

Session on Chapter 5 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) – “Stories of Attention”

- Ask participants: *On any given day, what do you show the most attention to? For example, do you focus on your work, your family, your worries, your phone, or the needs of others?*
- 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...

Loving Creator, we come before You with open hearts, acknowledging the blessings we have and the challenges we face. We thank You for the gift of community and the opportunity to learn from each other. Guide us in our discussions today, helping us to see the inherent goodness in ourselves and others. May we be instruments of Your love and compassion, fostering a world where everyone feels they belong. Amen.

4. Discussion Questions (30 min) – Based on Chapter Five —Acatamiento

1. Acatamiento means to look at something with attention, affection, or awe. When have you experienced Acatamiento in your own life?
2. Father Greg Boyle speaks about shifting away from the "tough on crime" narrative of the 1990s and replacing it with a "smart on crime" approach. Do you agree or disagree? If you agree, how can you contribute to this change?
3. Boyle shares the words of a *homie* who said, “After 23 years locked up, I left prison with insight, but I didn’t find healing until I came here [Homeboy]. Insight alone, without healing, only deepened my despair.” What is the difference between insight and healing?
4. A recurring theme in this chapter is the idea that teachers should not "erase the paragraph too soon." Who in your life needs a little more time?
5. The Buddhists say, “Whatever we resist, persists.” If we struggle to receive the belief that God sees us as perfect, we might fall back into feeling

unworthy. Greg Boyle suggests that God sees you with awe—how do you see yourself?

6. When discussing the Hillside Strangler, Angelo Buono, Boyle asks: What if we had met him with compassion when he was young and in need of healing? Could things have turned out differently?
7. One of the *homies*, describing a crack cocaine addict, said, “He’s just a base head.” Who in your life—or in society—do you see as disposable?
8. Boyle suggests that healing takes place in community. Is there a community that helps you heal? Are you seeking such a community?

(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.)

*Gracious God, we thank You for the insights shared today. As we depart, may we carry forward the spirit of compassion and *acatamiento*, striving to create a world where everyone feels they belong. Empower us to be instruments of Your love and peace. 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.

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Handout 5

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