

Session on Chapter 1 of Cherished Belonging

1. Welcome & Opening (10 min)

- Greet everyone warmly.
- Remind people of the ground rules (confidentiality, respect, listening with love).

2. Get-to-Know-You Activity (15 min) – “Belonging Moments”

- Ask participants: " **Share a time when you overcame a personal bias or preconceived notion about someone. What led to this change, and how did it affect your relationship?**
- Have them pair up or form small groups to briefly share their experiences.
- After a few minutes, invite a few volunteers to share with the larger group.

3. Opening Prayer (5 min)

Let us begin, In the name of the Father...

God who cherishes us, we come before you today with open hearts, ready to receive your love and mercy. Thank you for the gift of belonging—to you and to the people around us.

Help us to understand what it means to be truly cherished as part of your beloved family.

Let this time together deepen our love for you and for one another. We ask this in your holy name, Amen.

4. Discussion Questions (30 min) – Based on Chapter One—The Wild One of *Cherished Belonging*

1. Throughout this chapter, Boyle shares with the reader various glimpses of God—some his own, others from theologians and mystics, and some from his experiences with the *homies*. Which wild glimpse of God did you find fascinating? Why?
2. Fr. Greg begins this chapter by quoting a homeboy, Scrappy: “Today... I let God hold me by the hand.” When have you allowed God to hold your hand? If never, can you invite God to hold your hand?
3. Boyle quoted Richard Rohr, “Your image of God creates you.” Has your image of God changed, and has it changed you?
4. Thomas Merton was gentle with people because God was gentle with him. How has God been gentle with you?
5. Some of the mystics Boyle quotes are open to a rendezvous with the God of love. Where have you rendezvoused with God? Explain the circumstance.

6. Sometimes, people have seen God as transactional: I ask for forgiveness, and God grants it. Boyle says, God is Mercy and quotes Merton: “Mercy within mercy within mercy.” Mercy is love without expectations. Who might need to hear this message? Can you share it with them?
7. Quoting Catherine of Siena, Boyle interprets our service and love to others as God’s victory over division and suffering. How might we engage and invite others to this victory?
8. Describe a moment when your love rhymed with God.

(Encourage openness, active listening, and understanding. Attempt to learn from one another.)

5. Closing Reflection & Prayer (10 min)

- Invite each person to share one takeaway or a word that summarizes what they received today.
- Close with a short prayer of petition and gratitude for the week ahead.

For whom and what shall we pray? (Allow people to state their petitions.)

Loving God of unity, thank you for reminding us that we are never alone—that we belong to you and to a community of faith. Help us to carry this truth with us and extend the same love and inclusion to others. May we always reflect your heart for belonging in the way we live, love, welcome and serve. In Jesus’ name we pray.

Amen.

6. Next Steps & Goodbyes (5 min)

- Share a preview of the next session, including the chapter(s) you’ll be discussing.
- If you plan to share facilitation, discuss who will lead the next session.
- If refreshments are part of your gatherings, Thank the person who brought the goodies and remind the next volunteer.
- Express gratitude for each person’s presence and participation, and close with a warm thank-you.

Session on Chapter 1 of Cherished Belonging

Opening Prayer

Let us begin, In the name of the Father...

God who cherishes us, we come before you today with open hearts, ready to receive your love and mercy. Thank you for the gift of belonging—to you and to the people around us. Help us to understand what it means to be truly cherished as part of your beloved family. Let this time together deepen our love for you and for one another. We ask this in your holy name, Amen.

Discussion Questions Based on Chapter One—The Wild One of *Cherished Belonging*

1. Throughout this chapter, Boyle shares with the reader various glimpses of God—some his own, others from theologians and mystics, and some from his experiences with the *homies*. Which wild glimpse of God did you find fascinating? Why?
2. Fr. Greg begins this chapter by quoting a homeboy, Scrappy: “Today... I let God hold me by the hand.” When have you allowed God to hold your hand? If never, can you invite God to hold your hand?
3. Boyle quoted Richard Rohr, “Your image of God creates you.” Has your image of God changed, and has it changed you?
4. Thomas Merton was gentle with people because God was gentle with him. How has God been gentle with you?
5. Some of the mystics Boyle quotes are open to a rendezvous with the God of love. Where have you rendezvoused with God? Explain the circumstance.
6. Sometimes, people have seen God as transactional: I ask for forgiveness, and God grants it. Boyle says, God is Mercy and quotes Merton: “Mercy within mercy within mercy.” Mercy is love without expectations. Who might need to hear this message? Can you share it with them?
7. Quoting Catherine of Siena, Boyle interprets our service and love to others as God’s victory over division and suffering. How might we engage and invite others to this victory?
8. Describe a moment when your love rhymed with God.

Closing Prayer

For whom and what shall we pray? (Allow people to state their petitions.)

Loving God of unity, thank you for reminding us that we are never alone—that we belong to you and to a community of faith. Help us to carry this truth with us and

*extend the same love and inclusion to others. May we always reflect your heart for belonging in the way we live, love, welcome and serve. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen*