



Women's Spirituality Circle

A Model for Using the Spiritual Literacy DVDs

About This Model: The Spiritual Quest Group of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, has been meeting every week for several years to share their spiritual lives. One year they focused their meetings about the Alphabet of Spiritual Literacy, including the Spiritual Literacy DVDs.

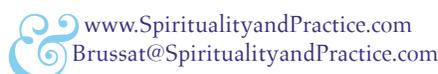
Group Makeup: This group consists of 8 - 12 women. They gather for 1 1/2 hours once a week. Leadership is rotated among the members.

Goal of Group: The group members share their spiritual lives by praying, spending quiet time together, and telling stories of their life experiences. They have identified the purposes of their "Spiritual Quest Group" as:

- To build community through trust and sharing. This requires commitment and fairly frequent attendance.
- To begin our meetings with prayer that includes our own needs, concerns, and thanksgivings, and those of others.
- To explore creative and diverse topics that nurture our relationship with God and our identity as women of faith.
- To calm, feed, and grow our spirits through quiet reflection.

Preparation: The chosen group leader takes a bag home two weeks before she is to lead the group. It contains the two books by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat – *Spirituality Literacy* and *Spiritual Rx* – a set of four different prayer services, and information on finding the practice homepages at the SpiritualityandPractice.com website for more material. The leader is not limited to these materials should she wish to use other sources.

15 WEST 24TH STREET · 10TH FLOOR · NEW YORK · NY · 10010
TEL 212 · 691 · 5240 FAX 212 · 989 · 4719 ORDERS 800 · 929 · 4857



Group Process: Each meeting focuses on one quality in the Alphabet of Spiritual Literacy. The process may vary from letter to letter as it is planned by different leaders. This is a description of the most common elements.

The meeting opens with morning prayer, chosen from the set of services. The group members are then invited to suggest a word or two that the alphabet letter of the day suggests to them. Then a handout of selected quotations about the quality, selected by the leader from the practice homepage for that quality at SpiritualityandPractice.com, is read aloud. Everyone takes a turn and has a chance to be both seen and heard.

The leader then shows the related episode of the DVDs or selected scenes from it. People are encouraged to write down their impressions and thoughts as they watch. This group has found that sometimes the full half-hour is too long, or some of the segments are not as useful as others; so sometimes they select a smaller number of the segments to show in order to stimulate thought, prayer, and discussion. These segments are often shown twice so people can remember them and appreciate them more fully.

Next, time is spent in silence, either inside or outdoors, pondering what was heard or seen on the DVDs. The leader often prepares questions in advance for this reflection time, and these are printed on a handout sheet (see sample questions for Nurturing DVD below). People are encouraged to choose one or two and write responses in a journal.

The quiet time is usually about 20 minutes. That leaves approximately 20 minutes to come back into the group and share insights. Each person is encouraged to speak on one or two of the sample questions or any other thoughts that have come up. The rest of the group members simply listen with attention to one another, not trying to reach a common understanding. The goal is sharing a journey and authentically searching for meaning, not problem-solving or debating theological beliefs.

Sample Questions for Nurturing DVD

1. Have you ever lost yourself in service to others? How has nurturing others become a rich spiritual experience for you?
2. How do you nurture your relationships with your friends? With your family members? With those with whom you live? For example, do you feed others and/or are you fed?
3. How has your relationship with animals nurtured you?
4. Do you have a source of inspiration (favorite song, poem, Bible passage, object, place) to which you often return? How does it strengthen you?
5. How do you find the holy in everyday tasks such as cooking and feeding?
6. What things do you touch with your fingertips? How do you nurture and receive nurture through touch?
7. What seeds have you chosen to take home from this group to nourish? What will it take to make them grow?