

# Beloved

## Introduction

Thank you so much for your willingness to offer yourself as a leader with Romero Center Ministries this Lent. This binder contains all the information you will need to host a meaningful Lenten experience. While there are very specific details to how each session should be run we would like to invite you to utilize this content with an openness and willingness to the spirit of the community that forms around your experiences.

### Notes on running each session:

- As a leader, the energy you put into the group will be the same energy you get back. So be sure to be a welcoming and hospitable host with the first person that shows up.
- When inviting people to share *during the first session*, it might be valuable for *you to offer first*. This will do two things: 1) it will set precedence for how to respond to the reflections and 2) it will break the ice.
- *Be okay with silence.*
- Understand and be comfortable in your environment. Know where restrooms are, how to change the temperature, where the matches are to light a candle, and other particular details.
- Be familiar with the content of each session before you begin. Take a minute to read through each session seeing what you might need to be prepared for. Watch the videos ahead of time. *If you feel comfortable with the content, that will be felt by the group.*
- Before beginning each session, you might invite everyone to take a few deep breaths to center themselves
- When it comes to sharing and discussing things may get very personal.
  - Sharing is a time for people to respond honestly with their thoughts and prayers. Discourage people from responding to one another.
  - Discussion is a time to listen to one another's thoughts and to consider your own. Encourage respectfulness when responding.
    - To close a discussion: Try to summarize the different points that have been made by noting different tensions and agreements. You may offer a quote to break the train of response. You can simply say "This is the end of our time for discussion." Move on to the next topic.
- Because so much of this has been written for you it may feel uncomfortable or awkward to read. This is a normal feeling. How other people hear what you say may be much different.

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## Notes on building community:

- Get to know your community mates, and encourage them to do the same! "Downtime" chatting is great before and after sessions. Realize that some may want to stay late.
- We encourage each group to attempt to meet one additional time for a meal or drinks. Perhaps the same day and time on a week that you're not meeting formally is the best bet to get everyone together!
- From the outset, emphasize confidentiality and that the community is intended to be a safe place.
- Please respect timeliness! It's important to not keep folks over time without discussing it first. At your first meeting (or before), you might want to set both a start and end time. Meeting length can be adjusted as needed after the first gathering.
- Encourage commitment to attendance! The community depends on each member's presence to be as strong as possible. Since there are only five formal gatherings (including the day of service), missing even one is to be avoided if possible. Please be understanding, however, if folks have to miss a session (it will happen!).
- If interesting events pop up (young adult activities, interesting concerts, movies, etc.) please feel free to share with the group, and invite them to do the same. Getting an email or Facebook thread going among your group members is a good way to stay in touch in between meetings.

## Notes on the theme:

- We've chosen to use this Beloved theme because of the eloquent way Henri Nouwen expresses the movement to becoming the Beloved. He moves through four motions of the Eucharistic feast, Taking the bread, Blessing the bread, Breaking the bread, and Giving the bread. These movements can draw us in to a new way to understanding not only the life of Jesus but our own participation in that life.
- To watch the videos:
  - Type "Henri Nouwen Becoming the Beloved" into the search bar on Google
  - Watch parts 3, 4, and 5. There are 8 other segments you can watch but the focus is on these middle three segments.
- We have included a prayer guide for daily meditation on this theme. You should try and do this for a few days on your own. It will help with your own understanding of the theme and your ability to guide others through it.

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## Notes on the setup of the content

- Each week does not stand alone but builds on the theme from the week before.
- At the beginning of each session is a list of materials you may need. It does not include things you might need for setting the environment like candles or soft music. We leave the setting up to you.
- Each session begins and ends with prayer. Find different people to read the prayers.
- We are hoping that you can use an internet connection to show the videos.
- Feel free to use the content as you see fit. In some cases there may be more content than time will allow.
- In session 3 there is a time to invite everyone to bless each other. While this may feel uncomfortable, we think that this is can be a valuable experience for you and your participants. Just read the blessing and let the Spirit move in the way that it wills.

If you have any questions or concerns as you move through this content with your community please do not hesitate to contact Patrick Cashio at [cashio@romero-center.org](mailto:cashio@romero-center.org).

Thanks again for your leadership and your spirit.