

Learning to Walk in the Dark
Chapter Five
The Eyes of the Blind

This study guide is formatted for a small group gathering. If you choose to use it as a small group leader or as an individual, feel free to adapt it in whatever way seems meaningful to you. Enjoy!

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Quotes and ideas worth repeating:

Wendell Berry: *To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight, and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings.* (page 91)

Lusseyran, a blind French resistance fighter: *I had completely lost the sight of my eyes; I could not see the light of the world anymore. Yet the light was still there.* (page 103)

Related Scripture:

John 9:1-12, 35-41 *Jesus heals a blind man*

Luke 12:27 *Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like those.*

Luke 15:1-7 *Parable of the lost sheep*

Centering song: “Down in the Hole” by Blind Boys of Alabama
or “Amazing Grace”

Introductions:

Report back on helping someone who is struggling this past week.

Gathering Activity:

Get your senses going:

Ask if any food allergies, then divide into 2 pairs—one blind folded, one not. The blind folded person is offered foods with different tastes and textures to identify—for example: grapes, mandarin oranges, tortilla chips, mint, M&Ms, grapefruit juice or lemonade, cheese cube.

Now let the other partner be blindfolded and presented with a variety of objects to describe using other senses besides sight: Examples: tennis racquet, marble, brush, flower, perfume, play-doh, lemon, scarf

Reflection/discussion:

What do you notice about the descriptions given by those blindfolded?

Is sight a superficial sense?

Every major spiritual tradition has something significant to say about the importance of paying attention. Why is that? In what ways are Christians encouraged to pay attention?

Discuss the woman who had sight-restoring surgery who was happiest with her eyes closed.
(page 95)

Do you find yourself bombarded with sight and sound sometimes?

BBT's participation in "Dialogue in the Dark" made her wonder what it would be like to attend an opaque church without identity markers to color our opinions (race/age). How would it be different?

Closing: Blessing by Jan Richardson

When the mystery.
When the shadows.
When the questions.
When the unknown.

May we find what stills us.
May we find what rests us.
May we find the courage to enter
the cave of the heart.
May we light a candle
to the mystery

May it become in us
a pathway.
May it become in us
a passage.
May it become in us
a map
by which we know
this step
and this step
and this.

Materials need to lead:

Blindfolds, plates, napkins, foods and items to identify.

Music and player for "Down in the Hole" by Blind Boys of Alabama or "Amazing Grace"

Homework for next week:

Spend 10-15 minutes in a dark place.

Find something that appears different in the darkness than it does in the light. Bring it to share next week.