



SONS of ADAM

Compiled by Stephen Joseph Wolf
parish priest and spiritual director

a companion prayer and workbook for

Men and Abortion: A Path to Healing
by C.T. Coyle, Ph.D.

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Sons of Adam

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This book can be a beginning, but you will also need

Men and Abortion: A Path to Healing

By C.T. Coyle, Ph.D.

www.lifecyclebooks.com

Most of the scripture renderings have previously appeared in *In Health & In Healing* and *Hinge Hours Experiment*.

Cover art previously appeared in *Tree of Life*.

Published by idjc press in Nashville, Tennessee
contact at steve@idjc.info or visit www.idjc.org

**Version printed and distributed by Ingram Books:
ISBN 978-1-937081-14-0 (paperback) \$5.95**

FOR A GROUP OF MEN

1. We begin with short passages from the word of God, followed by a solid minute of silence. The renderings provided are by Rev. Steve Wolf but members may wish to read instead from their favorite translation.
2. The group takes turns reading the background out loud and/or reviewing the week's reading.
3. The group pauses for a quiet solid minute on the reflection questions.
4. Each person is invited to offer part of his own story, a response to a reflection question, or something that struck him from the readings.
5. Ten minutes before time is up, someone volunteers to lead the closing prayer.

SONS of ADAM

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Preparation readings are from:

Men and Abortion: A Path to Healing, by C.T. Coyle, Ph.D.
Lewiston, NY: Life Cycle Books, 1999, 176 pgs.

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OPENING PRAYER

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone!
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Deut. 6:4-5

I the Lord am your God
who as God brought you out of Egypt
that I the Lord may be your God.

Numbers 15:42

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
and the God of our ancestors, the God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,
God great, mighty and fearful,
most high God, master of heaven and earth,
our shield and the shield of our fathers and mothers,
our trust in every generation.
Blessed are you, Lord, the shield of Abraham.

Following the Tephilla

Lord Jesus, gaze on us as we gaze on you.
Your birth, growth, ministry, death and resurrection
tell the story of love for all your brothers and sisters.
Take, Lord, and receive:

- + the words of faith that we speak, *sign*
- + the joys and pains of our humanity, *of*
- + the wordless prayer of our hearts, *the*
- + and the works of justice we would do. *cross*

When we come to the Sunday assembly,
gather our offerings to your own for the life of all.
At the end of the day, place us with Mary, your
mother, and with her, take us to your heart. Amen.

CONFIDENTIALITY GROUP GROUND RULE

Nothing heard here is shared outside this group. If your primary struggle in life is gossip, this process is not right for you. Ask your leader right now about another possibility. Violation of confidentiality cannot be tolerated.

I agree with the *Sons of Adam* confidentiality rule. (Signature and Date)

OTHER GROUP GROUND RULES

Regular - I will do my best to make all meetings.

Sharing – Though most men despise the word “sharing,”
I will share something of my story at each meeting.

No Interrupting – When someone else is sharing,
I will listen before commenting or speaking,
and refrain from side conversations.

No Contradicting – the sharing is based on the man’s
own experience, so I will avoid making critiques,
drawing conclusions, or trying to take away
feelings with comments such as,
You shouldn’t feel that way.

Done in “I” Language – I will share with *I think* or *I feel*
rather than *Mary said* or *Joe thinks*.

Availability – I will be reasonably available to others in
the group in need of encouragement.

Confidentiality – What is said in the group
stays in the group. Period.

I agree with the *Sons of Adam* ground rules. (Signature and Date)

1st Meeting

IMPACT ON MEN

Opening Prayer on page 4

Introductions

Review and sign Ground Rules on page 5.

One member of the group reads:

Psalm 100

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth!
Serve the Lord with gladness!
Come into the presence with joyful song.
Know that the Lord is God, who made us,
whose people we are,
in whose pasture we are the sheep.
Enter the gates with thanksgiving,
go into the courts with praise!
Give thanks and give praise to the Name!
Good is the Lord, and loving to forever,
and faithful through generation
and generations.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

Another member of the group reads:

Psalm 147:7-11

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving!
Make music on the harp to our God,
who covers the skies with clouds
and supplies rain to the earth,
making grass to grow on the hills,
providing food for cattle
and young ravens when they call.
The Lord finds pleasure
not in the strength of the horse
nor delight in the legs of the human,
but is delighting in those who fear the Lord,
who hope in this unfailing love.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

A third member of the group reads:

Mark 7:31-37

Again going forth out of the district of Tyre Jesus comes through Sidon to the sea of Galilee in the midst of the district of Decapolis. They bring to him a deaf man with difficulty speaking, and they beg him to put his hand on him. Taking him away from the crowd privately, he puts his finger into his ears and spitting he touches his tongue, and looking up to heaven he groans, and says to him, *Ephphatha*, which is "you be opened." And his ears are opened and immediately the bond of his tongue is loosened, and he speaks correctly.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

for one solid minute of silence

1. What rings true to me in what healing professionals say about recovering from the aftermath of an abortion?
2. What strikes me from the scripture passages?
3. What one point from Dr. Coyle's first chapter is helpful to me?
4. Is there anything for which Jesus wants to open my eyes or my mouth that I may see or say?

OPEN SHARING ABOUT ANYTHING

one at a time

TEN MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING

Leader: Are there any intercessions from the group?

*Conclude with the Our Father,
then the acts of faith, hope and charity on the back cover.*

2nd Meeting

POST-ABORTION STRESS

Opening Prayer on page 4

One member of the group reads:

Psalm 42:1-6A

& 43:3-5

As a deer breathes heavy for streams of water,
so my soul throbs for you, God.

My soul she thirsts for God, the living God.

When can I go and meet the faces of God?

My tears were food for me

by day and by night,

while all day they said to me,

"Where is your God?"

These things I remember

as my soul pours out before me:

How I would go with the multitude

to lead them to the house of God

sounding shouts of joy and thanksgiving,

a festive throng!

Why are you downcast, my soul,

and disturbed within me?

Send forth your light and your truth;

let them guide me to your dwellings

and bring me to your holy mountain.

Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God, my joy and delight,
and I will praise you with harp, God, my God.
Why are you downcast, my soul?
Why are you disturbed within me?
Put hope in God, whom I will yet praise,
the saving help of my face, my God.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

Another member of the group reads:

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help is from and with the Lord,
Maker of heavens and earth,
who will not let your foot slip
nor slumber when watching over you.
Indeed the one watching over Israel
will not slumber and will not sleep.
The Lord watches over you,
the Most High at your right hand.
By day the sun will not harm you,
nor the moon by the night.
The Lord will keep you from all harm
and watch over your life.
The Lord will watch over your going and coming
from now and to forevermore.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

A third member of the group reads:

Ezekiel 36:24-28

Thus says the Lord God:
I will take you out of the nations
and I will gather you from all the countries,
and I will bring you back into your land.
I will sprinkle on you clean waters,
and you will be clean from all your impurities,
and from all your idols I will cleanse you.
I will give you a new heart
and I will put inside you a new spirit,
and I will remove the stone-heart from your flesh
and I will give you a flesh-heart,
and I will put inside you my Spirit
and I will move you to follow in my decrees
and my laws you will be careful to keep,
and you will live in the land I gave your ancestors,
and you will be my people
and I will be your God.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

Pause for one solid minute of silence.

Leader

Each of us is made in the image of God.
God has given us freedom and a vocation.
In our vocation, God calls us to love and be loved,
to do good, and to avoid evil.
In our freedom, we sin, abusing our freedom.

And, by sinning, we lose our freedom.
We live with the effects of “original sin.”
As St. Paul said in the Letter to the Romans:

I do not know what I do...

For I do not the good (*agathon*) I wish, but I do the evil (*kakon*) I do not wish. If I do what I do not wish, it is no longer I doing it, but sin dwelling in me. I find it a law that when wishing to do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner humanity, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, taking me captive by the law of sin in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this dying? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 7:14a,19-25a

In the Catholic moral tradition for an action or thought-dwelled-upon to reach the threshold of “sin,” it must pass three tests:

- 1. Is it objectively wrong?**
- 2. Does the actor know it is wrong?**
- 3. Is the person acting freely?**

Only God and the person can ever really know whether all three tests are met. This is why, in the area of sin, I can judge myself, and God judges me, but no one else has that ability. A judge in a court of law can decide whether I have broken a law, but only God and my conscience can tell me when I commit a sin. This is why the ultimate job of “judge” belongs to God alone. Only God has all the data. God alone. -sjw

You are invited here to review your story, with the opportunity to share as you wish. We look at the story with neither complacency nor condemnation, but with honest compassion.

The Conception

Meeting the mother

The decision to be sexual

Any pressures around this decision

The nature of the relationship

Feelings about the possibility of pregnancy

Any conversations about a possible pregnancy

Your beliefs about chastity

What it means to be a man

What you know now that you wish you had known

The Decision

First awareness of the possibility of a pregnancy

Learning about the pregnancy

Telling others (or not) about the pregnancy

Any counseling or advice

Your role and influence in making the decision

Any feelings of being pressured or rushed

The final decision

A more complete set of questions can found
on page 59 of *Healing a Father's Heart*,
by Linda Cochrane and Kathy Jones,
Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1996. 127 pages.
(If you want a thorough bible study, this is it. - SJW)

The Procedure

Expectations to be passive or supportive

Memories of being at the clinic

Memories of being told after the fact

Physical, emotional, spiritual effects

Major way abortion has affected your life.

A more complete set of questions can found
on page 59 of *Healing a Father's Heart*,
by Linda Cochrane and Kathy Jones,
Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1996. 127 pages.
(If you want a thorough bible study, this is it. - SJW)

*If there is time, review the “**Problems Related To...**” worksheet from Coyle; see pages 31-32.*

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

for one solid minute of silence

1. Are there still questions in my heart about my own sinfulness and the abortion experience?
2. Anger? Helplessness? Anxiety?
Relationships? Grief? Guilt?
Do any of these dominate my story?
3. What does it mean to know
that God is loving me right now?

OPEN SHARING ABOUT ANYTHING

one at a time

TEN MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING

Leader: Are there any intercessions from the group?

*Conclude with the Our Father,
then the acts of faith, hope and charity on the back cover.*

3rd Meeting

FORGIVENESS-PSYCHOLOGICAL

Opening Prayer on page 4

One member of the group reads:

Psalm 131

Lord, my heart is not proud
and my eyes are not haughty
and I am unconcerned with the great matters,
with things so wonderful as to be beyond me.
But indeed I have become still and quiet in my soul
like a child with a mother, being weaned.
Like one being weaned is my soul within me.
Israel, put your hope in the Lord
from now and to forevermore.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

Another member of the group reads:

Jeremiah 18:3-6

I go down to the potter's house
and see him working at the wheel.
When the pot which he is shaping from the clay
comes apart in his hand,
the potter forms the pot again,
shaping it to be pleasing in the eyes of the potter.

Then the word of the Lord comes to me, saying:
“Can I not do with you, house of Israel,
as this potter has done?” says the Lord.
“See: like clay in the hand of the potter,
so are you in my hand, house of Israel.”

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

A third member of the group reads: **Romans 8:22-27**

We know that all creation groans together,
in pain as in labor, until now.
And not only this, but we ourselves,
the firstfruit of the Spirit, groan within ourselves
as we eagerly expect our adoption,
the redemption of our bodies.
For by hope we were saved;
but hope that is seen is not hope,
for why would anyone hope for what is seen?
But if we hope for what we do not see,
through patience we eagerly wait.
And similarly the Spirit shares in our weakness.
For we do not know how to pray as is fitting,
but the Spirit prays on our behalf
with inexpressible groanings.
And the one searching our heart
knows what is the mind of the Spirit,
because the Spirit intercedes on behalf of saints
according to the will of God.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

Pause for one solid minute of silence.

Leader continues:

In their work *Healing a Father's Heart* (see pg. 15), Linda Cochrane and Kathy Jones name some *common targets* at whom a man may aim post-abortion anger:

- Those who withheld the truth about abortion
- Friends who presented abortion as the best choice
- Himself for causing the unplanned pregnancy
- Parents for pressuring for the abortion
- The mother of the baby for not letting him in on the decision
- Himself for not being strong enough to choose life for his baby
- God for allowing the pregnancy or for not stopping the abortion
- Other: _____

Group members take turns reading the 20 points of the Enright Model of Forgiveness:

Processes of Forgiving Another

Appendix B of Men and Abortion, pages 163 and 164, and explained by Dr. Coyle in Chapter 3, pages 37-52.

AWARENESS

DECISION

REFRAMING

MEANING

For more on this, visit:

<http://www.internationalforgiveness.com/need-to-forgive/>

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

for one solid minute of silence

1. How are we doing?
2. At the next meeting, we look at forgiveness as the “Christian Imperative.” What is helpful or not helpful about a psychological understanding of forgiveness?
3. Where would I place myself on the 20-point forgiveness process? Do any of these not show up in my story?

OPEN SHARING ABOUT ANYTHING

one at a time

TEN MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING

Leader: Are there any intercessions from the group?

*Conclude with the Our Father,
then the acts of faith, hope and charity on the back cover.*

4th Meeting

FORGIVENESS - CHRISTIAN

Opening Prayer on page 4

One member of the group reads:

Psalm 139:1-10,23-24

Lord, you search me and you know me.
You know my sitting and my rising;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going and my lying down,
and you are familiar with all of my ways.
When a word is not yet on my tongue
you see it, Lord; you know them all.
Behind and before you hem me in
and you lay your hand upon me.
Too wonderful for me is this knowledge,
more lofty than what I can attain.
Where can I go that is away from your Spirit?
Where could I flee from your presences?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make a bed in the shades, you I see!
If I rise on the wings of dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me
and your right hand will hold me...

Search me, God, and know my heart!
Test me, and know my anxious thoughts!
See if there is in me an offensive way,
then lead me in the way everlasting!

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

Another member of the group reads: **Ephesians 3:14-21**

I pray that the Father
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named,
may give you according to the riches of his glory,
by the power of his Spirit,
to become strong in your inner humanity,
that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith,
being rooted and founded in love,
that you may have strength
to comprehend with all the saints
the breadth and length and height and depth,
to know the love of Christ that excels knowledge,
that you may be filled with the fullness of God.
Now to the one who, by the power operating in us,
is able to do superabundantly
beyond all things we could ask or think,
to him be the glory in the church
and in Christ Jesus
to all generations of the age and of the ages. Amen.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

A third member of the group reads:

Luke 17:4-5

Jesus says, "If your brother wrongs you seven times in a day and turns to you seven times saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."
And the apostles say to the Lord,
"Increase our faith!"

The gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ**

Pause for one solid minute of silence.

Leader reads "Chris's Story" from Coyle, pages 65-67.

*Each group member shares one point that struck him in Chapter 4 of Men and Abortion by Coyle (pages 57-64).
If the group prefers, members may instead take turns reading the 21 paragraphs in Chapter 4.*

TWO MODELS

PSYCHOLOGICAL

- 1. Awareness**
- 2. Decision**
- 3. Reframing**
- 4. Meaning**

A CHRISTIAN MODEL

- 1. Awareness of Pain**
- 2. Decision to Forgive**
- 3. Seeing As God Sees**
- 4. Finding Meaning**

AWARENESS OF PAIN

1. Examine denial and defense mechanisms used.
2. Be aware of the emotion of anger.
3. Admit shame, when it is appropriate.
4. Ask whether there is an emotional attachment.
5. Explore whether there is “cognitive rehearsal” of the abortion event.
6. Be aware of comparisons with others’ responses.
7. Realize that there is a permanent change.
8. Struggle with issues of justice, right and wrong.

DECISION TO FORGIVE

9. Be open to a change of heart, a conversion, or new insights that old strategies are not working.
10. Consider forgiveness as a viable option.
11. Make a commitment to forgive the offender.

REFRAMING: SEEING AS GOD SEES

12. “Reframe” who the wrongdoer is by viewing him or her in as large a context as possible.
13. Seek the empathy that comes with understanding.
14. Feel compassion. (Suffer with.)
15. Accept and absorb the pain.

FINDING MEANING

16. Try to find meaning in the suffering & forgiveness.
17. Remember that I have needed others’ forgiveness in the past.
18. Gain insight that I am not alone.
19. Realize that I may have a new purpose in life.
20. Notice any decreased negative affect (and perhaps increased positive affect) toward the injurer, and awareness of any internal emotional release.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

for one solid minute of silence

1. How are God's forgiveness of me, my forgiveness of others, and others' forgiveness of me integrated? In my faith tradition, is there a ritual way of celebrating God's mercy?
2. At the Catholic funeral liturgy, we proclaim that "in death life is changed, not ended." How does my understanding of the *communion of saints* work into the forgiveness process? How is this expressed in my faith?
3. Where would I place myself on the 20-point forgiveness process?

OPEN SHARING ABOUT ANYTHING

one at a time

TEN MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING

(Drawn from the Rite of Penance)

Leader: Each of us is created in the image of God, who loves us completely and asks us to love God with all our hearts and be good to each other. People do not always do what God wants, so we ask God to forgive everyone who sins, including us. Listen to what God does, in the words of Jesus:

A Reader:

Luke 15:1-7

The tax collectors and sinners all draw near to hear him, but the Pharisees and scribes begin to murmur, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." So to them he speaks this parable: "What man of you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them does not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And finding he places it on his shoulders rejoicing, and coming into the house he calls together the friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I found my lost sheep.' I tell you, that thus more joy will be in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine just people who have no need of repentance.

The gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ**

Pause for one solid minute of silence.

Leader

We pray for ourselves and for
all sons and daughters of God:

Help us to be sorry for our sins...

All: **You love us and forgive us.**

Have mercy when we are weak...

All: **You...**

Give us trust in your mercy...

All: **You...**

Make us strong in desire to do good...

All: **You...**

All make the sign of the cross, saying together:

+ **May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.**

5th Meeting

ANGER

Opening Prayer on page 4

One member of the group reads:

Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said,

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,
over the birds of the air, and over the livestock,
and over all the wild animals

and all the creatures that move over the earth.”

So God created the man in his image;

in the image of God he created him;

male and female he created them.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

Another member of the group reads:

Ephesians 2:19-22

You are no longer strangers and aliens,

but you are equal citizens with the saints

and members of the family of God,

having been built on the foundation

of the apostles and prophets,

with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone,

in whom the whole building fits together
and grows into a holy temple in the Lord,
in whom you also are being built together
into a dwelling place of God in the spirit.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

A third member of the group reads:

Mark 3:1-5

Jesus again enters into a synagogue.

And there is there a man

with a hand that has been withered;

and they watch him carefully

whether he will heal him on the sabbath,

that they might accuse him.

And he says to the man with the dry hand,

"Rise into the midst."

And he says to them,

"Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath

or to do evil, to save life or to kill?"

But they are silent.

And looking round on them with anger,

being greatly grieved at the hardness of their heart,

he says to the man,

"Stretch forth the hand."

And he stretches forth, and his hand is restored.

The gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ**

Pause for one solid minute of silence.

Leader reads “Jack’s Story” from Coyle, pages 71-74.

Each group member shares one point that struck him in Chapter 5 of Men and Abortion by Coyle (pages 75-84).

If the group prefers, members may instead take turns reading the 26 paragraphs in Chapter 5.

Leader

There are three mechanisms available for dealing with the emotion of anger:

- 1. Denial,**
- 2. Expression, and(/or)**
- 3. Forgiveness.**

Coyle, pg. 79

Chapters 5 through 10 are each concluded with a page or two of ideas for consideration.

The group leader reads aloud the “Putting the Ideas into Practice” for Chapter 5 on pages 85-86. Any worth trying?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

for one solid minute of silence

1. When might I have *displaced* my anger onto people who have absolutely no responsibility for the injury that has made me angry in the first place?
2. In Mark 3, Jesus acknowledges his anger and holds it with grief, in compassion, and a *suffering-with*. How might this model help me?
3. One writer has defined forgiveness, in his autobiography of being abused as a child, as *letting go of the sense that the past should have been any different or better*.

(Martin Moran, *The Tricky Part*
Vintage Books / Anchor Books, 2005)

In other words: What if I were to let go of the possibility of having a different or better past?

OPEN SHARING ABOUT ANYTHING

one at a time

TEN MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING

(Drawn from the Book of Blessings)

Leader: Today we seek God's blessings on seeds and the crops they will produce. As seeds grow and are cared for, may they be signs of the new life that comes from God.

A Reader:

John 12:24

Jesus answers them,
“Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain
of wheat falling to the ground dies, it remains
a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. “

The gospel of the Lord. **All: Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ**

Pause for one solid minute of silence.

Leader The Lord of the harvest sustains us;
let us call upon the Lord:

From despair in times of drought,
All: Deliver us, O Lord.

From wastefulness in times of plenty,
All: Deliver us, O Lord.

From neglect of those in need,
All: Deliver us, O Lord.

From blindness to your presence in our work,
All: Deliver us, O Lord.

From hunger and thirst,
All: Deliver us, O Lord.

Are there any intercessions from the group?
All respond to them: We pray to the Lord.

Remember us, Lord, in your kingdom:
All: Our Father . . .

All make the sign of the cross, saying together:

+ May God nourish us and care for us. Amen.

6th Meeting

HELPLESSNESS

Opening Prayer on page 4

One member of the group reads:

Psalm 63:2-9

God, you are my God; you I earnestly seek.
My soul, she thirsts for you,
my body, he longs for you,
as in a land with no water, dry and weary.
So in the sanctuary I saw you,
beheld you in your power and glory.
Your love is better than life itself;
my lips will glorify you.
So I will praise you in all the ways I am alive;
in your name I will lift up my hands.
As with fatness and richness,
my soul will be satisfied;
with singing lips my mouth will sing praise.
When I remember you on my bed,
through night watches I think of you,
you who are my help;
then in the shadow of your wings I sing.
My very self stays close to you;
your right hand upholds me.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

Another member of the group reads:

1 Peter 2:21-24

To this you were called,
for indeed Christ suffered on behalf of you,
leaving to you an example to follow in his steps:
He did not sin, nor was guile found in his mouth;
he was reviled and did not revile in return;
suffering he did not threaten,
but delivered himself to the one judging justly.
Our sins he carried in his body up onto the tree,
that dying to sins, we might live for justice.
By his bruises, you are healed.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

A third member of the group reads:

Luke 6:17-19

Jesus comes down with them
and stands on a level place,
and a crowd of many of his disciples,
and a multitude of many people from all Judea and
Jerusalem and the coast country of Tyre and Sidon,
come to hear him
and to be healed from their diseases;
and those tormented by unclean spirits are cured.
And all the crowd seeks to touch him,
because power goes forth from him
and heals them all.

The gospel of the Lord. All: **Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ**

Pause for one solid minute of silence.

*Leader reads “**Ted’s Story**” from Coyle, pages 87-89.*

Each group member shares one point that struck him in Chapter 6 of Men and Abortion by Coyle (pages 91-97).

If the group prefers, members may instead take turns reading the 17 paragraphs in Chapter 6.

Leader

Dr. Coyle declares,

Genuine forgiveness is an act of strength and not of weakness.

And quotes psychologist Coleen Benson:

One of the most serious consequences of lacking forgiveness is that we become bonded to those we need to forgive.

Coyle, pg. 79

*The group leader reads aloud the “**Putting the Ideas into Practice**” for Chapter 6 on **page 98**. Any worth trying?*

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

for one solid minute of silence

1. Jesus was conceived and born under extraordinary circumstances. Can I describe how Saint Joseph might have felt helplessness?
2. Does anyone I know see helplessness as unmanly? How can I reconcile helplessness with being a man?
3. Taking a risk by facing my pain *is, by no means, a helpless thing to do* (Coyle, pg. 94). Am I seeing this in my own story? Do I know anyone who needs to hear this truth?

OPEN SHARING ABOUT ANYTHING

one at a time

TEN MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING

BLESSING OF PARENTS BEFORE CHILDBIRTH

(Drawn from the Book of Blessings)

Leader: God, the Lord of life, rules and sustains the life of each of us. Parents-to-be in our world today are partners in God's love. We pray that they may already be cherishing the children they have conceived, and that they may each await the hour of their child's birth in faith and hope.

A Reader:

Psalm 33:12,20-22

Blessed is the nation for whom the Lord is God,
the people chosen for this inheritance.

Our soul waits for the Lord,
who is our help and our shield,
in whom our heart rejoices,
the holy name in whom we trust.

Lord, may you rest on us your unfailing love
even as we hope in you.

The word of the Lord. *All:* **Thanks be to God.**

Pause for one solid minute of silence.

Leader

Christ our Lord, you assumed our nature so that
we may be reborn as children of God:

All: **Blessed are you, O Lord.**

Christ our Lord, you give parents

the example of Mary and Joseph: *All:* **Blessed...**

Christ our Lord, through the ministry of parents

you fill the Church with joy: *All:* **Blessed...**

Are there any intercessions from the group?

Remember us, Lord, in your kingdom:

All: **Our Father . . .**

All make the sign of the cross, saying together:

+ **May God, who chose to give us the joys of
eternal salvation through the motherhood of
Mary and the protection of Joseph, bless and
keep all expectant parents in his care. Amen.**

7th Meeting

GUILT

Opening Prayer on page 4

One member of the group reads:

Psalm 51:6-12

Against you yourself I have sinned;
what I did is evil in your eyes.
You are proven right when you speak
and justified when you judge.
Surely we are sinners from birth,
from conception in a mother's womb.
Surely you desire truth in our inner parts;
in my inmost place you teach me wisdom.
You cleanse me with hyssop
and I will be clean;
you wash me
and I will be whiter than snow...
You let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you let be crushed now rejoice.
Hide your faces from my sins
and blot out all my iniquities.
A pure heart create in me, God!
Renew inside me a spirit to be steadfast.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

Another member of the group reads:

Romans 8:14-17

As many as are led by the Spirit of God,
these are sons and daughters of God.
For you did not receive a spirit of slavery,
for fear again, but you received a spirit of adoption,
by which we cry, "Abba, Father."
That very Spirit gives witness to our spirit
that we are children of God.
And if children, then also heirs,
heirs on one hand of God,
joint heirs on the other of Christ,
since we suffer with him
in order that we may also be glorified with him.
The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

A third member of the group reads:

Luke 15:20-24

Rising up, the younger son comes to his father.
While he is still far away, his father sees him,
and is moved with compassion,
and running he falls on his neck
and fervently kisses him.
His son says to him, "Father,
I have sinned against heaven and before you;
I am no longer worthy to be called a son of you."
But the father says to his slaves,
"Quickly bring the best robe and clothe him;
put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet."

And bring the fattened calf and kill it,
and then let us feast and celebrate,
because this son of mine was dead
and is alive again,
he was lost and has been found.”
And they begin to celebrate.

The gospel of the Lord. All: **Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ**

Pause for one solid minute of silence.

Leader reads “Bill’s Story” from Coyle, pages 99-101.

*Each group member shares one point that struck him in
Chapter 7 of Men and Abortion by Coyle (pages 103-113).*

*If the group prefers, members may instead take turns
reading the 31 paragraphs in Chapter 7.*

Leader

*Remember, the purpose of reframing is not to
excuse ourselves but to better understand why
we behaved as we did. As we reframe and come
to understand our behavior, we may still
condemn our behavior but we will begin
to feel compassion for ourselves as
vulnerable human beings.*

Coyle, pg. 115

*The group leader reads aloud the
"Putting the Ideas into Practice"
for Chapter 7 on page 114-115. Any worth trying?*

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

for one solid minute of silence

1. How are we doing?
2. How do I feel about the suggestion of C.S. Lewis that *if God forgives us we must forgive ourselves. Otherwise it is almost like setting up ourselves as a higher tribunal than Him* (pg. 105)?
3. Where would I place myself on the 20-point forgiveness process on page 25 in this book?

OPEN SHARING ABOUT ANYTHING

one at a time

TEN MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING

BLESSING OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS

(Drawn from the Book of Blessings)

Leader Brothers, in Psalm 128 we read,
*Your sons and daughters will be
like shoots of the olives around your table.*

Loving Father of all sons and daughters,
you so loved the world that you gave your only Son;
keep us, your children, in your love.

All: **Father, watch over your children.**

Your favor rested fully on the Son you loved;
grant that each one of us may successfully carry out
the work and mission entrusted to us.

All: **Father, watch over your children.**

As your Son was growing up, you placed him
in the tender care of Mary and Joseph;
grant that your children may grow
to the full maturity of Christ.

All: **Father, watch over your children.**

You show a special love
for those who are alone or abandoned;
through the help of the Christian community
let all children who are deprived of a family's love
know that you are their Father.

All: **Father, watch over your children.**

Men with living children pray together for them:

**Father, inexhaustible source of life
and author of all good,
we bless you and we thank you.
Grant that our children will find in this life
such inspiration that they will strive always
for what is right and good,
and one day, by your grace,
reach their home in heaven.
Amen.**

Men without living children pray together for all others:

**Lord Jesus Christ,
you loved children so much that you said,
Whoever welcomes a child welcomes me.
Hear our prayers
and, with unfailing protection,
watch over all your sons and daughters.
When they have grown to maturity,
grant that they will
confess your name in willing faith,
be fervent in charity,
and persevere courageously
in the hope of reaching your kingdom.
Amen.**

All make the sign of the cross, saying together:

**+ May the Lord Jesus, who loves children,
bless us and keep us in his love,
now and forever. Amen.**

8th Meeting

RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS

Opening Prayer on page 4

One member of the group reads:

Psalm 117

Praise the Lord, all you nations;
and extol, all you peoples.
Great is his steadfast love toward us,
the fidelity of the Lord to forever.
Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

Another member of the group reads: **Job 38:1-12,16,24-26,**
34,37, 39:1,9,19,27, 40:8, 42:1,2,3,5,6

Then the Lord answers from the storm and says...:

“Brace your loins now, like a man.

I will question you,
then answer me!

Where were you when I founded the earth?

Tell me if you know with understanding.

Who marked off her dimensions; do you know?

On what were her footings set?

Into what were its pedestals sunk,

Who laid her cornerstone?...

And who shut the sea behind doors
when he burst forth from the womb;...
and said: to here you may come and no farther,
and here shall your proud waves halt!...
Have you in your days ordered morning
and shown the dawn his place?...
Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea,
or walked in the depths of the abyss?...
How is the lightning sent,
and the east wind scattered over the earth?...
Who cuts the channel for the pouring rain
and the path for storms of thunder
to water no man's land, the unpeopled desert?...
Can you raise your voice to the cloud,
and cover yourself in a flood of waters?...
Who has the wisdom to count the clouds?
Who can tip over the water jars of heaven...?
Do you know the time of birth of a mountain goat?
Do you give strength to the horse?...
Does the eagle soar at your command...?
You condemn me to justify yourself?"

Then Job replies to the Lord and says:
"I know that you can do all,
and that your plan cannot be thwarted.
Surely I have spoken without understanding
of things more wonderful than me I cannot know...
I heard of you with my ear,
but now my eye has seen you.
So I retract my words, and repent in dust and ash."

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

A third member of the group reads:

John 14:1-7

Jesus says to them,
"Do not let your heart be troubled;
believe in God, believe also in me.
In the Father's house there are many abodes.
If not I would have told you,
because I go to prepare a place for you.
And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again and receive you to myself,
that where I am you also may be.
And where I go, you know the way."

Thomas says to him,
"Lord, we do not know where you are going;
how do we know the way?"

Jesus says to him,
"I am the way and the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me.
If you have known me,
you have also known my Father.
From now, you know him, and have seen him."

The gospel of the Lord. All: **Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ**

Pause for one solid minute of silence.

Leader reads **“Cal’s Story”** from Coyle, pages 117-119.

Each group member shares one point that struck him in Chapter 8 of *Men and Abortion* by Coyle (pages 121-127).

If the group prefers, members may instead take turns reading the 17 paragraphs in Chapter 8.

Leader

When a post-abortion man enters into a new relationship with anger and low expectations of his new partner, he is likely to behave in ways that practically ensure another failed relationship.

Coyle, pg. 126

The group leader reads aloud the **“Putting the Ideas into Practice”** for Chapter 8 on pages 128-129. Any worth trying?

Leader

Henri Nouwen wrote that no human being is capable of offering the unconditional and unlimited love for which our hearts yearn. If I expect any fellow creature to make me whole by loving me perfectly, I am asking that one to be God, and I will be disappointed.

Bread for the Journey: A Daybook of Wisdom and Faith
Harper San Francisco, 1997, entry for January 20

This bold truth is countercultural in a world that might try to solve all problems with good sex. But folks who discern that God is calling them into the sacrament of marriage can rely on God's providence in their vocation, and on God's grace in its challenges. In true humility, spouses can acknowledge their unique giftedness and live with one another's imperfections by trusting that God who calls them into their vocation will give them the grace necessary to be faithful to it. When a man or woman can say to God with gut-wrenching honesty, "Lord, you got me into this; I need your help now," he or she can rest in the surety of God's care and the truth that God is God and we are not. -sjw

*Lord, you stir in us pleasure to praise you
for you have made us for yourself,
and our heart is restless
until it rests in you.*

Saint Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, 1st paragraph, 4th Century

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

for one solid minute of silence

1. All of the men in Coyle's study stated that they *never, ever wanted to experience another abortion.*
(pg. 122)
How might this be affecting my relationships?
2. Why might it be *helpful for the post-abortion man to think of his fear as temporary and providing him with a much needed "time-out"?*
3. In chapter 9 on *A Spirituality of Sexuality* in his great book *The Holy Longing*, Ronald Rolheiser discusses Karl Rahner's saying that in the insufficiency of everything attainable we eventually realize that, here in this life, all symphonies remain unfinished.
What might this say to me about my relationships?

OPEN SHARING ABOUT ANYTHING

one at a time

TEN MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING

Leader: Are there any intercessions from the group?

*Conclude with the Our Father,
then the acts of faith, hope and charity on the back cover.*

9th Meeting

GRIEF

Opening Prayer on page 4

One member of the group reads:

Psalm 86:1-7,11

Hear in your ear, Lord;
answer me for I am poor and needy.
Guard my life for I am devoted;
save your servant, my God,
the one trusting in you.
Have mercy on me, Lord,
for to you I call all the day.
Bring joy to me, your servant,
for to you, Lord, I lift up my soul.
Indeed, Lord, you are kind and forgiving
and abundant in love for all who call to you.
Hear my prayer, Lord;
listen to the sound of my cries for mercy.
In the day of my trouble I will call to you
for you will answer me...
Teach me, Lord, your way
and I will walk in your truth.
Make my heart undivided
that I may fear your name in awe.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

Another member of the group reads: **Romans 8:38-39**

I am persuaded that not death, nor life, nor angels,
nor rulers, nor present things, nor things coming,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor any other creature will be able to separate us
from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

A third member of the group reads: **Matthew 8:23-27**

And as Jesus embarks in the boat,
his disciples follow him.
And behold, there is a great storm in the sea,
so that the boat is swept over by the waves.
But he is asleep. And they approach him
and wake him up saying,
"Lord, save us! We are perishing!"
And he says to them,
"Why, little-faiths, are you fearful?"
Then rising he rebukes the winds and the sea,
and there is a great calm.
And they marvel saying,
"What sort is this man,
that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

The gospel of the Lord. All: **Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ**

Pause for one solid minute of silence.

Leader reads **“Paul’s Story”** from Coyle, pages 131-132.

Each group member shares one point that struck him in Chapter 9 of Men and Abortion by Coyle (pages 133-142).

If the group prefers, members may instead take turns reading the 24 paragraphs in Chapter 9.

Leader

Real grief is a sign of love.
If there had been no love
in a relationship loss,
there would be really nothing to grieve.

We may cry over lost money or spilt milk,
but few of us honestly grieve those losses.

And so, if we let it,
deep grief can give honor
to the truth of deep love.

- SJW

*The group leader reads aloud the
"Putting the Ideas into Practice"
for Chapter 9 on pages 143-144. Any worth trying?*

Leader

Does anyone really think that a miscarried or aborted baby is anywhere but in heaven? In the old days, some spoke of "limbo," which was never the teaching of the Church and was rejected by the Church because, to paraphrase, it would still mean a separation from God, which is not God's desire.

Accept that this deceased child is in heaven, and find there the source of your healing:

To be in God's presence in heaven is to be a saint, and to be a saint is to hold nothing unforgiven. Your son or daughter in heaven is praying in the communion of saints for everyone to be healed of this experience. Can you accept this gift of mercy?

- SJW

A GUIDE TO GRIEVING

Lynn M. Levo, CSJ, Ph.D.

Saint Luke Institute

used with permission

1. Not all loss is of the same magnitude or kind.
2. All loss can be the groundwork for new life.
3. Losses are unique to each individual, because we grieve more over the loss of what something meant to us than over the lost object itself.
4. Change always brings loss, even when the change is welcome.
5. As our losses are unique, so are our ways of coping with them.
6. Loss evokes a wide array of emotions, whether we admit them or not.
7. We will find the makings of ourselves in our own history of loss, especially in the ways we have chosen to deal with them.
8. While we cannot control the losses we experience in life, we can choose what we do with them.
9. Suffering is a mystery.
The Son of God endured suffering and death out of love for and solidarity with us, but he never explained why we suffer.
10. God's grace gives us the choice of transforming loss into abundant life.
11. The Spirit dwells within us, suffers with us, consoles us, and will guide us to resurrection.

12. Growthful grieving involves three movements:
 - a. Openly acknowledging what has been lost,
 - b. Expressing our feelings
as we acknowledge the loss,
 - c. Choosing to change
the things that keep us tied to the loss.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

for one solid minute of silence

1. How are we doing?
2. Can I describe a time when crying helped?
3. Do I know or have a sense
of whether the child is a boy or a girl?
Have I given the child a name? If not, can I?

OPEN SHARING ABOUT ANYTHING

one at a time

TEN MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING

Leader: Are there any intercessions from the group?

*Conclude with the Our Father,
then the acts of faith, hope and charity on the back cover.*

10th Meeting

HELPING OTHERS TO HEAL

Opening Prayer on page 4

One member of the group reads:

Psalm 96

Sing to the Lord a new song!
Sing to the Lord, all the earth!
Sing to the Lord and praise the name!
Proclaim the salvation from day to day!
Declare among the nations the glory of the Lord!,
among all the peoples the marvelous deeds,
for great is the Lord, greatly being praised,
the one being feared above all so-called "gods."
For all "gods" of the nations are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens,
splendor and majesty and strength and glory
in the holy sanctuary.
Ascribe to the Lord, families of nations!
Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength!
Ascribe to the Lord the glory of the name!
Bring offerings and come into the courts!
Worship the Lord in holy splendor!
Tremble in the presence all the earth!
Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!"
Firmly established, the world cannot be moved
and peoples will be judged with equity.

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad.
Let the sea resound and all its fullness.
Let the fields and all that is in them be jubilant,
then all the trees of the forests will sing for joy
before the Lord who comes,
who comes to judge the earth,
who will judge the world and its peoples
in justice and in truth.

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

Another member of the group reads: **Acts 1:15,21,22**

During those days Peter stands up
in the midst of the brothers, a group together
of about one hundred and twenty, and says,
“It is fitting that one of these
accompanying us all the time
the Lord Jesus came and went among us,
beginning from the baptism of John
until the day when he was taken up from us,
become with us a witness to his resurrection.”

The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

A third member of the group reads: **John 8:2-11**

At dawn Jesus arrives again in the temple,
and all the people come to him,
and sitting he teaches them.

And the scribes and the Pharisees lead a woman
who has been caught in adultery and
and standing her in the midst, they say to him,
“Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act
committing adultery. Now in the law,
Moses commanded us to stone such.

So what do you say?”

They say this to test him,
that they might accuse him.

Jesus stooping down
writes in the earth with his finger.

But as they continue questioning him,
he stands erect and says to them,

“Let the one sinless of you
first cast a stone on her.”

And again stooping down he writes in the earth.

And hearing, they go out one by one,
beginning with the elders.

And he is left alone, the woman being in the midst.

Then standing erect Jesus says to her,

“Woman, where are they?

No one condemns you?”

And she says, “No one, sir.”

So Jesus says,

“Neither do I condemn you.

Go, and from now sin no longer.”

The gospel of the Lord. All: **Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ**

Pause for one solid minute of silence.

Leader reads **“David’s Story”** from Coyle, pages 145-146.

Leader

Part of David’s message is:

I wish society would look at the long-term effects on both men and women so they could see the long-term damage it does to people. Then they could inform and warn people before the abortion, or better yet, before the pregnancy.

Coyle, pg. 146

Each group member shares one point that struck him in Chapter 10 of Men and Abortion by Coyle (pages 147-52).

If the group prefers, members may instead take turns reading the 14 paragraphs in Chapter 10.

*The group leader reads aloud the
“**Putting the Ideas into Practice**”
for Chapter 10 on **pages 153-154**. Any worth trying?*

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

for one solid minute of silence

1. Mother Teresa of Calcutta is often quoted:
*It is a poverty to decide that a child must die
so that you may live as you wish.*
How does my soul hear this truth today?
2. Can I remember a time when telling part of
my life story or speaking up about my values
helped me to discover what I really believe?
3. The word *apostle* means *one who is sent*.
Is there any way in which God might be trying
to send me as a witness to the resurrection?

OPEN SHARING ABOUT ANYTHING

one at a time

FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING

from *BLESSING OF PARENTS AFTER MISCARRIAGE*

(Drawn from the Book of Blessings)

Leader For those who trust in God, in the pain of sorrow there is consolation, in the face of despair there is hope, in the midst of death there is life. As we mourn the deaths of our children we place ourselves in the hands of God and ask for strength, for healing, and for love.

A member of the group reads

Romans 8:14-27,38-39

As many as are led by the Spirit of God,
these are sons and daughters of God.
For you did not receive a spirit of slavery, for
fear again, but you received a spirit of adoption,
by which we cry, "Abba, Father."
That very Spirit gives witness to our spirit
that we are children of God. And if children,
then also heirs, heirs on one hand of God,
joint heirs on the other of Christ,
since we suffer with him in order that
we may also be glorified with him.
For I reckon that the sufferings of this time
are not worthy of comparing
with the coming glory to be revealed to us.
Creation watches in anxiety and eager expectation
for the revelation of the children of God.

For creation was subjected to vanity,
not of free will, but by that of the one subjecting,
in hope, because even creation itself
will be freed from the slavery of corruption
to the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
We know that all creation groans together,
in pain as in labor, until now. And not only this,
but we ourselves, the firstfruit of the Spirit,
groan within ourselves as we eagerly expect
our adoption, the redemption of our bodies.
For by hope we were saved;
but hope that is seen is not hope,
for why would anyone hope for what is seen?
But if we hope for what we do not see,
through patience we eagerly wait.
And similarly the Spirit shares in our weakness.
For we do not know how to pray as is fitting,
but the Spirit prays on our behalf
with inexpressible groanings.
And the one searching our heart knows
what is the mind of the Spirit,
because the Spirit intercedes on behalf of saints
according to the will of God...
I am persuaded that not death, nor life, nor angels,
nor rulers, nor present things, nor things coming,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor any other creature will be able to separate us
from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.
The word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God.**

And behold, two of them on the same day
are journeying to a village named Emmaus,
sixty stadia (7 miles) distant from Jerusalem,
and they are talking to each other
about all these things having occurred.

And it comes to pass as they talk and discuss:
Jesus himself drawing near journeys with them,
but their eyes are held to not recognize him.

And he says to them,

"What are these words
which you exchange with each other walking?"

And they stand with sad faces.

And the one named Cleopas answering says,

"You are only a stranger in Jerusalem and do not
know the things happening there in these days?"

And he says to them, "What things?"

And they say to him,

"The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a
prophet-man, powerful in work and word before
God and all the people, how both the chief priests
and our rulers delivered him to judgment of
death and crucified him. But we were hoping that
he was the one about to redeem Israel. But also
with all these things, this is the third day since
these things happened. But also some of our
women astonished us. Being at the tomb early
and not finding his body, they came saying they
had seen a vision of angels who say that he lives.

And some of the ones with us went to the tomb,
and found as indeed the women said,
but him they did not see."
And he says to them,
"O foolish ones and slow in heart
to believe in all things which the prophets spoke.
Did the Christ not deem it fitting
to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?"
And beginning from Moses and from all the
prophets, he explains to them in all the scriptures
the things concerning himself. And as they draw
near to the village to which they are journeying,
he pretends to journey farther.
And they urge him saying,
"Remain with us, because it is toward evening
and the day has declined."
And he goes in to remain with them.
And it comes to pass as he reclines with them,
taking the bread he blesses, and having broken
he hands it to them. And their eyes are opened
and they recognize him; and he becomes
invisible to them. And they say to each other,
"Was not our heart burning in us
as he spoke to us on the way,
as he opened up to us the scriptures?"
And rising up in the same hour,
they return to Jerusalem and find
the eleven collected and the ones with them saying,
"Truly the Lord was raised
and appeared to Simon."

And they relate the things on the way,
and how he was known by them
in the breaking of the bread.

The gospel of the Lord. All: **Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ**

*If members are agreeable,
group leader lays hands on their heads,
praying silently for healing.*

Leader Let us pray to God,
who throughout the ages
has heard the cries of parents:

For these men, who know the pain of grief,
that they may be comforted,
we pray: All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For their families, that they may be filled with hope,
we pray: All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who have suffered the loss of a child,
that Christ may be their support,
we pray: All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our sons and daughters who are now our brothers
and sisters in Christ, (*by name*) _____
we pray: All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader

Let us pray to the God of consolation and hope
as Christ has taught us: *All:* **Our Father . . .**

All together

**Lord, God of all creation,
we bless and thank you for your tender care.
Receive these lives you created in love
and comfort your faithful sons and daughters
who have suffered loss
with the assurance of your unfailing mercy.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Leader

May the peace of Christ
which is beyond all understanding
keep your minds and hearts
in the knowledge and love of God
and of his Son, our Lord and Savior,
Jesus Christ. Amen.

All make the sign of the cross, saying together:

**+ May god give us peace in our sorrow,
consolation in our grief,
and trust in God's abiding presence. Amen.**

All exchange a sign of the peace of Christ.

AMAZING GRACE

A-ma-zing\ Grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a\ wretch like me.
I once\ was\ lost, but now/ am\ found,
Was blind, but\ now I see.

'Twas grace that\ taught my heart to fear,
And grace my\ fears re-lieved.
How prec\ious\ did that grace/ ap\pear
The hour I\ first be-lieved.

Through ma-ny\ dan-gers, toils, and snares,
I have al\rea-dy come.
'Tis grace\ hath\ brought me safe/ thus\ far,
And grace will\ lead me home.

When we've been\ there ten thou-sand years,
Bright shi-ning\ as the sun,
We've no\ less\ days to sing/ God's\ praise
Than when we'd\ first be-gun.

Text: John Newton, 1779
Music: NEW BRITAIN, CM, composer unknown;
Virginia Harmony, 1831

FAITH, HOPE & CHARITY

F Lord, we believe you are the Christ, *Matthew 16:16*
A the Son of the living God, *Mark 9:23,24*
I who have said:
T *All things are possible to those who believe.*
H We believe. Help our unbelief.
Lord, increase our faith.

H You, O Lord, are our hope, *From Psalm 71*
O our trust, O Lord, from our youth.
P Upon you we have leaned from our birth.
E Our praise is continually of you.
You are our rock and our fortress.

C Lord, you know everything. *John 21:17; 15:9-12*
H You know well that we love you.
A May we live on in your love,
R keeping your commandment
I to love one another as you have loved us,
T that your joy may be ours
Y and our joy may be complete.

BLESSING:

+ Lord, bless us and keep us! *Numbers 6:24-26*
Lord, let your face shine upon us
and be gracious to us!
Lord, look upon us kindly
and give us peace.
Amen.