

West Hill United Church Facilitators Template For the 2012 Book Study

“Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life” by author Karen Armstrong

Start Time: To respect everyone’s time and energy for the evening, the book study should begin sharply at 7:30 p.m. If people are late they will catch up.

Welcoming: Welcome everyone to the evening’s session. Introduce yourself and the evening’s agenda, steps and theme (themes can include “a look at one’s self,” “faith in action,” etc.) = **5 mins**

Ice Breaker: This helps participants get to know one another. Ice breakers can include things such as, “Introduce yourself and tell us what your favourite colour is; or What kind of tree you would be if you were a tree; or What is your favourite day of the week and why; or If you were a kind of ice cream tell us what your flavour is; or What is your favourite kind of drink (can be non-alcohol based or alcohol based); or What is your favourite movie and why; or ... you can make up a grid of ‘answers’ and have each participant find an individual that represents the ‘answer’ on the grid (sample attached) ... is there a common theme to the grid? If so what is it – tell the group at the end.” = **10 mins**

Recap: Briefly recap the previous week’s steps. You can do this by asking the large group, from the last session’s readings:

1. What did the book say about Step X or Y that you can recall?
2. Would anyone like to share a personal story about one of the steps from last session that affected you in some way over the last 2 weeks?

The recap should not be longer than **15 mins**.

Video: Tell the group something brief about the upcoming video interview with Karen Armstrong. You will need to have watched it ahead of time and just give a brief word or two about it. Such as: “I think the interview we will watch tonight has something interesting to say about ‘faith in action’ ... etc.” Don’t give it all away, just say a word or two = **5 mins**. Then, Show the video interview clip (Part X from the book study schedule). = **10 mins = total 15 mins**.

Reflection: Debrief in the large group about the video they've just seen. Find one or two issues discussed in the interview that can be reflected upon. For example: Was there a term used that would be interesting to discuss (i.e. Faith), what about a concept she talked about that seems hard to understand (i.e. Faith in action) ... ask the group what they think about the term or concept ... OR throw it open to what people thought in general or what disturbed them/challenged them most about the video clip. = **15 mins.**

Break: Time to have some refreshments = **15-20 mins.** By the time of the break it should be around 8:40 p.m.

Small Groups: Gather everyone together from the break into the large group (no later than 9 p.m.). Have everyone number off 1, 2, 3; 1, 2, 3, ... decide based on the number of participants that evening how many groups should be formed. No group should be larger than 6; in fact 4-5 people per group is ideal for conversation. = **5 mins.**

Discussion: Small group discussion happens now and is based on questions provided in an attachment to the template for the corresponding weeks 1 through 8 = **20 mins.**

Reflection: Gather everyone back to the Large Group (it should be no later than 9:30 p.m.). On a flip chart have the evening's questions put up. Ask the large group to reflect – provide comment on the questions asked. People can either choose to give their own personal reflections or tell the large group what the small group discussed. Note: There should be no pressure on anyone to “report back” on the small group discussion; if, however, the small group decides they want to have a spokesperson and report back then that is honoured. = **15 mins.**

Ending: It should be about 9:40-9:50 p.m. Announce any Housekeeping issues; thank the people who brought the refreshments; briefly note the next session's readings (next session we are looking at Steps X & Y), ask if anyone has any announcement to make and wish everyone a Good Night and Safe Drive. = **5-10 mins.**

Leadership/Facilitator Notes:

- 1) If possible, end the evening before 10 p.m. to give everyone a chance to help with the clean-up of food, dishes, chairs etc. so that everyone can be out of the building by 10 p.m. and on his/her way home.

- 2) As the evening's leader/facilitator it is prudent to keep to the time as much as possible. Keep the group moving and discussions happening. It is OK if some of the "Reflection" opportunities shorter, we simply go home earlier or be mindful that some of that time may be needed for the small group discussion. If the groups are kept to 4-5 people per group, then 20 mins is about right for discussion. However, if you find that the groups need more time for discussion, then chop some time out of the large group reflections.
- 3) The Karen Armstrong Interview videos are found on YouTube at the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtpF94Fjue4> (or once you get onto YouTube, simply type in the Search Box: Karen Armstrong Video and a group of her interviews will appear). You want the interviews (7 parts) on "The Case for God" presented by the Ottawa International Writers Festival on October 14, 2009 in Ottawa, Ontario. It's Karen Armstrong in conversation with Jim Creskey; www.writersfestival.org
- 4) The TED videos of Karen Armstrong's TED Wish, Let's Revive the Golden Rule and the Charter for Compassion can all be found on the TED web-site: www.ted.com