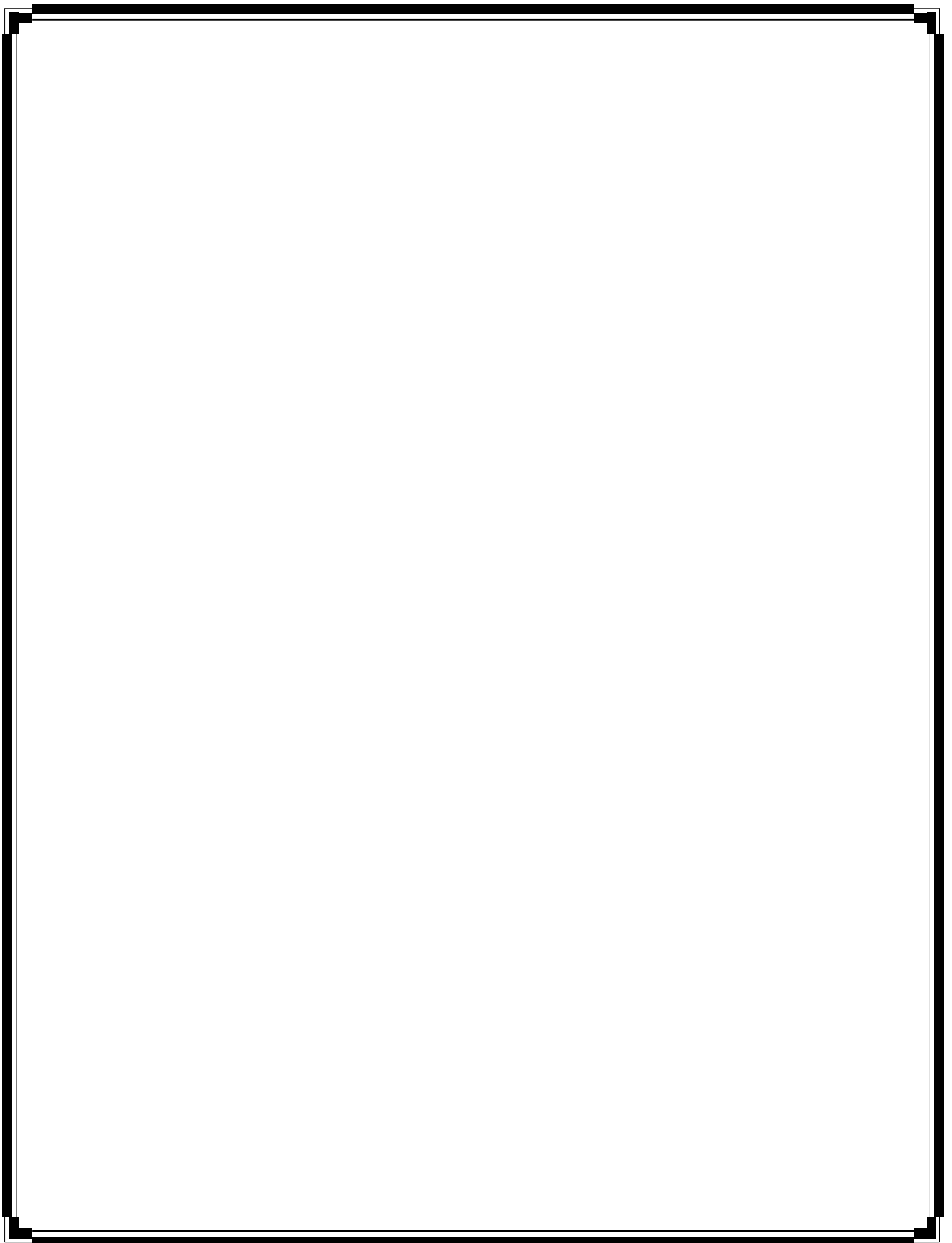
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## *He Asked for Charity*

God came to my house and asked for charity.  
And I fell on my knees and cried,  
“Beloved,  
what may I  
give?”  
“Just love,” He said.  
“Just love.”

*Saint Francis of Assisi*



# Week 7 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Name tags, markers
- Extra pens and “Notes” handouts on table at door entrance
- Candles, flowers, colorful Post-it notes, colored pencils and crayons
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups/break
- Facilitator copy of *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*
- “Forgiveness Group Exercise” – one copy of that particular group’s instructions for each member of the group
- “Forgiveness” handout

## Week 7: To Forgive

### Opening prayer

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis.”

### Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. Name
  2. Has one part of the Prayer of St. Frances inspired you more than another? If so, what is it and why? (from your spiritual practice of meditating and journaling about it)

### Forgiveness Group Exercise

- *Say: Forgiveness weaves its way in and out of the Prayer of Saint Francis. It is impossible to sow love while holding onto un-forgiveness. One can't be the presence of light without letting go of resentments. How we show up in one circumstance affects who we are in every circumstance.*
- *The class will break into four groups, each with a different section of the Prayer of St. Francis. You will have 30 minutes to talk about how forgiveness affects each of the concepts in your portion of the prayer.*

- *For instance, Group 1 has the first three lines of the prayer:*

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred let me sow love,  
Where there is injury let me sow pardon.*

- *This group will consider 1) what forgiveness has to do with being an instrument of God's peace, 2) how forgiveness is an integral part of sowing love where there was hatred, and 3) pardoning where there was injury.*
- *Group members will share their experiences of forgiveness (or working on forgiveness) in these three areas. Together the group will decide which experience most illustrates the power of forgiveness.*
- *When we come back together, each group will have chosen one spokesperson to tell about that one incident that most illustrates the power of forgiveness. The group will choose another spokesperson to give a general conclusion about why forgiveness is imperative if we are to live the Prayer of St. Francis.*
- *Because each group has a different set of lines from the Prayer of St. Francis, the instructions are unique to their group's assignment.*
- *I will let each group know when there are 5 minutes left so you can decide on your significant experience and your general conclusion and choose a spokesperson for each.*
- *Are there any questions before we count off to come up with group members? After we count off I will hand the group their instructions.*
- *Count off by 4's to come up with group members and hand out instructions.*
- *Inform groups when 5 minutes are left.*

### **Whole group discussion**

- *Beginning with group one:*
  1. *One group member reads the lines of the Prayer of St. Francis that were the focus of their group discussion.*
  2. *Spokesperson #1 tells about one example or incident that was significant to that particular part of the prayer, as it relates to forgiveness.*
  3. *Spokesperson #2 explains the group's general conclusion about the power of forgiveness if one is to truly live the Prayer of St. Francis.*
- *Each group presents in the same fashion.*
- *When complete, ask if there are any final thoughts about forgiveness and the Prayer of St. Francis.*

### **Break**

**"Forgiveness" meditation and handout (meditative CD music)**



- As students return from the break, pass out the “Forgiveness” handout, and then ask them to set it aside for a time of meditation on the power of forgiveness.
- Slowly read the “Forgiveness” meditation that follows this teaching agenda, pausing for at least one minute at the end of each sentence.
- As you complete the meditation, ask that they return their attention to the room and write or draw what came up for them.

### **Dyad sharing**

- As students finish, ask them to partner up with one other person for a few minutes to discuss the results of their meditation.
- Notify dyads when there are 3 minutes left.

### **Whole group sharing**

- If time, ask for volunteers to share their thoughts.

### **Reading**

- Are there any other questions or comments about this week’s reading, either in the textbook or the workbook?

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

- Have students turn to the last page of the week’s Student Workbook on p.83, which includes:
  - instructions for their Thought Paper
  - the invitation to bring light snacks next week
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

### **Closing prayer**

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis,” ending with, “And so it is!”

## Forgiveness Group Exercise Group 1

What does forgiveness have to do with:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred let me sow love,  
Where there is injury let me sow pardon.*

- We have found that the Prayer of Saint Francis is a call to action. Your group will share experiences of forgiveness (or working on forgiveness) in each area represented by these three lines of the Prayer of Saint Francis.
  - For instance, consider 1) what forgiveness has to do with being an instrument of God's peace 2) sowing love where there once was hatred, and 3) pardoning where there was injury.
  - Who has had experiences in one of these areas? How were you able to move past the anger, hurt, and pain? Was forgiveness a part of your journey? If you are still on the path to forgiveness, what are you doing to move toward the goal of letting go and forgiving?
- When we come back together, your group will have chosen a spokesperson to tell about one incident that was particularly significant.
- You will choose a different spokesperson to give a general conclusion about the power of forgiveness and why it is imperative if we are to live the Prayer of Saint Francis in our everyday lives.

## Forgiveness Group Exercise Group 2

What does forgiveness have to do with:

*Where there is doubt, faith,  
Where there is despair, hope,  
Where there is darkness, light,  
And where there is sadness, joy.*

- We have found that the Prayer of Saint Francis is a call to action. Your group will share experiences of forgiveness (or working on forgiveness) in each area represented by these four lines of the Prayer of Saint Francis.
  - For instance, consider 1) what forgiveness has to do with living in faith instead of doubt 2) moving toward hope where there once was despair 3) being the light in a time of darkness and 4) finding joy where there had been only sadness.
  - Who has had experiences in one of these areas? How were you able to move past the doubt, confusion, pain and darkness? Was forgiveness a part of your journey? If you are still on the path to forgiveness, what are you doing to move toward the goal of letting go and forgiving?
- When we come back together, your group will have chosen a spokesperson to tell about one incident that was particularly significant.
- You will choose a different spokesperson to give a general conclusion about the power of forgiveness and why it is imperative if we are to live the Prayer of Saint Francis in our everyday lives.

## Forgiveness Group Exercise Group 3

What does forgiveness have to do with:

*O Divine Master,  
Grant that I may not seek so much to be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love.*

- We have found that the Prayer of Saint Francis is a call to action. Your group will share experiences of forgiveness (or working on forgiveness) in each area represented by these four lines of the Prayer of Saint Francis.
  - For instance, consider 1) what forgiveness has to do with the Divine Master/God/Spirit 2) consoling instead of needing to be consoled 3) seeking to understand instead of wanting understanding and 4) choosing to love instead of asking for love.
  - Who has had experiences in one of these areas? How were you able to move past your need to be consoled, understood, loved in order to be the one consoling, understanding and loving? Was forgiveness a part of your journey? If you are still on the path to forgiveness, what are you doing to move toward the goal of letting go and forgiving?
- When we come back together, your group will have chosen a spokesperson to tell about one incident that was particularly significant.
- You will choose a different spokesperson to give a general conclusion about the power of forgiveness and why it is imperative if we are to live the Prayer of Saint Francis in our everyday lives.

## Forgiveness Group Exercise Group 4

What does forgiveness have to do with:

*For it is in the giving that we receive,  
It is in forgiving that we are forgiven,  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

- We have found that the Prayer of Saint Francis is a call to action. Your group will share experiences of forgiveness (or working on forgiveness) in each area represented by these three lines of the Prayer of Saint Francis.
  - For instance, consider 1) what forgiveness has to do with giving instead of receiving 2) being forgiven and 3) dying to be born.
  - Who has had experiences in one of these areas? How were you able to move past your needs? Was forgiveness a part of your journey? If you are still on the path to forgiveness, what are you doing to move toward the goal of letting go and forgiving?
- When we come back together, your group will have chosen a spokesperson to tell about one incident that was particularly significant.
- You will choose a different spokesperson to give a general conclusion about the power of forgiveness and why it is imperative if we are to live the Prayer of Saint Francis in our everyday lives.



## Forgiveness Meditation

By Shelley Motley, RScP

Sit for a few moments in the quiet, feeling the stillness and centering yourself. Feel the presence of God/Spirit/Life within and all around you.

Visualize yourself and the person you are forgiving not as two separate people, but rather as two perfect and beautiful expressions of God/Spirit/Life. You may choose to see yourselves as two bright lights of any color instead of human form.

Imagine all the ways you are the same as this other being of light.

You both seek happiness.

You both seek an end to suffering.

You both want to be loved.

You both have fear.

You both struggle with insecurities.

You both are doing the best you can.

You both are perfect, beautiful expressions of God/Spirit/Life.

Allow your light to merge with the other light, knowing that you are part of the same Whole. Let the Love that you are envelope any and all hurt. Realize that holding onto the hurt only creates misery for you.

Gently release the hurt into Love, as you feel the light within you shining brightly.

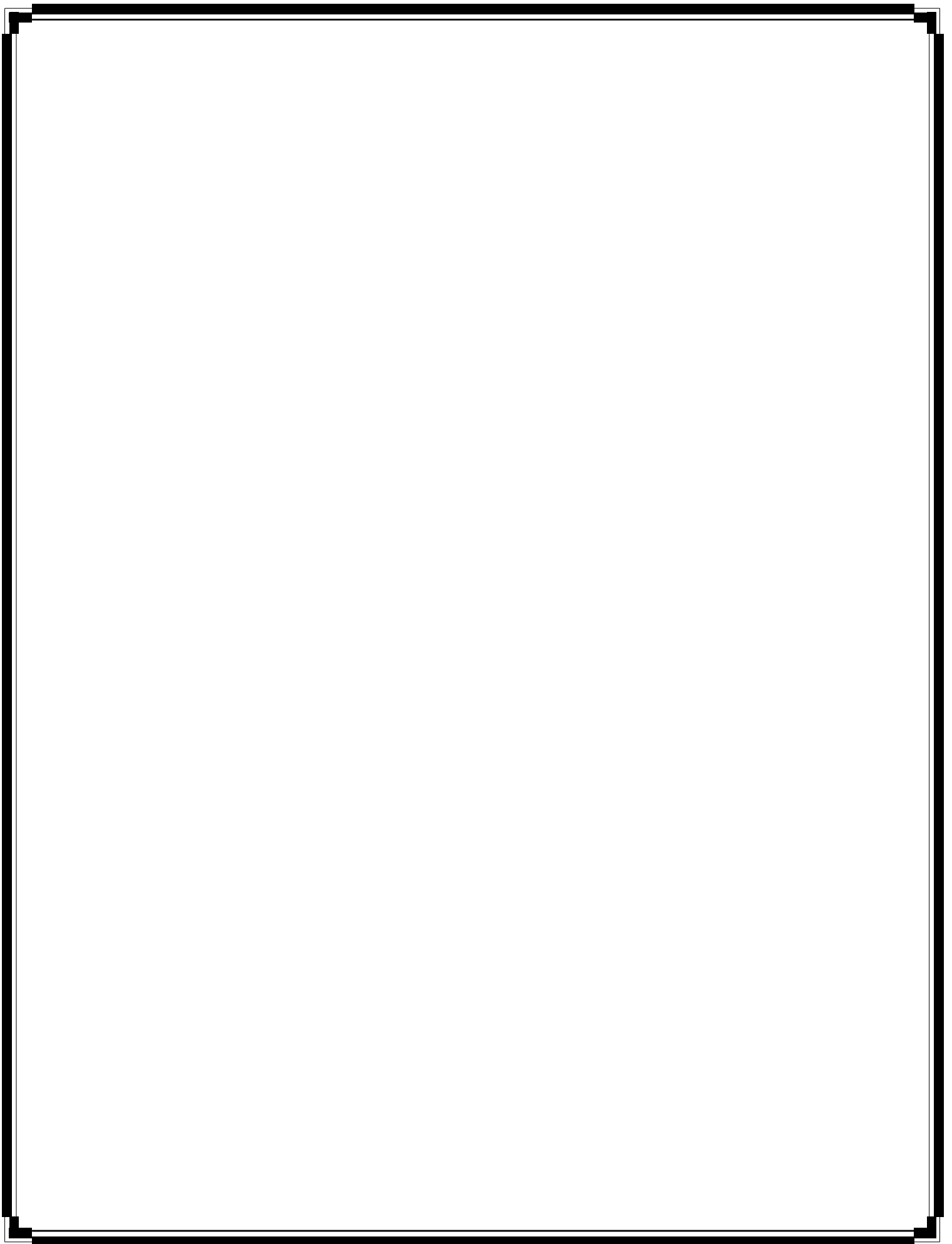
Gently release the other being of light into Love, giving a blessing that their light continues to shine brightly too.





## *Forgiveness*

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# Week 8 Teaching Agenda

## Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Candles, flowers
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups/break
- Facilitator copy of *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*

## Week 8: To Be Born

### Opening prayer

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis.”

### Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
  1. Name
  2. Share one way you showed love to yourself or another this week and how you felt as a result.

### Introduction to Presentation of Final Thought Papers

- Say: *There are many ways to die to the old and to be born to the new. You have all seen changes within yourself during the course of this class as you have challenged old thinking and behaviors. As you let go, new possibilities and next steps have emerged.*
- *The Prayer of St. Francis is a call to action. At this time we look forward to hearing about how those changes have impacted your life.*

### Thought Paper Presentations

- Ask: *Who would like to go first?*
- After applause for the first student, ask: *Who would like to go next?* Continue until about half the class has made their presentations.

**Break** with light snacks

### Continuation of Thought Paper Presentations

**If time ...**

- Ask: *Does anyone have any concluding thoughts you want to share?* Be ready to have some of your own, perhaps about the joy of all being together on this particular leg of our spiritual journey.

**Closing prayer**

- In unison everyone reads “The Prayer of Saint Francis,” ending with, “And so it is!”