

*The Spirituality of Work*

# **Unemployed Together**

**during the  
COVID-19 Shutdown**

**A six-session  
small group guide**

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# Remote Facilitation

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## Online Small Groups

During this time of physical distancing, small group faith sharing is both a challenge and an opportunity.

Many people are feeling lonely and isolated with a dramatic reduction of in-person interactions. Those who have lost paid work have also lost the social connections that came with that work. It is more important than ever to connect, and technology can help us to hold each other in community and be an important way to provide pastoral care.

However, many of us are new to connecting in this way, so hosting virtual meetings can be intimidating. They also come with their own unique challenges.

## You Can Do This!

As a church leader, technology may not be your “thing.” That’s okay. You do not have to be the one to figure out the technical details. Your job is to make the invitations and connections.

Members of your parish have had to figure out how to use online video conferencing for work responsibilities, their child’s school, connecting with family members, and other reasons. It is very likely that at least one member of any small group you would form will be able to take on the technology piece for you.

If you do not already have the technology expertise personally or within your staff, we suggest that you set that aside and begin by making small group invitations. Once you have willing participants, begin by asking if any of them is willing and able to host the meetings. Otherwise, ask your broader community for help.

## Video Conferencing Platforms

There are a number of free or low-cost tools for video conferencing. A member of the group most likely can host all other members for free, without you having to be involved.

If you are seeking out a platform yourself, there are many online articles that can help you. Simply do a web search for “best free video conferencing.” Zoom (<http://zoom.us>) is one of the most popular options for hosting meetings and has a free tier.

## Tips for Facilitation by Video

It will be important to think through how the meetings will be facilitated remotely. Here are some recommendations.

- **Group size.** Generally, we would suggest aiming for a group size of about 6 to 8 participants. If you have much more than this number interested, simply form additional groups.
- **Scheduling.** Small faith sharing groups typically meet once a week. It may make sense for groups sharing in this particular experience to meet more frequently: twice a week or even more often. Ask the participants what they would prefer.
- **Facilitator.** A parish staff member does not have to be a part of each group (although it could be very helpful to them and insightful to the leader). It would be important to have a meeting facilitator who can be especially welcoming, coordinate, and step in as needed.
- **Tech facilitator.** It may be helpful to have a separate technology facilitator who can help folks if they run into trouble. Share the phone number of this person before the meeting so they can call if they have trouble joining, turning on their microphone, etc.

- **The value of video.** Not all participants may have a camera or be willing to use it. That is certainly not required, although it can help the group feel more connected and provide visual cues.
- **Getting voices into the circle.** This small group guide uses a “round table” methodology, in which the written material is read out loud by the participants during the meeting, one paragraph at a time. We have learned that this process brings all of the voices into the circle early on and makes participants more comfortable to share later on. This is even more important when we are meeting through screens.
- **One voice at a time.** Think a bit beforehand about how you can help the group from talking over each other. If the group is small enough and there is little audio delay, you may not have to do anything. However, if it becomes a problem, one leader could be responsible for calling on

speakers one at a time. Participants could raise their hands (if on video) or type in a chat box if they would like to speak.

- **The first session.** Note that the first session in this series has less content than the others, to open up time for participants to introduce themselves and possibly their unemployment stories. The first set of reflection questions have prompts, but you may choose to open the meeting with introductions.
- **After six sessions.** Once the group has covered the material in this process, check in to see if they have interest in continuing to meet. Extra meetings could be unstructured, or you could use one of our many other downloadable small group series at <https://pastoral.center/small-group-resources>.
- **Review the standard guidelines.** Be sure to also cover the guidelines found on the next page.

# Small Group Guidelines

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## Ground Rules

Here are some guidelines for your gatherings. Your group leader will help facilitate.

1. **Our goal** is to grow together into a deeper intimacy with Christ and to connect our faith with our work. Keeping this goal in mind will help us get there!
2. **Confidentiality.** What's said in the group stays in group, unless you have the permission of the person who spoke it.
3. **Start on time—and end on time.** Your group leader will try to pace the sessions, but everyone can help by arriving promptly and being attentive to time.
4. **Discussion involves everyone.** Make it possible for everyone – even those who are naturally more quiet – to take part. Don't share a second time until everyone has had an opportunity to share the first time.
5. **Remember your manners.** Avoid dismissing the thoughts of others, don't laugh at others when they've shared (unless they've just told a joke), and no put-downs of any kind.
6. **Share from your own experience and speak for yourself.** Don't try to problem-solve for another person or tell them what to do, but you can share what you have found helpful in your own life.
7. **It's OK to agree to disagree.** It's just a fact of life that everyone has different opinions. If the group has differing thoughts on an issue, there's no requirement that everyone agree. Respect everyone's opinions and where they are at in their journey.
8. **Turn off mobile phones** before the group begins! Put your electronic lives on hold for this short time to be fully present to others.

## Leader Guidelines

Thank you for being willing to help lead your group and make this a great experience for everyone!

Here are some things to keep in mind as you do so:

1. **Ensure good hospitality.** Members of your group may be new to a small group experience or the larger community. Facilitate introductions and be sure everyone feels welcome.
2. **Go over the ground rules** at the beginning of the series, and quickly review them at the start of each session. Some of the material is challenging, since it explores how the Gospel challenges us to change our lives. Make sure that the ground rules are followed so everyone feels comfortable in the group.
3. **Gauge the dynamic of your group.** If necessary, you (or another designated facilitator) may need to gently facilitate to keep the group on schedule, remain on-topic, and/or allow all voices a chance to enter the circle. You may feel timid interrupting someone, but this can be a very important role that helps the whole group. You can apologize in advance for such interruptions when reviewing the ground rules with the group. However, don't put people on the spot by compelling them to share.
4. **Facilitate answering reflection questions.** Sometimes sharing times can be a little awkward waiting for people to initiate. You can rotate around the circle, but we recommend that you try something called the "popcorn" method. One person starts, and when they are done sharing they choose the next person (who is always allowed to pass and pick another person). We have found that in practice this works very well, sometimes adding a little levity.
5. **Listen to the feedback from the group along the way.** Pace the time for the different sections based on the total time available and what works for your group.

# Seeking a Spirituality of Work

## Opening Prayer

*Read this prayer aloud together:*

Gracious God,  
we come together in our search for you  
in the midst of our lives.

Sometimes it is easier to feel you at church,  
among our loved ones, or in nature.  
But Jesus promised us that he would be with us  
always and everywhere.

Together we want to discover him  
in our day-to-day moments.  
Open our eyes to you, O God.  
Attune our ears to what you want us to hear.  
Through this series may we grow to be  
better disciples throughout our days.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

## Background

*Read this passage aloud, with each participant reading a paragraph. Anyone who prefers not to read is welcome to pass.*

Three people were working on a Gothic cathedral. When asked what they were doing, the first replied, "earning a living." The second said "Can't you see, I'm a stone mason?" The third responded "I am building a cathedral."

Various words can be used to describe work: *job, career, profession*. Sadly, our society often overlooks the very real and significant work done by people who are unemployed – people who are still working in many and various ways throughout their days, but not in the paid labor force. Now, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are millions more people who fall into this category, most of whom have lost their jobs suddenly.

Being unemployed, especially without warning, can be incredibly stressful. People who just a week or a month before were bringing home a paycheck, supporting family members, feeling useful and productive as members of society, and enjoying the social benefits of working with others, might find themselves angry, confused, depressed, worried about money, or scared. All of these emotions are completely normal.

Regrettably, the way in which our culture idolizes high paychecks and productivity means that when someone isn't earning an income they may feel like they are less-valued as a person. It may feel almost impossible, especially at first, for an unemployed person to see the spiritual significance of their unpaid daily work. Now is a good opportunity for us as Christians to ask new questions about the collective and individual meaning of work.

This series is for those who are currently unemployed or underemployed, whether for voluntary or involuntary reasons. It focuses on how unemployed Christians can come to better see how God is inviting us to be a part of building the kingdom. How are we called to serve our family, friends, neighbors, and community members when we aren't drawing a paycheck? How can we be the best disciples while waiting for a furlough to end and the economy to bounce back? Even in challenging times, God is still working in our lives and inviting us to new life.

There is no simple blueprint for a spirituality of work for the unemployed. Such a spirituality is especially difficult because it often begins in frustration, or even in a dark night of loss and devastation. At the start we may be frightened because the outcome for each unemployed worker is unknown. But the spirituality of work offers an invitation to find God in a new way. A spirituality of work for unemployed workers rests on the conviction that God's grace is somehow present in every circumstance, even the loss of a job.

We also need to understand that those who are unemployed *are* workers, whether this work involves

searching for employment, developing their job knowledge and skills, volunteering, caring for children and a household, or other tasks.



Work involves more than just a paid job. Work is an investment of time and energy which the unemployed make too. Work is an opportunity to make a difference, to influence the world and improve individual lives, as well as an opportunity to earn a living. We may not have considered it before, but we *can* find a “spirituality of work” for the unemployed and let our spirituality affect the way we live our lives in between paid jobs. Let us begin our journey together to see where God is calling us in our lives right now.

## Reflection

1. Do you currently self-identify as a worker, despite being unemployed? Why or why not?
2. If you are comfortable doing so, briefly share about the reason for your current unemployment.
3. Have you ever thought of your career path previous to your unemployment as a spiritual calling? Why or why not?
4. Did you feel fulfilled in your previous paid work? Is there anything that would make future employment more meaningful to you?
5. Is there some gift you think God might have for you in this time of unemployment?

## Scripture

*Read this passage aloud, again with each participant reading a paragraph.*

Genesis 1:26-2:3

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

## Reflection

1. Have you ever considered yourself, when doing paid work or not, as an image of God? Why or why not?
2. How might thinking of God as a “working God” change the way you think of your work?
3. Everything that God created God named “good.” What do you do in your life now that God would pronounce “good”?
4. Is there anything you are doing now during a period of unemployment that you could say cooperates with God in creating a more just and loving world?
5. God rested from work after six full days. Do you consistently take a break for yourself? If not, why not?

## Action Response

*Consider this question for your week ahead. It does not need to be discussed now with the group, but we will reflect on it briefly next session.*

What can you commit to before we next meet to raise your personal awareness of God being present in your daily life?

## Closing Prayer

*Read this prayer aloud together:*

Thank you, God,  
for this time to focus on how we can  
see you more clearly in our lives.

We pray for all those who are ill,  
those who are caring for them,  
those who are lonely and scared,  
and those who are without work at this time.

Be with us,  
and help us to know your presence  
during our waking hours.

Help us to look for ways to  
make a difference in the world  
through all of our activities.

We ask this in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

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# Listening to Unemployed Workers

## Opening Prayer

*Read this prayer aloud together:*

Thank you, God,  
for bringing us together again  
to pay attention to how you are present  
in our lives.

May your Holy Spirit guide our conversation  
so that we may be led to any insights  
you want to give us.

Let us notice how you have  
been at work in our world recently.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Sharing

Were you any more aware of God during your waking hours since we last met? Did it change anything about how you spent your time or went about your responsibilities? How so?

## Background

*Read this passage aloud, with each participant reading a paragraph. Anyone who prefers not to read is welcome to pass.*

In order to discover the spirituality of unemployed workers, it is necessary to listen to their stories. Anyone who has not experienced the fear and despair, the rejection, and self-doubt of being involuntarily unemployed cannot fully understand the special relationship—at times comforting, at times stormy—that develops between an unemployed worker and his or her God.

Let us start our search for the spirituality of unemployed workers by hearing how differently several of them feel about their situations and how differently they respond.



Edward Z. was employed as a mechanical engineer for eight years and then suddenly laid off. "I don't know that being unemployed made me look at God any differently," he says. "I do know I have to trust God more. When things are going well it is easy to say you trust in God. When things are out of control, you must wait patiently to see what is in store for the future. Someone like myself, however, tends to get impatient and wants things to happen in my own time frame instead of in God's."

Thomas S. has been laid off from his job at a steel company. "I believe in God," he says, "but I don't go to church very much. I hope God has something to do with my situation and my finding work. I feel depressed more than anything—working all these years and not getting anywhere. I got more done when I worked; now I don't feel like doing as much. I get lazy."

Daniel D. is an advertising writer who has been unemployed many times. "I always told my wife that God would provide for us," he says, "and, sure enough, I would call friends and often come up with a better job than the previous one." When he was employed again, he felt that he was obliged to reciprocate with other unemployed workers: "God has helped me all my life, and I have felt responsible never to say no when asked for help by others. I have been able to help numerous people obtain work."

Marilyn Campen was employed for 13 years as an insurance claims representative when she suddenly lost her job. "I had always been a part-time worker, yet with a lot of job security. When my office closed, it was traumatic for me since I was then over 55 years old. Before this happened, I had earnestly prayed to God to simplify my life, but when I lost my job my initial reaction was shock. Did I really want God to take me that literally, or did God have something else in mind?"

Robert Parmley was laid off from his administrative job with a construction company. "In earlier jobs that I lost," Parmley notes, "I felt bitter and

disappointed. But this time I did not feel that way. If you think about it, we have no control over these situations. I know it was difficult for my boss to lay me off since I was a hard worker. So I looked on my job search as a new mission or assignment. I didn't know what I was supposed to be doing, but I welcomed the opportunity to find out."

Donald L. worked in marketing and sales in the financial industry and was out of work for 16 months. "I began to search for answers in areas of my life that I had neglected," he says. "I found that I needed a strength that money could not buy and a peace of mind that I needed to look for inside myself. I needed answers that the world cannot provide or take away."

"The experience of being unemployed and not finding anyone who valued my experience or expertise was very disturbing and depressing. In order to counter-balance the deafening silence I found in the marketplace, I started going to the 6:30 Mass every morning. I also joined a prayer group in my parish. That's where I found the strength to continue my job search."

Paul Traynor worked as a political consultant before taking the bar exam to become a lawyer. He then took 18 months to find a job in his new field. "I was well-educated, well-spoken, fluent in three languages, and lucky to get one interview," he says. "The constant problem was either that I was over-qualified or that I lacked the proper experience. I began to doubt my own self-worth and abilities. I began to withdraw, to avoid others, to fear the phone ringing."

Traynor finally began to work as a consultant doing contract work for insurance firms. "I went back to my religious upbringing, which I had really set aside in my college years. When I got hit by unemployment, with no opportunity for work, I returned to regular religious practice. When I felt worthless, I found that my religious values were still there. I found the support I needed in my church."

Eugene Kopyar worked for 34 years as a national account manager for a single company. He received a letter of dismissal with no option except to leave with a modest severance payment. "Unemployment has tested my spirituality," he says. "I thought I could just make some calls to old friends and get

work. This was not the case. They did not feel they owed me anything. I would have despaired and lost hope without my faith and my family."

Howard Bushey was a widower with two teenage children when he retired from the army and entered law school. "I thought going through law school would provide me with a simple entry into a second career," he explains. "But when I graduated I found that a 50-year-old retired lieutenant colonel with a law degree is not the hottest commodity in today's job market."

Bushey is currently unemployed. "Like many others," he says, "I found that God is using my unemployment to take me off the pathway from point A to point B. I have finally let go of my self-pity and decided that I am no longer going to identify with my work. My work will have to identify with me."



These are the reflections of just a few of the millions of people who are or have been unemployed, many millions more recently because of the novel coronavirus. Although each unemployed person experiences it differently, there are common threads which this series will try to explore.

The concept of a spirituality for unemployed workers is not an attempt to make unemployment palatable. Nor is it meant to minimize the need or desire for paid employment. In fact, a spirituality for unemployed workers very often includes an active search for meaningful and paid employment. For many today, it is a strange, in-between time when employment options are severely limited because of COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders. Many of those unemployed due to the pandemic have no choice but to find other ways to contribute to society while they wait for the economy to recover.

Wrestling with life's meaning and worth in the context of unemployment can be the very ground from which workers—those in the paid work force, those who are unemployed, those who are full-time or part-time homemakers, those who are students—fully comprehend the spirituality of work. When we are cast out of our familiar contexts, we are called to turn toward something new. Not unlike Abraham leaving his homeland for unknown territory, we are

sent forward on a journey of faith, where we might find a new, often enriched, spirituality.

## Reflection

1. Some of those quoted in this series are in shock, some are bitter, several are positive. Name the primary emotion(s) you felt when you first became unemployed.
2. Depending on how long it has been since you became unemployed, has there been a shift in your feelings since then, i.e. do you still feel the same now, or have new emotions set in?
3. Has your unemployment led you back to an earlier time of faith in your life or sparked a renewed reliance on God?
4. Do you have anyone else in your life with whom you can share your need for spiritual support during this time of unemployment?
5. Has God used your unemployment to “take you off the pathway from point A to point B” and set you in a different direction?

## Scripture

*Read these passages aloud.*

*Isaiah 43:1-3a, 4a, 5a*

But now thus says the Lord,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine.

When you pass through the waters,  
I will be with you;  
and through the rivers,  
they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.

For I am the Lord your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Because you are precious in my sight,  
and honored, and I love you,

Do not fear, for I am with you.

## Reflection

1. What is your greatest fear during this time of your unemployment?
2. Is the metaphor of *passing through the waters* or *walking through fire* anything like your experience?

## Action Response

*Consider this question for your week ahead. It does not need to be discussed now with the group, but we will reflect on it briefly next session.*

Sometime this week jot down a moment in which you feel God's presence and/or a sense of trust that God is with you during your trials.

## Closing Prayer

*Read this prayer aloud together:*

Lord Jesus, you once walked this earth as a human like all of us. You know what it is like to feel all of the human emotions, including uncertainty, worry, and even fear. Help us to learn from you about how we can keep walking this path with the trust that you are with us. Like Peter walking on the water, keep our eyes trained on you and not on the storm and the waves around us. Give us peace in our days. We pray this in your name. Amen.

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# Losing One's Job as a Spiritual Experience

## Opening Prayer

*Read this prayer aloud together:*

Gracious God,  
we come together again asking that you  
open our eyes and ears,  
our minds and hearts,  
to how you are working in our lives,  
especially while we are unemployed.

May your Holy Spirit be here among us,  
guiding our conversation and gifting us  
with insights and wisdom  
in the words and experiences of others.

We pray this in trust,  
knowing that Jesus promised that  
those who seek shall find.

Amen.

## Sharing

Was there a moment since the last session when you felt God was particularly present and/or you had a sense of trust in his presence amidst your trials?

## Background

*Read this passage aloud, with each participant reading a paragraph. Anyone who prefers not to read is welcome to pass.*

Unemployment can and does happen with little respect for age, experience, education, or dedication. The experience of being "fired," "terminated," "laid off," "let go," "downsized," or any of the other euphemisms for losing one's job can be devastating. Yet it can be an opportunity for the worker to turn toward—rather than away from—God.



Daniel Kale III worked in quality control in the nuclear industry for twenty years. He was stunned

when in recent years he found himself seriously unemployed. Whenever business was down, there were "reductions in force"—another euphemism. "I was shocked when it happened the first time," Kale recalls. "It bothered me more at the beginning. I was close to mental illness from being home with nothing to do."

Robert Campanella is a young engineer, a graduate of a prestigious university. When he could not find new employment after being laid off his first job, he wondered if all his education had been worthwhile. He was overwhelmed at this unexpected and devastating turn of events and wondered about his future. At the time, Campanella was single and dating his future wife, Linda. He vividly recalls standing with Linda on a rooftop in Atlantic City six months into his layoff looking out at the immensity of the ocean. He found there a poignant symbol of his separateness from the world.

Lorraine Thai was a case worker at a small, not-for-profit criminal justice agency which monitored clients recommended for alternative sentences. After a three-year grant expired, funding for the program could not be obtained and the agency was closed. "I felt that everything I had accomplished was washed away like sand from the shore," Thai said. "I wondered if the sun would ever rise again. I am proud of my social work background, but after the grant I have either been doing odd jobs or been entirely unemployed."

Unemployment can rise suddenly, like an unexpected sea squall, and toss any person—regardless of age, occupation, geographical location or length of experience—like driftwood on the waves. The unforeseen need for the United States to practically shut down huge sectors of the economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the sudden lay-offs of millions of people. In this case, unemployment has been caused by forces outside a worker's control. Unemployment in these situations often could not be prevented even by the most effective managers in the field.

The loss of a job, especially when it happens suddenly, is often traumatic, and reactions can range from resignation to anger to, in some cases, relief. When I myself was let go after five years as an admissions counselor at a welding school, for example, my first reaction was shock and disbelief.

I began looking for another job without much success. It was only after a long period of prayer and the encouragement of my family and friends that I eventually came to see that my unemployment was an opportunity for me to learn more about who I really am and what I really want to do. I discovered that losing a job is not about being abandoned by God.



Donna Cuning, who worked full-time for many years as a secretary of public relations for a physical rehabilitation facility, found that being let go allowed her to pursue her interest in free-lance writing and public relations. "The strongest influence on my spiritual life has been the belief that my unemployment was for my greater good. In my darker moments, I've had to fight to maintain that belief, but as a result it has opened me to a deeper trust in God."

There is a basic problem, however, in the fact that the more we develop a true spirituality of work, the more we might possibly put unemployment in sharper, more painful contrast with a paid job. If we try to cultivate the spiritual in our work and then end up unemployed, where do we then find God? The more we tie our spiritual values to our daily work, the more painfully we might feel the emptiness of unemployment.

In many cases, therefore, an honest spirituality of work for unemployed workers must begin at that apparent low point—the frustrating, often unexpected, anxiety-inducing, involuntary, lack of paid employment. The spirituality of work cannot gloss over the deprivation and emptiness of losing a job. While it is true that we tend to link meaning and worth to what we do and produce for pay, a spirituality of work for the unemployed challenges that idea at its root. Ultimately, it is a mistake to confine the search for the spiritual meaning of work to the paid workbench. We must find it in the wider context of our lives.

## Reflection

1. In casual conversation, how do you respond to the question, "So, what do you do?" What is it like for you to answer such a question?
2. Do you agree with Donna Cuning who holds the belief that "my unemployment was for my greater good"? Why or why not?
3. Has anything positive come about because of your unemployment?

## Scripture Reading

*Read this passage aloud, taking turns with each paragraph.*

*Matthew 6:25-34*

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

"And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?"

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

"So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."

## Reflection

1. Where do you think Jesus got his money? Do you think he ever worried about where he would get his next meal from?
2. Is it possible “not to worry” about these things?
3. Can you imagine trying to take Jesus' words more to heart at this point in your life?

## Action Response

*Consider this question for your week ahead. It does not need to be discussed now with the group, but we will reflect on it briefly next session.*

Whenever you think of it, ask God for the grace to let go of some of your worry and to be gifted with a little more trust. (And don't beat yourself up if you still worry sometimes!)

## Closing Prayer

*Read this prayer aloud together:*

Gracious God,  
grant us the ability to help each other  
in whatever challenges that  
our unemployment brings to us.

May we assist each other in our efforts,  
strengthen each other in our hardships,  
and comfort each other in our  
frustrations and disappointments.

Give us the courage and grace we need  
to do what it is you would have us do.

In everything that we experience,  
remind us that you are with us always.

Amen.

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