

ADVENTURE  
IN FAITH  
2024

# RELEVANT & FAITH

FINDING ONENESS IN AN OCEAN OF UNCERTAINTY



Mile Hi Church

*It's different here.*

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## 2024 ADVENTURE IN FAITH COMMITTEE

Richard Koken  
Kate Ripp  
Christen Roberts  
Zemirah Jazwierska  
Josh Reeves  
Judy Turner  
Dana Weddle

Theme Design: Eva Thoemke  
Workbook Design: Launa Fujimoto  
Creative & Design Manager: Lindsey Portincaso

## FACILITATORS

This book was created as a group facilitators guide, however, if you wish, you may also encourage your group members to download it from the Mile Hi Church Adventure in Faith landing page.

## GROUP TIMES AND MEMBERS

Groups should be at least one hour, but no more than an hour and a half. Ideally, each group should have no more than ten participants, including the facilitators.

## OPENING AND CLOSING BLESSINGS

A brief blessing should start and end each group session. Ideally a facilitator will do an opening blessing, and as trust grows in the group, it might be beneficial to invite a participant to say a closing blessing.

## KEY POINTS

These key points sum up what we intend the participant to understand in each week's session. You can choose to share these points with the group, or use them as your own guide for how to use the curriculum effectively.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to create meaningful sharing in your group. You can choose which, if any to ask.

## PROCESSES

These meditations, worksheets, and experientials are designed to assist the participants' inner exploration of the weekly topic. Choose the ones that you feel will be most resonant with your group.

## INTERFAITH SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

These are practices that can be practiced in your group, or participants can be encouraged to practice during the week.

*"How many paths are there to God? There are as many paths to God as there are souls on the earth." ~ Rumi*

## AFFIRMATIONS

You are invited to share these with your group each week.

## WEEKLY PRAYERS

Each week concludes with an affirmative prayer.

## SHARING GUIDELINES

It is recommended that you review these guidelines in your first session and refer back to them as needed.

### SHARING GUIDELINES *(Handout to download)*

- ◆ **Sacred Listening** – When someone is sharing I do not just listen, but do so with the intention of not judging or trying to solve and with a loving heart.
- ◆ **Sharing from Personal Experience** – When I share, I do so from my own personal experience, recognizing that what may be true for me, may not be true for others. I do not speak to others' experiences outside of how they resonate in my own.
- ◆ **Confidentiality** – What someone shares in class I will not share about outside of class unless it is with the consent of the person who shared it.
- ◆ **Authenticity** – I will be sincere with my sharing by holding myself to the present and not the past, not to someone else's, but my own vision of myself, not the roles I play but who I really am.

# RELEVANT & FAITH

## INTRODUCTION

### FINDING ONENESS IN AN OCEAN OF UNCERTAINTY

If you met someone today who had unshakable faith—in light of social discourse, the direction of our country, the future well-being of our children and grandchildren—most of us would think this person is strange, if not delusional or naïve.

In fact, that so called faith, we might not consider relevant faith at all.

Relevant faith isn't superstitious faith. Relevant faith isn't superficial faith.

Relevant faith is grounded faith. Relevant faith is informed faith. Relevant faith is authentic faith.

Relevant faith isn't afraid to walk in the forests of doubt and uncertainty. Relevant faith doesn't reject skepticism and discernment but embraces them.

Relevant faith is a commitment to knowing the truth, not only to belief, even if it means not being right. Even if it means changing your mind. Changing our minds.

Maybe that's the best thing that can happen for us.

# RELEVANT FAITH

WEEK  
ONE

TRANSFORMATIONAL  VULNERABILITY

Relevant faith calls us to use new tools for new results.

Take vulnerability, for instance. For many, this term has potentially negative consequences. Vulnerability removes our defenses and opens us up to being attacked. At the same time, vulnerability removes our defenses and opens us up to the experience of transformation.

Relevant faith requires a new level of openness, honesty, and willingness to change. Transformational vulnerability may make us at first feel we are throwing ourselves out to sea. But used wisely, we realize we were already in distress, and it becomes a life preserver ring that keeps us afloat.

## WEEKLY SYMBOL

Each of these nautical symbols carries a deep spiritual symbolism that relates to faith and our ability to navigate the waters of life with vulnerability, guidance, stability, wisdom, and discernment.

With faith, we stay the course to traverse and maneuver through the storms of our lives, ultimately expanding our awareness and spiritual

practice to touch, feel, know, and embody the deeper, truer waters of Spirit.



### Lifesaver

The lifesaver symbolizes salvation, safety, and protection. Spiritually, it represents the idea of being saved or rescued from difficulties, reminding us of the importance of hope and faith in times of crisis.

Faith—represented by the lifesaver—is in and of our own volition to take charge of our lives and perspectives. To reach out, reach in, and realize it is up to each one of us to grab the lifesavers that are presented to us by life and by God.

## KEY POINTS FOR THE WEEK

- Vulnerability is a key to meaningful transformation. Relevant faith means trust in vulnerability.
- There are many qualities of relevant faith that may have a negative connotation but can lead to positive transformation.
- Oneness can be revealed, even in uncertainty.

## QUOTES FOR THE JOURNEY

*Vulnerability is the only authentic state. Being vulnerable means being open, for wounding but also for pleasure. Being open to the wounds of life means also being open to the bounty and beauty.*

–Stephen Russell

*Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity, and change.*

–Brené Brown

*To share your weakness is to make yourself vulnerable. To make yourself vulnerable is to share your strengths.*

–Criss Jami





# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## Icebreaker:

1. Who is someone whose faith you admire and why?
2. If you could cultivate a deeper sense of vulnerability in your own spiritual life, how would that transform your relationship with God, yourself, and others? What would your life look like as a result?
3. In her book *Trusting the Gold* by Tara Brach, Brach starts a chapter called “Speaking and Receiving Difficult Truths” with the following words: “When Jonathan and I got married, my wedding vows to him included the bold aspiration expressed in a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke:

*‘I want to unfold.  
Let no place in me hold itself closed,  
for when I am closed, I am false.  
I want to stay clear in your sight.’”*

Later she writes, “One of the biggest tests of that wedding vow happened only two years after our wedding. I was suddenly facing chronic health problems that would clearly put an end to many of the activities we loved doing together...I could see a future in which Jonathan remained healthy and athletic while I became less and less fit and desirable. I sank into a swamp of shame...

Finally, one day I asked if we could talk...He told me kindly and clearly that his love for me was not tied to boogie boarding or any other activity. He cherished our togetherness, unrelated to any of the particulars of what we could do...

Believing we are separate selves is one of our deepest illusions and the source of our suffering. If we try to hide our feelings of unworthiness or unlovableness, we deepen our sense of separation from others. Taking the risk to be vulnerable and real reveals the truth of our belonging—to each other, to ourselves, to this world we share.”

She closes the chapter with the following reflection: “Is there a truth about your own vulnerability that you are holding back in an important relationship? Can you imagine, for the sake of deepening love, taking the risk of being more real?”



## OPTIONAL PROCESSES

### Process One: Tools of Relevant Faith

- ◆ Vulnerability
- ◆ Forgetting
- ◆ Surrender
- ◆ Leaving
- ◆ Struggle
- ◆ Not Knowing

1. What are some negative ways these can express themselves?

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2. What are some positive?

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3. Could these qualities/practices be tools for positive transformation?

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4. Where am I called to be more vulnerable?

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5. What am I called to forget?

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6. What must I surrender?

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7. Where am I ready to leave?

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8. What am I grateful for about my struggle?

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9. Where am I called to practice not knowing so that I might change my mind?

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## Process Two: Meditation

*“In one drop of water are found all the secrets of all the oceans; in one aspect of You are found all the aspects of existence.”* –Kahlil Gibran

Today’s meditation is a trip to the ocean. Become one with the drops, traveling through a child’s imagination bridging it through the play of your life adventures. Opening up to witness choices to transform through adoption of new outlooks for life’s experiences by choosing to see through a different lens.

Before we start, have a pen and paper to write what comes up. It is a journey of spiritual images.

Make yourself comfortable and allow the mind to settle. We all know the mind’s job is to think. See the words pass like the clouds going from one horizon to the next with each breath. Now, begin breathing in a rhythm, slow and deep, filling the body and feeling its flow touch and move through every cell. (For a couple of minutes.)

Now in this moment, see that breath of life move with the current. See this individual drop welcome you into a single droplet. With each breath, feel the drop gently merging you in the flow of the breath, one in the current of many breaths. Feel the personal freedom as the fluidness of the breath streams with the sacred Self. Allow your breath to travel in the channel with the One. Into your own gracefulness, beholding the stream coming from the heart center of love and kindness, allow versions of your own life to swim into view. (Give it a moment.)

Be open for the sacred message to unfold. It may be a feeling, a vision, or a whisper. Continue with the deep breath, seeing your breath move fluidly through your body. (Be silent for a moment.)

Now, let’s move into the first breath of existence, a droplet, in its morning glory with rays of light shining through its bead in complete illumination. You are not alone. Rays shine through other drops on the branches, creating the most brilliant spectrums. (Take a silent moment.)

### How does it make you feel?

As you watch the individual droplets fall to the ground and into the stream below, there is a curiosity where you are going to go. With a quiver of the leaves, you feel yourself become airborne and drop into the stream with a splash, having no idea where this stream is going to take you.

### When was there a time you felt this way? (Take a silent moment.)

Immediately blending with many drops, still holding uniqueness, as you travel peacefully and bumpily downstream. You are susceptible to the current as it takes you in between huge boulders, sending you up in the air, soaring over and then under, blending into the One. Uncertain where or what the next breath will uncover, there is a feeling of a quantum leap of faith as everything begins to move faster.

### Where in your time have you experienced a quantum leap? (Be silent with your breath.)

Being a newborn drop, you can feel the uncertainty of the upcoming events. You are getting acquainted with your new environment. Seeing algae on the boulders floating by and tall trees through the clear stream, a sense of calmness is felt.

Now you look at the drop next to you. You see fear on the drop to the right, then exhilaration on the drop to the left. You are feeling a state of helplessness from the unknown, not sure what to expect, as a feeling of fear starts to build.

Has there ever been a time you have felt this way?

Continuing in the flow of breath and the stream, you see what caused the two expressions. A small group of you hit a protruding boulder, which jetted everyone out. All that’s seen is an extremely long distance to the stream below. The other droplets anchored hold together creating oneness, giving a little more confidence with the togetherness. And you collectively ride the fall, dovetailing one another to the bottom.

Upon arriving at the bottom, you feel a sense of accomplishment—survival, not fear. All lives, through what was believed in your core to

be impossible, endure. It gives you renewed possibilities and faith in survival.

You can feel perseverance moving with the sense of your own stability. Recognizing an inner faith is revealing itself, the gift of each experience you have maneuvered. Handling the unforeseen and enduring greater waterfalls with exhilaration, continues to build an inner self-trust. You look up and see a crescent moon shimmering through the water, glowing in and through, illuminating the whispers of these new inner truths as a shooting star moves through the sky.

When have you felt this way?

Now, you feel the current blend into a river. It is large, deep, and murky. The merging moves into an enormous number of droplets and critters with tails. Huge trees hover faintly over the surface with cliffs shooting to the sky. Different plants, critters, and insects are watching more critters feast on tasty goodies.

With a swish of a tail, one sends you into a different group. The attitude of aloofness creates invisible walls for you to navigate more independently, having to experience occurrences without help. It establishes a new learning of self-adaptation to flow as the course navigates around the bends into a new undertaking. You discover there are many ways to move with the current. One in fear and the other with faith, welcoming excitement of what is around the next bend. You allow the walls to resolve in the river's flow.

With each bend, you feel yourself expand and experience builds through both volatility and acceptance. You are grace's gifts. A rebirth, one through known or unknown situations.

Looking about, you move into a blue ocean. Taking all the successes and relearning with you, while reawakening into an experienced drops' new travels. Blessing the breath that moves through any weakness and evaporating fear, you choose to accept this new knowing, wherever the current maneuver is, home to explore and experience. For in this moment, resonate with the knowing that you are always in the perfect place at the perfect time. Enjoying the aqua adventure in the ocean you see forests, coral, and the abyss

of the sea. You enjoy the aquatic adventure moving with the current of the ocean and the sea.

Your journey is now complete.

After your travels to the sea, can you identify with this secret?

*"The secret from the river is there is no such thing as time. That the river is everywhere at the same time, at the source and at the mouth, at the waterfall, at the ferry, at the current, in the ocean and in the mountains, everywhere, and that the present only exists for it, not the shadow of the past nor the shadow of the future."* –Unknown

Take a moment to witness any correlations of your life and the travels of your drop. Write them down.

### Discussion Questions

1. What experiences of the unknown came up for you?
2. How have you moved through events like the rapids or great falls? What was your life preserver to survive what was feared?
3. What adventure of the unknown have you faced with fear that unfolded in transformation?
4. What has your learning in life's travels expanded into new gems?



## AFFIRMATIVE PRAYER

I become aware of the stillness that gives rise to all things and look within myself to know the truth of my being. Knowing and sensing I live, move, and have my beingness from the Source of all that goes forward and expresses through my life. I turn within to open my heart, revealing a softness in my approach connecting deeply with my source that protects and guides with unfailing love. Looking out and recognizing grace is present in all situations, circumstances, and events. The need to resist or distract with fear melts away as this truth supplants any notion of separation. I open to new possibilities with courage, giving myself permission to be vulnerable and allowing my thoughts and actions to align with all that is good. Expressing vulnerability empowers a deeper awareness of the everlasting strength and power available in each and every moment.

And so it is. Amen.

## AFFIRMATION

*I trust that all situations and circumstances are unfolding to grow my faith and courage to engage and express Life!*