

HERE/HEAR GROUP: WEEK 1

1. Welcome and Introductions

At the beginning of every group, take a few minutes to welcome everyone, **stress that Here/Hear Groups are safe places** where no one is judged, looked down upon, and everything remains confidential, and go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves (this is in case someone forgot a name or is new, there is no awkwardness).

2. Meditation/ Mindfulness

This is a time where the group spends a few minutes in meditation. The idea is to root each individual in the present and in the divine connectedness of all things. This also helps each member of the group find a little clarity. This is not a time where everyone clears their minds, but finds what is really on their minds. It's also a time where everyone can connect with God as they begin the group. During this time, set a timer so that the meditation does not go too long. As the group starts, 3 minutes is ideal. It can grow from there.

3. Scripture

Each week, the Here/Hear groups will read Scripture to give the group a starting place to guide discussion. However, the Scripture in no way dominates the discussion: it is simply a starting place and the discussion can and must go where the group takes it. The Scripture for this week is, "Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-38).

The topic is self-love. How do you love yourself? How does this help you love others? How does loving others help us love ourselves?

4. Reflection

During this time, each person writes down one or two takeaways from the time together. It is a good idea to have pen and paper handy. At the end, you can share together or simply keep them private. End the group with a corporate prayer, like the Lord's Prayer or something from the Psalter. We will have suggestions in the Appendices.