

The Faith-Filled Catholic Women's Bible Study Program

A Leader's Guide to Group Discussion

Hope
Song: "River of Hope"
CD 1, Track 9

Insert I-1 through I-4
Composer: Susan J. Paul
Faith-Filled Catholic Women's Bible Music CD

Materials Needed

Faith-Filled Catholic Women's Bible and Music CD, CD player, Participant's Worksheet, Beanbag or Fabric Ball.

Setting the Stage

Before this session, mail (or e-mail) any member that may not have been present at the last session 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 **Hope**, have the song "River of Hope" from the Faith-Filled Catholic Women's Bible Music CD playing in the background when the participants arrive.

Warm-Up - Optional (15 minutes)

With the participants all within tossing distance of each other, hand a soft beanbag or cloth ball to the first person. Tell them that they are to toss the ball to any other member. When a participant is tossed the ball, she must share with the group something that she considers a hope or dream for herself. Explain that these can be your hopes for yourself, your family or even society in general. Ask each participant to keep a record on the back of her Participant's Worksheet of what hopes and/or dreams she mentions. Continue tossing the ball until all have had an opportunity to give three answers. (Keep the list for use later in the session).

Opening Discussion (15 minutes)

Have the participants to read silently the **Plan and Purpose** article on insert page I-1. After some silent reflection, ask the group to share and discuss their answers to the following questions: What is hope? Do you consider yourself to be a hopeful person? What is the reason for your hope? How does having hope help you deal with challenges including things like pain and suffering?

Spiritual Awakening - Opening Prayer

Invite the participants to pray together the **Opening Prayer** at the top of insert page I-2.

Spiritual Awakening - Recognizing (10 minutes)

Ask for volunteers to read aloud each of the Scripture passages in the **Recognizing** section of **Spiritual Awakening** on insert page I-2. Remind the participants that each reader will pause for a few seconds of silence after each passage to allow anyone to offer any spontaneous thought, prayer, praise or thanksgiving that this Scripture might inspire. After the final Scripture is read, ask the group, "What else do these Scripture verses teach us about **Hope**?" Share and discuss any responses.

Spiritual Awakening - Reflecting (10 minutes)

Read aloud Romans 8:18-25 (Page 1218). Ask the group to look again at the list of hopes and dreams they wrote down in the Warm Up exercise. Have each participant ask themselves: Are my hopes and dreams focused on earthly things? What does this Scripture challenge me to hope for? Share your thoughts with each other.

Faith In Action (15 minutes)

Read together the **Faith in Action** article "Door Number Three" on insert page I-4. Discuss these questions: Can you think of an example of how today's culture pushes for immediate gratification. How are we tempted to "cash in" the immediate rewards on the things we can see over the reward of eternal life that we cannot see. Give an example of how advertising exploits this temptation in our culture.

Group Prayer (5 minutes)

Leader: Heavenly Father, in the spirit of hope, we offer these prayers, praises and petitions to You: (**enter aloud all individual intentions**). Accept these prayers along with our silent prayers today and every day. Guide and protect us as we seek to continually to hope in You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Leader: As each participant comes forward, place your hands on their heads and give them the blessing from Romans 15:13: **"May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."**

Fellowship (15 minutes)

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

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