

Cross of Hope Making Faith Connections Small Group Ministry
September 8, 2024
God's Work. Our Hands.

- 15 Minutes **Gathering, Hospitality, Check-in with Each Other...**
How do you do God's work?
Describe a time in your life when you stretched yourself.
- Opening Prayer Holy One, you stretch wide your tent that all may be welcomed in, and in Jesus you stretched out your hands in expansive love for a weary and wounded world. Help us to reach out with your own wounded hands of love, that through us your life may be known in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.
(From ELCA resource for God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday)
- 45 Minutes **Discussion Questions:**
Read again Mark 7: 24-37
What do you notice about this story as you read/hear it this time?
What is challenging or confusing as you read/hear it this time?
What do the specifics of the location of the Jesus' travel and the woman's origin in vv.24-30 tell us about expected relationship?
How is this helpful to receiving the story? How is it not helpful?
Why is it helpful to remember Jesus is human?
What might we learn from Jesus' change of heart/mind after encountering this woman?
When did your life change after encountering someone you didn't know or didn't expect?
What helped you be opened to that change?
Explore the power of God's healing in vv. 31-37.
How has your life opened others to experience God?
- Read again Isaiah 35:4-7a
What do you notice about this story as you read/hear it this time?
How is this a word of hope to the exiles in Babylon/any exiles?
How would you proclaim your hope in God to someone in need?
What images and phrases would you use?
- Read again James 2: 1-17
What do you notice about this story as you read/hear it this time?
What are the acts of faith expressed in this reading?
Why is it hard to not show partiality to the rich and powerful of the world?
- 20 Minutes **Prayer Requests and Prayer**
- 10 Minutes **Wrap Up and Get Ready to Leave Session:** Conversation about details for the next session...place, day, time, and volunteer Host. Remember...bring a Bible, watch the Sunday worship and sermon in preparation for the group session.

Maximum amount of time...90 minutes. Time used for each component is flexible depending on the agreed upon needs of the group for that session.