

## **Living Intentionally**

### **Session Five | Holy Action**

#### **Before the Session**

This week's session will seek to encourage the women in your group to think about the ways they intentionally reach out into their larger community. In an effort to facilitate this reflection, you are invited to do a mission project together. Several ideas for this project are provided in the Create section. However, it may be more meaningful if you can find a way to connect to a ministry need specific to the community in which you live. Be sure to choose a project that best fits your group and your local community.

#### **Gather these items**

Gather the items needed for the project you choose to do for the Creation section.

#### **Leading the Session**

##### **Open (5-7 minutes)**

Begin by welcoming everyone back to the group. Be sure to allow everyone some time to catch up with one another. As you begin, invite them to reflect on who they gave their soup to for their at-home-work for the last week. Invite them to talk about their experience and feelings around the activity, using the questions like the ones below.

- When you gave your soup jar away, how did it go? How did the other person receive it?
- How did you feel after you gave it to the other person?
- What are ways that our shared community can grow together? How can we care for one another?

After they have taken some time to talk about their soup jars, ask if anyone would like to share about the other activities they did for the

week. Ask which activities (examen, breath prayer, or holy conversations) each person chose, why they chose it, and what their experience was like.

### Create (time depends on activity)

For today's Create activity, choose something your group can do for someone else. It would be a good idea to choose something that fits what your group is interested in or something that meets a need in your local community. Some possibilities are:

- Write notes to homebound church members.
- Assemble hygiene kits for a local shelter.
- Assemble birthing kits for an organization that sends them overseas.
- Assemble care packages for college students or soldiers who are away.
- Make more "Soup in a Jar" for people in your church who could use an expression of love.

The possibilities are endless and the best idea is to choose an activity that fits your group, your church, and your community.

### Discuss (17-20 min)

Have someone read Luke 10:25-37, and then watch the FaithElement video, *Studies for Women: Living Intentional Lives, Holy Action*. Use the following questions to encourage discussion among the group.

- In the story of the Good Samaritan, we often try to vilify the priest and the Levite for ignoring the injured man. We think that they neglected him out of spite or meanness. However, it is possible that they did it because they were in a hurry and truly thought the man was dead. Their actions were just as likely actions based on apathy as they were on actively causing harm through neglect. How is your life that way? What keeps you from feeling free to

reach out and help others in need?

- We all have different gifts for engaging our communities. What are your gifts? In what ways do you feel the most comfortable reaching out to your community?
- We have spent our last weeks together talking about ways that we can be more intentional in our lives of faith. Nikki suggests that when we work on developing an interior life of faith, it leads us to reach out to others – to share the love of God with others. Do you think this is true? Do you agree? Why? Or why not?

### Share (10-15 minutes)

Use today's Share time to invite group members to share their reflections about your time together over these last five weeks. Encourage each person to share something they are going to try to do more intentionally as they move forward. Be sure to assure them that there is not pressure and that their responses may come from any of the weeks' sessions.

If your group is inclined, you could have them write down what they want to do more intentionally in the future and place them in a basket, then have a time of prayer and dedication of the items. One way to do this is to have everyone draw a piece of paper out of the basket and read it for the group. Having it read out loud, even anonymously, can make it more concrete.

### Pray

In preparation for your time of prayer today, pay attention to the needs of your local community. Watch your local news and pay attention to what is going on in your community. You might choose situations that have been in the news, needs from your own faith community, or different service organizations in your area. As you become aware of needs, clip or print the articles or jot down the need to bring to the group for prayer. Be sure to come up with enough needs so that each woman in your group has at least one.

Invite your group to a time of silence that will be followed by

prayer. After some time of silence, begin the prayer time, having each woman pray for the community need you have given to her. You may choose to go in a circle or as each person feels led to pray. As you sense that everyone has had an opportunity to pray for the need they have been given, offer a closing prayer for the members of your group and for your community.

Leader's note: Assure your group that they do not have to pray out loud if they do not feel inclined to. Encourage them to pray quietly for the need they have been given.

### **At-Home-Work**

This week, for the at-home-work, encourage group participants to find a new way to engage their community with intentional and active love. Offer the examples that they may volunteer at a local service organization, make visits or phone calls to homebound members of the church, take a college student to lunch, or make dinner for a new mom. On the day that they do that, encourage them to journal about the experience — to write down their reflections and feelings from it. On the rest of the nights, encourage them to choose one of the exercises from the previous three weeks to do. They can choose one and practice it all week, or they can alternate and do a different one each night. For your reference, those exercises were the Daily Examen, Breath Prayer, and having Holy Conversations.

Your journal is a place to record your experiences as you practice the activities for each session.

Use your journal in the way that is most suited for you. Write, draw, or decorate—however you choose to journal, know that it is intended to enhance your learning experience and not place any undue burden on you or your experience.

## **Living Intentional Lives**

### **Session 5: Holy Action**

This week, you are invited to find a new way to engage your community with intentional and active love. Some examples of ways to volunteer are listed below: you may volunteer at a local service organization, make visits or phone calls to homebound members of the church, take a college student to lunch, or make dinner for a new mom. As you choose what you will do, think about your community and where you want to make an impact. On the day that you do the service activity, be sure to journal about the experience. On the rest of the nights, you are encouraged to choose one of the exercises from the previous three weeks to practice and then journal about them. You may choose one and practice it all week, or alternate and do a different one each night. For your reference, those exercises were the Daily Examen, Breath Prayer, and having Holy Conversations.