

Living the Serenity Prayer

Developed by Reverend Jane Beach

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Living the Serenity Prayer

Dear Facilitator Friend and Colleague,

This curriculum is designed to bring the Serenity Prayer to life in our very real human experience. During the next six weeks we will consciously broaden our concept of the God of our understanding, no matter what we call him, her or it. I chose the textbook, *Twenty-five Words*, because I value authenticity. Barb Rogers gives us license to be open, honest, and real.

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 suggestions 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 *Twenty-five Words*
- “Notes” handouts (3-hole punched) on table at door entrance – available each week for general note-taking

Week 1: The Serenity Prayer

Opening Prayer

Welcome

- Say:
 - *In this class each of us will honor our own relationship with the God of our understanding, which is where the Serenity Prayer begins. Even if we aren't sure of what that relationship looks like, we become willing to let it surface and unfold as the class goes on. Our willingness is to be in the ever-deepening consciousness of our spiritual nature.*
 - *While our experience will be unique to each of us, at the same time, you will see similarities with others as they share their insights and revelations. Our willingness to be open and honest is the great gift we bring to this class.*
 - *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 (if any).

- The TA is also available to help with class work and home study questions. Feel free to call her/him/them for prayer, as well.
- **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 shifts in consciousness that will occur during the course of this class. 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 makes you joyously happy? Explain
- Everyone answers, with option to pass. 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 the Serenity Prayer (10-20 minutes)

- Ask: *How many of you have heard the Serenity Prayer before? (Raise hands). Super! Who will tell us their experience with the Serenity Prayer?*

- If many raise their hands, ask that they keep their sharing to 1-2 minutes, so everyone has a chance to share.
- If you run out of time, the topic will come up again, so others will have a chance to share later.
- *Now we are going to take a look at 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 each week.*

Workbook Week 1

- *Say: This week we get an overview of the Serenity Prayer and what it means to embrace a God of our understanding.*
- **Title Page** *As we move into the essence of the Serenity Prayer, the more we can become open to our own spiritual nature, the more real God will become to us. Let's begin by taking a look at the title page on workbook p. 7.*
 - Have students take turns reading "This Week" and then each quote.
 - If someone doesn't want to read, they just say, "Pass" and the next person takes it from there.
 - *Say: The Title Page is your introduction to the topic of the week. You may find a quote on this page that speaks to you specifically. Feel free to write it on a Post-It note and put it on your bathroom mirror, the dashboard of your car, or anywhere else where you will see it.*
- **"Living the Serenity Prayer"** *Now let's proceed with the first article, "Living the Serenity Prayer" by Rev. Jane Beach, on workbook p. 8.*
 - Have students take turns reading the article. Generally I have them read one paragraph at a time. Again, if someone doesn't want to read, they just say, "Pass" and the next person continues to read.
 - If someone has a question, they are free to ask it in between paragraphs, so no one's reading is interrupted.
 - Once the article is read, ask the students to respond to the three questions in bold print at the end of the article. (You may want to play quiet meditative music while they are writing.)

Small group sharing (20-25 minutes)

- As students finish writing, ask them to quietly step to the back of the room to create groups of three to talk about the three questions, as well as general ideas they have about the Serenity Prayer.
- Remind them that everything that is said in the small group is confidential. Also, to please refrain from giving suggestions or trying to "fix" anyone.
- *Say: I will come around to let you know when there are five minutes left.*
- Once the time is up dismiss the students for a short break.

Break

Workbook Week 1, continued

- **Contemplation and Journaling** Have students turn to workbook p. 13. “Contemplation and Journaling.”
 - Say: *Each week you will be presented with a “Contemplation and Journaling” page, on which you will find a quote from A Course in Miracles.*
 - Background on A Course in Miracles:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Course_in_Miracles **A Course in Miracles (ACIM)** is a self-study curriculum that aims to assist its readers in achieving spiritual transformation. The book describes a non-dualistic philosophy of forgiveness and includes what are meant to be practical lessons and applications for the practice of forgiveness in one's daily life. The introduction to the book contains the following summary, "Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God."
 - No author is listed for the book, but Helen Schucman wrote it with the help of William Thetford, based on what she called an "inner voice" which she identified as Jesus.
 - *The profound yet simple wisdom of the quotes from The Course are a perfect match for the wisdom of the Serenity Prayer.*
 - *Please take time to be quiet with each week's quote, letting yourself connect with your inner wisdom – the God of your understanding – before writing about it.*
 - **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 your thoughts opens a gateway to revelation.*
 - This sets the example for what the students will do at home, making sure they give adequate time to all writing opportunities.
 - Read the quote from *A Course in Miracles* at the top of the page, as well as the journaling questions, and then ask the students to respond in writing. (Again, play very quiet meditative music).
 - 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.*
 - Ask 2-3 volunteers to share their thoughts.

Taking a look at the Home Study for Week 2

- **Workbook**
 - After looking at the Home Study page on workbook p. 15, 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, as well as the “Contemplation and Journaling” page.
 - **Background on Jalaludin Rumi:** Rumi wrote the poem on workbook p. 27. He was an Islamic poet who lived from 1207-1273 and is considered to be one of the greatest poets known in history. He was born in Afghanistan, which was at that time in the Persian Empire. When he was 8, his family fled the invasion of Genghis Khan, moving to Turkey, where he lived the rest of his

life. He is one of the most widely read poets in the English language. In his book, *Love Poems from God*, translator Daniel Ladinsky says, “Rumi says to us in a poem, ‘Love is the cure, for your pain will keep giving birth to more pain until your eyes constantly exhale love as effortlessly as your body yields its scent.’ Love is the impetus of all his poetry.”

- **Spiritual Practice**
 - Ask if there are questions or comments about the daily spiritual practice, which is essential to this course.
- ***Twenty-five Words***
 - Take a quick look at the textbook, which was written by Barb Rogers, a woman whose life was saved by her decision to live the Serenity Prayer. *In one way or another, we will all be able to relate to her!*
- Ask if there are questions or comments.

Closing Prayer

- Ask a volunteer to read, “A Prayer for New Life” by Marianne Williamson on workbook p. 14 to close out the class.

Week 2 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 *Twenty-five Words*
- “The Love of God” handout (All handouts are 3-hole punched)

Week 2: God grant me the serenity

Opening prayer

Before introductions and sharing

- Remind the students that when life was very bleak for author Barb Rogers, she ended up as a caregiver for an elderly lady who had a faith that Barb had never known.
- Have students turn to *Twenty-five Words* p. 12.4 (page 12, fourth paragraph) beginning “Little did I know ...” and take turns reading through p. 13.2 (page 13, second paragraph) ending with “ ... his way.”
- Give them a moment to contemplate and journal about the question, “Is there a particular place where you can most easily feel the presence of the God of your understanding?” (Listening to music, in nature, when I’m meditating, when I’m with someone whose faith inspires me).
- Play quiet, meditative music for several minutes while they write. After 3-4 minutes say: *60 seconds more ...* which lets them know it’s time to finish their thoughts for now – they can always continue at home.
- Say: *We are now going to have an opportunity to answer the question.*

Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
 1. Name
 2. I most easily feel Spirit when/in _____.

- Everyone answers.

Discussion : God as We Understand God

- Say: *At the end of the Melody Beattie article, “God as We Understand God” on workbook p. 18 you were encouraged to make a list of 10 attributes that define your Higher Power – truths that you want to experience in your life. For instance, “God is trustworthy; I really can trust that God has my back,” “My Higher Power accepts me unconditionally, even when it’s hard for me to accept myself” or “My prayers are heard.” You were to explain what each means to you.*
- *There is great power in group sharing on topics like this! You may find that someone else’s idea of God also makes sense to you. If so, add it to your list!*
- *At this time I’d like to have each person choose 3 attributes of God that are important to them. You will share those with the group, explaining each. Everyone shares.*
- *As your relationship with your God/Higher Power deepens, your list will change and grow; be open to whatever comes up for you. It will be helpful to add it to your list, along with an explanation of what it means to you.*

Discussion : Serenity Means Letting Go of Drama

- Have students turn to *Twenty-five Words* p. 23 “Serenity Means Letting Go of Drama in Our Lives,” and ask students to take turns reading p. 23.1 through 22.3 beginning “Serenity comes when we are willing ...” and ending “... It didn’t sound like much fun.”
 - Ask: *What does this mean to you personally? Do you struggle with your need for drama in certain areas of your life? The need to control, to be right, to get in the last word? Volunteers share.*
- *The willingness to give up drama invites serenity. We needn’t do it alone. We are never alone. The presence of the God of our understanding stands ready for our attention, with loving willingness to guide us to a life of serenity.*
- Have students turn to *Twenty-five Words* p. 26 ask them to take turns reading p. 26.2 through 27.3 beginning “And I don’t believe I could ...” and ending “... Serenity is waiting.”
 - *We have heard a bit about what serenity feels like in Barb Rogers’ life. What does it look like/feel like in your life? Be specific. Everyone shares.*
 - This is where hearing each other’s stories and examples open everyone up to a bigger picture of how serenity shows up in our very human lives.

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

- Ask students to get into groups of three to discuss their responses to the articles and Contemplation and Journaling in their workbook.
- 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 45 minutes, and there is a lot to talk about. Please keep track of time, making sure that everyone has equal time to 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 work they did in the workbook or from their dialog with their small group. Everyone shares.*
- *If time is short ask 2-3 volunteers to speak.*

“The Love of God” handout (quiet meditative music)

- *Pass out “The Love of God” handout and go over the questions.*
- *Invite the students to be quiet for a moment and allow themselves to feel the presence of their own inner wisdom. Encourage them to let their answers be guided by Spirit; they may be surprised with what comes up!*

Dyads (15 minutes, if time)

- *As people finish ask them to move to the back of the room with their handout to meet with one other person for discussion.*
- *Say: I will signal you when there are 5 minutes left.*

Whole group discussion

- *Bring the group back together.*
- *Have each person share one insight that came up in the writing or in the partner discussion. If time is short, ask for 2-3 volunteers.*

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 28.*
- *Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.*
- **Background on Hafiz:** *Hafiz wrote the poem on workbook p. 39. He was a Persian poet and mystic who lived from 1320-1389. Hafiz was a beloved 14th century Persian poet who wrote about love – human love as well as his adoration of God. He became so popular that all over Persia farmers, scholars, children and royalty sang his*

poems – they became love songs. Very few knew that he was a Sufi, where it was believed that anyone could have a relationship with God. In medieval Persia, fundamental religion was strong and it was blasphemy to suggest that any human being could even approach a direct relationship with God. The Sufi schools were often outlawed, and many were executed for their beliefs. Those who survived met in secret and used a symbolic language in their poetry; for instance the *nightingale* = *human*, *wine* = *love*, *the Tavern* = *Sufi school* and *the Rose* = *God*. *Sufi students* were often referred to as *clowns*, *vagabonds*, *scoundrels*, *beggars* and *intoxicated wayfarers*. Hafiz perfected this symbolic language in his poems. He challenges us to confront and master our own nature and to see God in everything.

Closing Prayer

- Ask a volunteer to read, “On a Day When the Wind is Perfect” by Rumi on workbook p. 27 to close out the class.

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 *Twenty-five Words*
- “Teaching and Learning” handout

Week 3: To accept the things I cannot change

Opening prayer

Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
 - Name
 - What is one way that you have accepted what you cannot change? How does it make you feel?
- Everyone answers.

Discussion : To accept the things I cannot change

- Have students turn to *Twenty-five Words* p. 30.2 and ask students to take turns reading beginning “I grew up in a secret organization ...” and ending on p. 31.2 “... Only the feelings we are left with about ourselves matter.”
 - Ask: *How many of you grew up in a household / environment where there were secrets? (hands are raised) How have you dealt with breaking away from the secrets? Be ready to tell a personal story to open up the discussion, if needed. Volunteers share.*

- Ask: *How many of you have kept secrets as an adult? (hands are raised) How have you dealt with breaking away from the secrets?* Again, be ready to tell a personal story to open up the discussion, if needed. Volunteers share.
- *How does it feel to uproot the secret and break free of it?* Volunteers share.
- Ask a volunteer to read *Twenty-five Words* p. 32.3 beginning “The past is a big deal ...” and ending “... what has happened to us and others.”
 - *Barb Rogers gives us a wise practice toward letting go of the past and accepting it for what it is with the process of “Name it, claim it, and let it go,” beginning on p. 33. Have any of you ever used this process to move past any situation that keeps you from serenity? Here you may want to begin with a personal example once again, helping the students to feel safe with this deep sharing.*
 - *The process may be uncomfortable (it is!) but the result is pure freedom!*
- *Are there any questions or comments before we meet in our small groups?*

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

- Ask students to get into groups of three to discuss their responses to the articles and Contemplation and Journaling in their workbook.
- Say: *Try to get into a group of people you did not meet with last week.*
- *Remember that everything said in your small group is confidential.*
- *Also remember that there is no “fixing;” please don’t offer well-meant suggestions – this is about accepting everyone exactly where they are.*
- *You have 45 minutes. Once again, please keep track of time, making sure that everyone has equal time to 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 work they did in the workbook or from their dialog with their small group. Everyone shares.*
- If time is short ask 2-3 volunteers to speak.

“Teaching and Learning” handout (quiet meditative music)

- Pass out “Teaching and Learning” handout and go over the questions.
- Invite the students to be quiet for a moment and allow themselves to feel the presence of the God of their understanding before they begin to answer the questions.

Dyads (15 minutes, if time)

- As people finish ask them to move to the back of the room with their handout to meet with one other person for discussion.
- Say: *I will signal you when there are 5 minutes left.*

Whole group discussion

- Bring the group back together.
- Have each person share one insight that came up in the writing or in the partner discussion. If time is short, ask for 2-3 volunteers.

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. 40.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.
- **Background on Saint Francis de Sales**, author of the prayer on workbook p. 52. He was a Roman Catholic saint who lived from 1567 –1622. He is known also for his writings on spiritual direction, including *Introduction to the Devout Life* and *Treatise on the Love of God*.

Closing Prayer

- Ask a volunteer to read, "Several Times in the Last Week" by Hafiz on workbook p.39 to close out the class.

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 *Twenty-five Words*
- “Belief” handout

Week 4: Courage to change the things I can

Opening prayer

Before introductions and sharing

- Have students turn to *Twenty-five Words* p. 59 “Courage to Change the Things I Can.” Have the students take turns reading through p. 60.2 ending with “... those things that keep us from serenity?”
- Say: *We have all moved through fear in at least one aspect of our life. Think about the five common fears that Barb Rogers gives us and consider our opening question: “Think back to the last few years of your life. In what way are you courageous today?”*
 - *You do not have to be fearless! You still may be afraid, but are in the process of moving through it. Today is the day you give yourself credit for being in the process of moving through fear and toward serenity.*
 - Give the students a minute or two to contemplate the question before beginning the introductions and sharing.

Introductions / Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
 - Name (If everyone has learned each other’s names, this part can now be omitted).
 - Think back to the last few years of your life. In what way are you courageous today?

- Everyone answers.

Discussion : Courage Means Facing the Truth

- Have students turn to *Twenty-five Words* p. 97 and read the first paragraph. Say: *Barb Rogers reminds us of all the ways our family and society instill their beliefs in us from the moment we were born. It becomes very easy for our spiritual truth to get lost in the process.*
- Ask students to take turns reading p. 98.3 beginning “When we are unhappy ...” and ending on p. 100.3 “... other people, and outside circumstances.”
 - Ask: *Have any of you uncovered old beliefs and expectations that have kept you from accepting the truth of your Authentic Self? What were they?* Be ready to tell a personal story to open up the discussion, if needed. This is an important discussion, as students will find out they are not alone. Volunteers share.
 - Say: *It takes courage to break away from the expectations of others and the expectations that come from our own past beliefs in order to face the Truth of who we really are; spiritual beings having a human experience. Who will tell us how they did it? What was the process? Did you walk away from a job in order to move toward what you really wanted to do? A relationship? Again, be ready to tell a personal story to open up the discussion, if needed. Volunteers share.*
 - *It takes courage to break away from the old and venture into the unknown. The important thing to remember is that you are not alone. Your soul – the part of you that has never been afraid, hurt, angry or disappointed – is your personal guide, your private cheerleader. Paying attention to that guidance builds your relationship with that part of you that is your Authentic Self. Listening to divine direction and then having the courage to follow it lets you know just how courageous you are! Serenity follows.*
- *Are there any questions or comments before we meet in our small groups?*

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

- Ask students to get into groups of three to discuss their responses to the articles and Contemplation and Journaling in their workbook.
- Say: *Again, try to get into a group of people you did not meet with last week.*
- *You have 45 minutes. Once again, please keep track of time, making sure that everyone has equal time to be heard.*
- *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 work they did in the workbook or from their dialog with their small group.* Everyone shares.
- If time is short ask 2-3 volunteers to speak.

“Belief” handout (quiet meditative music)

- Pass out “Identity” handout and go over the questions.
- Invite the students to be quiet for a moment and allow themselves to feel the presence of the God of their understanding before they begin to answer the questions.

Whole group discussion

- Have each person share one of their beliefs. It is important the group hears what is true for each other; it affirms that we are all each other’s students and teachers.

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 53.
- **Background on Saint Francis of Assisi**, author of the prayer on workbook p. 64. Probably the most beloved western saint, Francis was born in 1182 in Assisi, in central Italy, the son of a wealthy cloth merchant. He lived the high-spirited life typical of a wealthy young man. He went off to war and was soon taken prisoner, becoming very ill. It is thought that his spiritual awakening was a gradual process that began with that experience. The bottom line is that he gave up his riches, joyfully choosing to live a life of poverty among the people, animals, and plants. He believed that nature itself was the mirror of God. He called all creatures his “brothers” and “sisters,” and even preached to “my sisters the birds” and supposedly persuaded a wolf to stop attacking some locals if they agreed to feed the wolf. He knew that God was in love with all creatures. .
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.

Closing Prayer

- Ask a volunteer to read, “Do Not Look with Fear” by Saint Francis de Sales on workbook p. 52 to close out the class.

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 *Twenty-five Words*
- “Self-Value” handout

Week 5: Wisdom to Know the Difference

Opening prayer

Before introductions and sharing

- Have students turn to workbook p. 64 “The Comfort of God” by Saint Francis of Assisi.
 - Ask two volunteers to read the poem, and then read it yourself, which emphasizes its meaning.
 - Say: *In every moment, the God of our understanding offers us tenderness, love, forgiveness ... anything that might comfort us. All we need do is accept it, and our lives change. It's the experience of God that changes us. Knowing we are never alone changes us.*
 - Our introductory question asks: *How do I experience God today?* (periods of peace, more patient with others and myself, less controlling, liking myself better)
 - Give the students a minute or two to contemplate the question before beginning the opening sharing.

Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
 - How do I experience God today?
- Everyone answers.

Discussion : And Wisdom to Know the Difference

- **The Guide:** Have students turn to *Twenty-five Words* p. 109.4 beginning “I would like to share with you ...” (In this paragraph Barb Rogers introduces “the guide” to serenity.)
- Give students a moment to look through pages 110-133, reminding themselves about the guide to building calm within: Stop, Connect, Believe, Reflect, Expand, and Live.
 - Ask: *Which aspect of the guide was most meaningful to you and why?* Everyone shares. (This was part of their reading assignment)
 - This discussion should take a good amount of time, rich with honesty and revelation. You may want to note/praise the level of richness that comes from the willingness of the group to be so open and honest – we really are each other’s students and teachers.
- *Are there any questions or comments before we meet in our small groups?*

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

- Ask students to get into groups of three to discuss their responses to the articles and Contemplation and Journaling in their workbook.
- *You have 45 minutes. Once 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 work they did in the workbook or from their dialog with their small group.* Everyone shares.
- If time is short ask 2-3 volunteers to speak.

“Self-Value” handout (quiet meditative music)

- Pass out the “Self-Value” handout and go over it, emphasizing that each of us is on earth at this time and place for a reason. Say: *Spirit is moving through us, as us. We are God’s gift, whether we know it or not, or accept it or not. Always, the God of our understanding is tugging on the shirt sleeves of our consciousness, whispering, “Here I am. I am*

always with you. I love you. You are my cherished one, exactly as you are.” It is our choice to listen.

- Invite the students to be quiet for a moment and allow themselves to feel the presence of the God of their understanding before they begin to complete the handout.

Whole group discussion

- Have each person share one way that they are a gift to the world. It is important the group hears what is true for each other; they are liable to hear what is true for another is also true for them.

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. 65.
- Guide them through their Home Study, answering questions they might have.
- Next week is the presentation of their Thought Papers “Choosing Life: Living the Serenity Prayer.” Point out that they may want to re-read *Twenty-five Words* pp. 134-138 “Wisdom Means Choosing How to Handle Life’s Situations” for inspiration. (It was part of their homework for this week.)
- Students are also invited to bring light desserts for the break.

Closing Prayer

- Ask a volunteer to read, “The Comfort of God” by Saint Francis of Assisi on workbook p. 64 to close out the class.

Week 6 Teaching Agenda

Pre-class Checklist:

- Whiteboard, markers
- Candles, flowers
- Meditation CD, CD player
- Chime to call students back from small groups
- Facilitator copy of *Twenty-five Words*

Week 6: Living the Serenity Prayer

Opening prayer

Sharing

- Write on whiteboard:
 - What are you feeling right now? Why?
- Everyone answers.

Presentation of Final Thought Papers

- I have found it best to let students self-select the timing of their thought paper. Say: *Who would like to go first?* Followed by: *Who would like to be next?*

Break Includes light desserts, if this option was decided upon by the class.

Continuation of Presentation of Final Thought Papers

Final sharing (if time)

- After a few words praising the class members for being such a blessing in the world, ask them to answer one of the following two questions:
- Tell us one way you are either:
 - 1) *Giving* faith and hope and mercy today OR
 - 2) *Receiving* faith and hope and mercy (From this week's Contemplation and Journaling)

Closing Prayer

- Ask a volunteer to read, “Morning Prayer” by Marianne Williamson on workbook p.76 to close out the class.

The following pages contain the handouts.

Notes

The Love of God

See the Love of God in you, and you will see it everywhere because it is everywhere.

- The Course in Miracles

In what ways do you see the Love of God in you?

In what ways do you see the Love of God around you?

Teaching and Learning

What you teach you strengthen in yourself because you are sharing it.

- The Course in Miracles

To whom are you teaching acceptance today?

In what situations are you teaching acceptance today?

How is this strengthening acceptance within you?

Belief

When you believe something, you have made it true for you.

- The Course in Miracles

What do you believe is true about yourself today?

What do you believe is true about the God of your understanding today?

What do you believe is true about life today?

Self-Value

Remember this: Every decision you make stems from what you think you are, and represents the value that you put on yourself.

- The Course in Miracles

You are alive today to bring the beauty of who you are to the world in a way that only you can bring. You are not meant to play small, so don't do it here!

What gifts do you bring to the world today? Name and explain at least five.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.