

# Who is at my table?

## Session 1 - Materials:

- Device to play a YouTube video
  - Possibly speakers
- Loaf or piece of bread to share
- Space to eat a meal or share food
- Bible, if you don't have one it is all available on USCCB.org
- Handout: The Celebration
- CRS Rice bowl

## Greeting and Gathering

*Be a welcoming host as guests arrive. If you don't know who they are be sure to introduce yourself to them. Point out things like the restroom or places to put coats, etc.*

***Welcome** all participants and share how excited you are that you'll be moving together through this journey.*

***Reassure** them that anything shared in the group will remain confidential, and that everyone is invited to share as much as they feel comfortable sharing.*

***Overview** the arc of the four weeks, both in terms of content and format. The theme is *Becoming Beloved*. We will meditate on the movements of the Eucharistic feast.*

***Introduce CRS Rice Bowl.** Because the community that we form here is not isolated but participating in the world in many different ways the Rice Bowl is offered as a way to expand the reach and depth of the life of this small community.*

***Explain** to them that tonight's session will be about beginning to unpack who we are around the table.*

*Tell them that they can expect each session to run between 1 - 1.5 hours.*

## Questions for introduction

*Invite everyone to introduce themselves with these questions. You should go first to model what kind of answers people should give.*

- Name
- Why have you come here?
- Where have you come from to get here?
- What is your hope for this Lent?

## Opening Prayer

*Invite everyone to gather around the space you have prepared. It could be around a table or in a circle of chairs or pillows. Find three readers to read the scripture. Read these slowly. You read the prayer.*

Matthew 26:26-30

Luke 22:14-19

John 15:9-17

## Who is at my table?

You and I are the beloved daughters and sons of God.

We are not what we do.

We are not what we have.

We are not what others think about us.

We are the beloved.

We take this bread. We bless it. We break it. And we give it to one another. (*As you read this line break the bread and pass it around the group*)

### Sharing the meal

*You don't have to share a meal here if you don't have the space. But some sort of shared offering should be put forth. Maybe share some pizza. It has a communal and kitchen nature to it.*

### After Dinner

**Introduce Henri Nouwen.** *The internationally renowned priest and author, respected professor and beloved pastor Henri Nouwen (pronounced Henry Now-win) wrote over 40 books on the spiritual life. He corresponded regularly in English, Dutch, German, French and Spanish with hundreds of friends and reached out to thousands through his Eucharistic celebrations, lectures and retreats. Since his death in 1996, ever-increasing numbers of readers, writers, teachers and seekers have been guided by his literary legacy. Nouwen believed that what is most personal is most universal; he wrote, "By giving words to these intimate experiences I can make my life available to others." The series that you will watch comes from lecture he gave in the early 1990's. It is the basis for the book Life of the Beloved.*

**Play the following YouTube clip.** *It is 8:27 long. Stop it at 5:00*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dB4DsEQr4Q>

*You might allow for some journaling time. Offer some time for initial responses and impressions. **Invite** everyone to spend a minute thinking about these questions.*

What does it mean to be taken?

What does it mean to be blessed?

What does it mean to be broken?

What does it meant to be given?

# Who is at my table?

**Encourage** one another to share. **Tell** them these questions will be a weekly way for us to share. Each week we will open our sessions with these questions. **Distribute** the *Becoming the Beloved Guide*. **Explain** that the next three sessions will encompass exploring these ideas of being taken, blessed and broken, and given.

## Closing Prayer

*Handout: The Celebration.* Invite the group to each read one stanza of this poem until you finish it.

**Thank** everyone for coming. **Make** any announcements about next week, allow for others to make announcements about things they are involved with. **Remind** everyone to consider the questions for next week. **Answer** any questions. **Remind** everyone to contribute to the CRS rice bowl if they can.

# Who is at my table?

**The Celebration** – Anthony De Mello, SJ

I imagine I hear Jesus say,  
“Prepare a place for me,  
for I am going to dine with you tonight.”  
I choose a place.  
Whom do I invite to this unusual supper?  
What preparations do my friends and I make for  
it?

The time has finally arrived.  
I see the room, the food,  
the bread and wine,  
the friends I have invited.

When introducing Jesus to my friends  
I invent an adjective for each of them.  
For instance, “This is John, the Faithful;  
this is Ann, the Loving;  
this is Gentle Joseph.”

Then Jesus gives a sign of love to each of us  
and the meal begins.

Quite early in the meal Jesus  
breaks a loaf of bread  
and comes around to offer it to each of us.  
To each he says a sentence.  
What does he say to me?

After the bread is eaten the meal goes on.  
Jesus often speaks,  
sometimes in answer to our questions,  
sometimes unasked.

He speaks of love.  
It is as if he spoke to me alone.

He tells us of discipleship  
and the persecution that must go with it.

We ask him what this means concretely in our  
lives.

He then goes on to talk of peace.  
And I ask myself how much I have of it,  
what obstacles I put to it.

He talks about a joy  
That comes from his mysterious presence  
that no one can deprive us of,  
so we question him about this joy,  
this “presence,”  
and I recall the moments  
when I felt it in my life.

We know this meal is linked  
in some mysterious way  
to his and our existence:  
to passion, death and resurrection.  
So we talk with him about this too.

Supper is almost over.  
Jesus pronounces sacred words  
over a glass of wine  
and offers it to each of us.  
Again he says a sentence as he offers it.  
What does he say to me?

After the wine is drunk,  
silence invades the room.  
Then Jesus prays aloud for me and for my  
friends.  
I hear him pray that we will be united,  
that we will foster unity wherever we may be.

It is time for us to leave.  
We stand as Jesus leads us in a song of praise.  
And as I sing, I savor in my heart  
the sentiments created by this supper I prepared  
for Jesus and my friends.

# Beloved

## Becoming the Beloved Guide - Weekly Reflection

In between weekly sessions we invite you to take a deep look at your spiritual life as you move through this Lenten season. Use this sheet to guide your thoughts and prayers.

### Daily Method:

*Set aside about 10- 15 minutes each day. They can be in silence or with soft music. You may want a journal.*

*Open yourself to prayer. Breathe slowly and deeply. Read this:*

I remind myself that I am in your presence, O Lord.

I will take refuge in your loving heart.

You are my strength in times of weakness.

You are my comforter in times of sorrow.

*Ask yourself these questions. Repeat each one slowly to yourself and listen. Sit with a question for as long as you need to.*

Where am I taken today?

Where am I blessed?

Where am I broken?

Where am I given?

*Unpacking your reflection:*

**Feelings**--What feelings did you experience? What caused the feelings?

**Forgiveness**--What might I need forgiveness for from this day? Who do I need to forgive? Who might need to forgive me?

**Future**: -- Ask God for help in the upcoming day...Please God, help me to be...

Scripture for Reflection:

*Read these scripture passages if you need something to ignite your imagination.*

Psalm 139

Psalm 27

Isaiah 58

Jeremiah 1:4-9

Acts 1:4-11

Philippians 2:5-11

John 14:1-14

Mark 1:9-11

Mark 14:12-24

Close your Prayer:

I am the beloved (daughter or son) of God.

I am not what I do.

I am not what I have.

I am not what others think about me.

I am beloved.

# Beloved

## Scripture Reflection notes

Passage:

Where is the setting?

Who are the Characters?

What is the plot?

What is the conflict?

What details strike you?

What do you not like about this passage? Why?

Where do you see yourself in the passage? Who are you in this passage?

How does this passage speak to your own life?

How does this passage speak to your relationship to God?