

SESSION 3

SISTERHOOD

PART 1



SCRIPTURE QUOTE FOR THE WEEK



"In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the child leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.'"

—Luke 1:39-45



COMMIT

People are made for relationships. Virtuous friendships with other women help us to grow in selfless love and bring great joy to our lives. True, Christ-centered sisterhood is God's plan for friendship between women; He wants all of His beloved daughters to experience it, and to have the freedom to share their unique and precious hearts in relationships that are founded in faith.

This week, read and reflect on a short passage from Scripture: John 15:12-17. Here, Jesus is speaking to His disciples at the Last Supper, the night before His passion and death on the cross. Jesus tells them: "I have called you friends." As you read, reflect on the importance of friendship, and why Jesus uses some of His last moments with His disciples before He suffers and dies to talk to them about friendship.

Also, in response to this session, are you willing to be honest and accountable to this group in the following areas?

- » I will avoid comparing myself to others.
- » I will fight to overcome feelings of envy.
- » I will talk to a close friend when struggling in these areas.
- » I will seek ways to encourage my friends—to give them courage to be their best selves.



TIP FOR THE WEEK

Scripture is full of wisdom and examples of true, lasting friendship. For more insight and passages on friendship, read:

- » Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 – “Two are better than one”
- » Sirach 6:14-17 – “A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter”
- » Romans 12:9-21 – “Love one another with brotherly affection”

You can also read about some examples of true friendships in Scripture: David and Jonathan (1 & 2 Samuel) and Ruth and Naomi (the Book of Ruth).



PRAYER

The Joyful Mysteries

1. The Annunciation of Gabriel to Mary
- 2. The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth**
3. The Birth of Our Lord
4. The Presentation of Our Lord
5. The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty. Creator of Heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty. He shall come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

OUR FATHER, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. They will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL MARY, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

GLORY BE to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

O MY JESUS, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy. Amen.

HAIL HOLY QUEEN, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us. And after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

O GOD, whose only-begotten Son, by His life, death, and Resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life; grant, we beseech Thee, that by meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scene 1

We look to other people and the media for examples of true friendship. Female friendships are often portrayed negatively and revolve around drama. A biblical image of true sisterhood is shown at the foot of the cross when Jesus took his final breath. Finding true sisterhood helps women thrive in life.

1. What qualities are you looking for in a friend?
2. Would you rather fit into any group and never be popular, or fit only into the popular group? Be honest with your feelings.
3. Would you rather be famous, or the best friend of someone famous? Be honest with your feelings.
4. What would a group of girls with a true sisterhood look like? In other words, what qualities would the girls possess?
5. Why do the women at the foot of the cross give a good image for true sisterhood?
6. St. Thomas Aquinas said, "Friendship is the source of the greatest pleasures, and without friends even the most agreeable pursuits become tedious." What do you think he meant by that?

Read a story of a virtuous friendship in Luke 1:39-45.

Scene 2

The friendship between Mary and Elizabeth is an example of true sisterhood. True sisters are on the same page, path, and place in life; they help each other grow closer to God; and they encourage one another in good times and bad. The two biggest challenges of true sisterhood are competition and comparison. Facebook and other social media can increase our tendency for competition and comparison. Society has created an idea of perfection that is impossible for women to achieve.

1. How different do you think life would be if mirrors and photographs had never been invented?
2. In what ways does Facebook make your life better?
3. In what ways does Facebook make your life worse?
4. Why do you think girls bullying other girls has become such a problem in school?

Dr. Carol Dweck at Stanford University did a number of research experiments with kids to try to discover why some kids are affected by fear of failure more than others. She found that it was directly related to the praise the kids received. For example, after solving puzzles they were given, one group of kids was praised in this manner: "Great job solving the puzzle. You must be really smart." Another group of kids was praised in this manner: "Great job solving the puzzle. You must have worked really hard." The group they praised for their intelligence did not want to try more difficult puzzles. The group praised for their effort did want to try more difficult puzzles.

1. What does this tell us about the pressure to be perfect?

The tendency for women to compare themselves to one another can lead to one of the seven deadly sins: envy. It is “deadly” because if entertained it will quickly become a way of life and poison a person’s relationship with God, with self, and with others. We commit the sin of envy when we desire that others not have what we want. St. Thomas Aquinas defines envy as “sorrow at another’s good.”

Read Genesis 4:3-8.

1. Here, in Genesis 4:3-8, we see envy is literally deadly. Why was Cain envious of Abel?
2. Envy is often confused with jealousy. Do you know the difference?
3. What do you think are some practical ways to overcome feelings of envy?

Elizabeth’s first words to Mary are encouragement. Have you noticed that the word “courage” is in the word encouragement? Encouragement means to “give courage to another” and is at the core of true friendship.

1. How can we give courage to one another?
2. There is a saying that “virtue is its own reward.” How does that relate to friendships formed in faith?