

The Faith-Filled Catholic Women's Bible Study Program

A Leader's Guide for Group Discussion

Acceptance
Song: "*Magnificat*"
CD 1, Track 1

Insert A-1 through A-4
Composer: *Lori True*
Faith-Filled Catholic Women's Bible Music CD

Materials Needed

Faith-Filled Catholic Women's Bible and Music CD, CD player, Participant's Worksheet, Holy Water, 4" x 6" index card each.

Setting the Stage

Before this session, mail (or e-mail) each member of the group a welcoming message and a copy of the Participant's Worksheet for this session. Also, send a reminder of the date and time of the session as well as directions to the meeting place (if different from the church). To enhance an atmosphere of **Acceptance**, have the song "*Magnificat*" from the Faith-Filled Catholic Women's Bible Music CD playing in the background when the participants arrive.

Warm Up - Optional (10 minutes)

Give each participant an index card. Ask them to draw both a vertical and a horizontal line through the center of the card dividing it into four equal sections. Then ask them to complete the following.

In the upper left-hand corner, list three things you like to do.

In the upper right-hand corner, list three of your favorite foods.

In the lower left-hand corner, list three things you like to watch on TV.

In the lower right-hand corner, list the place in the world you would most like to see.

Make sure that no one puts her name on the card. As soon as everyone is finished, put all the cards in a hat and have the first participant draw out a card (it cannot be her card – if it is, she must put it back and draw another card). Before she reads the details on the card aloud, tell all participants that they are going to be asked to write down (without discussion) who they think each card describes. Ask the first person to draw a card to write the number #1 on the back of the card. She should ask every participant to write the same number (#1) on the back of their Participant's Worksheet. As she reads the answers to the questions written on the front of the card (what three things #1 likes to do, what #1's three favorite foods are; etc.), the other participants try to guess which woman this may be describing. They each write their guess beside the corresponding number on the back of their Participant's Worksheet.

Move around the group until the last participant has read the last card. After the first one, each subsequent card should get the next consecutive number written on the back of the card, corresponding with the numbers written on the back of the Participant's Worksheets. Compare answers with each other. Ask if anyone got all the names correct in their list.

Opening Discussion (15 minutes)

To begin the discussion, ask each participant to share with the group her answer(s) to one, or both, of the following questions:

1. What does acceptance mean to you?
2. What does it mean to be accepted?

Ask the participants to offer their reflections on any of the following questions:

3. Have you ever felt totally accepted (or totally unaccepted) by a person or a group?
4. Do you ever have trouble accepting yourself?
5. Do you sometimes have trouble accepting the circumstances in your life that you can't change?

Spiritual Awakening - Opening Prayer

Ask the participants to read together the **Prayer** at the top of insert page A-2.

Spiritual Awakening - Recognizing (5 minutes)

Leader: *The Bible tells us about how God accepts us and how He expects us to accept each other.* Ask the participants to read aloud each of the **first five** Scripture passages in the **Recognizing** section of **Spiritual Awakening** on insert page A-2. Remind them to pause for a few seconds in silence after each passage to allow anyone to offer any spontaneous thought, prayer, praise or thanksgiving that this Scripture might inspire. Then, in recognition of the example she set for full acceptance of God's will, conclude this section by all reciting **Luke 1:38** followed by praying the Hail Mary together.

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.
May it be done to me according to your word." Luke 1:38

Spiritual Awakening - 1st Reflection (15 minutes)

Have the participants read the **Faith in Action** article "*Smile Even at Funerals*" on insert page A-3. Discuss the answers to the following questions: Are you fully accepting of God's will? How would your life look different if you rejoiced in Luke 1:38.

Spiritual Awakening - 2nd Reflection (15 minutes)

Ask a volunteer to read **James 5:9 (Page 353 NT)**. Then, read the following: **Leader:** *This verse teaches us not to complain about others that you may not be judged.* Ask the participants to share some instance recently where they have found themselves complaining in some way about some person or some situation in their family, at work, or in your community? After discussion: **Leader:** *Let's pray James 5:9 again asking God for the strength to refrain from complaining about others and the resolve to choose acceptance by focusing only on the positive things about others.*

Group Prayer (10 minutes)

Leader: *Dearest Jesus, just as Your Blessed Mother accepted the will of the Father, accept our prayers for these special intentions. May Your answers to our group and individual prayers for each other be made clear to us. Guide us to discern Your will with full acceptance as we ask you for: **enter aloud all individual intentions.** In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Leader: *You could say that Baptism is the "Sacrament of Acceptance." In Baptism, we are welcomed into the Body of Christ. As we close, come forward and bless yourself with Holy Water as a reminder of God's acceptance of you.* After all have come forward, continue with *Let us close today by reciting together the Serenity Prayer.*

***God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. Amen.***

Fellowship (15 minutes)

After the session is completed and while refreshments are served, play softly in the background: "*Magnificat*" from the Faith-Filled Catholic Women's Bible Music CD.

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Write to:

DeVore & Sons, Inc.
PO Box 780189
Wichita, KS 67278-0189