

# **Small Group Guide**

*We Make the Road by Walking* by Brian McLaren  
Eastminster Presbyterian Church  
2019-2020

Welcome to a year of journeying through scripture with Brian McLaren's *We Make the Road by Walking*! Thank you for your commitment to be a small group leader. The intention is not for you to plan before each meeting, but to be able to show up, invite others to open their books, and join in a process of learning together.

As you prepare for reflection and study, you may refer to the attached timeline and choose one of the below formats, which are detailed in this packet.

1. Dinner club
2. Group study

If you should need any additional guidance, feel free to contact Kristin Stroble ([revstroble@eastminsterchurch.org](mailto:revstroble@eastminsterchurch.org)) or Neil Myer ([neil@eastminsterchurch.org](mailto:neil@eastminsterchurch.org)).

Blessings on your journey down this exciting new road!

## **Group Formation**

- Groups can be any size. Scripture tells us when 2 or 3 are gathered, Christ is present. When a group gets larger than 10, though, we might want to form a second group that meets the same time.
- Group members can choose to read the scripture and a chapter from *We Make the Road by Walking* before their weekly small group gathering or during the gathering.
- During the first small group meeting, a designated leader/the host may choose to help the group form a covenant for their time together. The leader may record the group's commitments, have members sign their agreement, and distribute them to all members, so that they may revisit them throughout their weeks of meeting.
- The 5 guidelines listed below, which are detailed in Appendix II (pp. 278-279), may serve as a helpful starting point for expectations of the group's conversation.
  - Participation
  - Honor
  - Silence
  - Understanding
  - Brevity
- You can choose to be the designated leader and/or host or that responsibility can be shared. For every successive meeting, you might ask that someone volunteer to be the designated leader and/or host. That person will be responsible for facilitating readings and discussion, but apart from reading, no advanced preparation is necessary.

## Group Study Format

### Engagement

*Drawing on the scriptures and themes from the week's McLaren chapter, the designated group leader will engage participants in a conversation. You may interact with the class using the first questions from the end of each chapter. Feel free to add resources of your own and personalize the message as you choose. You may also draw on some of the additional resources. On Eastminster's website you will find a commentary written by the author, Brian McLaren, as well as a document titled "McLaren Additional Resources" with a variety of websites and videos for each chapter. Finally, you may find the websites below helpful as you assemble your lesson.*

- **Textweek.com**—commentary, artwork, and discussion guides related to various lectionary passages
- **McLaren Additional Resources** document that you can find on Eastminster's website or ask Kristin for it directly.
- **Visual Liturgy video series**—Kristin has a subscription to a web site called *The Work of the People* that will allow us to download videos that Brian McLaren has produced in connection to *We Make the Road by Walking*. When relevant to specific weekly themes, these videos are listed on the resource guide. There are also additional videos on this site that are linked to in the resource guide. You can view them from the site using the following login information:

www.theworkofthepeople.com

E-mail log-in: [revstroble@eastminsterchurch.org](mailto:revstroble@eastminsterchurch.org)

Password: Please contact Kristin for the password

*You may end your lesson with the "Meditate" and "Activate" sections from the "Engage" questions at the end of the chapter. These offer suggestions for silently reflecting on the day's lesson and an active charge for the group to consider throughout the week.*

### Prayer

*Invite the group to share concerns and celebrations for which they would like the group to pray throughout the week. You may integrate these into a closing prayer and/or simply thank the group for sharing and invite participants to remember those named in prayer throughout the week.*

*After a closing prayer, you might share with the group the theme for the following week and invite people to return when they are able.*

## **Dinner Club Format**

### **Fellowship**

*The group will gather, ideally at alternating members' homes, to share a meal together. Allow conversation at the beginning of the meal to unfold naturally, as people get to know one another and catch up.*

### **Engagement**

*About halfway through the meal, the host or designated leader will invite the group into a discussion of the readings. Leaders may ask general questions, such as "What did you think about the readings? What stuck out to you?" or they may use the questions from the "Engage" section at the back of each section.*

### **Prayer**

*The leader will invite the group to share concerns and celebrations for which they would like the group to pray throughout the week. You may then thank the group for sharing, integrate these into a closing prayer, and encourage the group to pray for one another throughout the week. Please feel free to pray as you are led. If you are searching for ways to pray, you may offer some of the following words:*

Dear God, thank you for the gifts of each new day. Today, we celebrate this occasion for fellowship and the opportunity to learn and grow together. We also thank you for \_\_\_\_\_. We remember these blessings, which you offer us, so that we may be a blessing to others.

God, we also offer to you the people and places in need of your care. We remember the needs of our world, our nation, and our city: \_\_\_\_\_. We lift to you those who are sick and those who care for them, for \_\_\_\_\_. And we pray for those who are grieving, for \_\_\_\_\_. May they find peace and comfort.

God of all, you know everything that is on our hearts, both spoken and unspoken. Hear our prayers, make us aware of your presence throughout the week, and empower us to do your work. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

*After a closing prayer, you might share with the group the theme for the following week and invite people to return when they are able.*

## **Reading Timeline**

### **Alive in the Story of Creation**

8/8: Chapter 1—Awe and Wonder

9/15: Chapter 2—Being Human

9/22: Chapter 4—The Drama of Desire

9/29: Chapter 5—In over Our Heads

10/6: Chapter 6—Plotting Goodness

10/13: Chapter 7—It's Not Too Late

10/20: Chapter 8—Rivalry or Reconciliation?

10/27: Chapter 9—Freedom!

11/3: Chapter 10—Getting Slavery out of the People

11/10: Chapter 11—From Ugliness, a Beauty Emerges

11/17: Chapter 12—Stories That Shape Us

11/24: Chapter 13—The Great Conversation

### **Alive in the Adventure of Jesus**

12/1: Chapter 14—Promised Land, Promised Time

12/8: Chapter 15—Women on the Edge

12/15: Chapter 16—Keep Herod in Christmas

12/22: Chapter 17—Surprising People

12/29: Chapter 18—Sharing Gifts

1/5: Chapter 19—Jesus Coming of Age

1/12: Chapter 20—Join the Adventure!

1/29: Chapters 21 – Significant and Wonderful

1/26: Chapter 22—Jesus the Teacher

2/2: Chapter 23—Jesus and the Multitudes

2/9: Chapter 24—Jesus and Hell

2/16: Chapter 25—Jesus, Violence, and Power

2/23: Chapter 26—Making it Real

### **Alive in a Global Uprising**

3/1: Chapter 27—A New Identity  
3/8: Chapter 28—A New Path to Aliveness  
3/15: Chapter 29—Your Secret Life  
3/22: Chapter 30—Why We Worry, Why we Judge  
3/29: Chapter 31 – The Choice is Yours

4/5: Chapter 32 – Peace Mark  
4/12: Chapter 33 – The Uprising Begins  
4/19: Chapter 34—The Uprising of Fellowship  
4/26: Chapter 35—The Uprising of Discipleship

5/3: Chapter 36—The Uprising of Worship  
5/10: Chapter 37—The Uprising of Partnership  
5/17: Chapter 38—The Uprising of Stewardship  
5/24: Chapter 39—Whatever the Hardship, Keep Rising Up!

### **Alive in the Spirit of God**

5/31: Chapter 40—The Spirit Is Moving! (Pentecost Sunday)  
6/7: Chapter 41—Moving with the Spirit

### **Summer Reading**

Chapters 42-52