

A Simple Guide to *Grounded* in Four Sessions

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Session 1

Read “Genesis” and watch the MSNBC interview, [“Faith Outside the Box.”](#)

When you gather, light a candle and begin with prayer and/or a poem.

Questions to shape your conversation:

- What grounds you?
- Do you recognize the shifts in religious decline and the rise in spiritual experience? Have you ever had a meaningful, transformative spiritual or mystical experience? Would you be willing to share your experience with the group?
- Where do you find God? Where is God in the midst of a world in crisis?
- Do you trust “the theologian within?”

Session 2

Read the “Natural Habitat” section. You might want watch [my sermon from the Washington National Cathedral](#) or listen to the Freshwater Trust podcast (to be posted on the website soon).

When you gather, have people bring something from the natural world (a rock, shell, flower, or leaf or a photo of a landscape that is meaningful to them) and place it in the midst of the group. Read a poem or say a prayer.

Questions to shape your conversation:

- Have you ever had an experience like the one I describe on the beach (pages 28-29)?
- Which of these chapters – dirt, water, sky – spoke to you most strongly? Why?
- If we find God in nature, what kind of moral/ethical/justice demands does that place on our lives? What do you feel empowered to do as a result of reading these chapters?

Session 3

Read the “Human Geography” section.

When you gather, have people bring a picture of the people whom they love or tokens of a house, neighborhood, or community that has meant a great deal to them. Place those things in your midst. Read a poem about community or say a prayer.

Questions to shape your conversation:

- Have you ever lived in a particular place that changed the way you experienced community as I describe in the Memphis section (pages 128-131)?
- Which of these chapters – roots, home, neighborhood, commons – spoke to you most strongly? Why?
- If we experience God in the human environment, what kind of moral/ethical/justice demands does that place on our lives? What do you feel empowered to do as a result of reading these chapters?

Session 4

Read the “Revelation” and the Afterword (if you are part of a church or other religious community; if you are not a church group, skip the Afterword).

When you gather, light a candle and begin with a poem and/or a prayer.

Questions to shape your conversation:

- How did the events of 9/11 affect your understanding of faith and religion?
- Have you ever experienced a conversion? More than one? How would you describe these experiences?
- What stands out for you in these final pages?
- What will you take away from *Grounded*? Is there something you are motivated to do in relation to your spiritual life to go deeper or serve the world with greater compassion?