

Session on Chapter 9 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) – “The Fastest Route”

- Ask participants: *Think about a time when you wanted a quick solution to something, but the longer, harder path ended up being the most meaningful. What*
- 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 of patience and presence, we often seek quick solutions and easy answers, but You call us to the deeper journey. Help us to trust the path of love, kinship, and transformation, even when it is not the fastest or most convenient. Open our hearts today to Your wisdom and guidance. Amen.

4. Discussion Questions (30 min) – Based on Chapter Nine—the Fastest Route

1. In this chapter, Boyle highlights that *"the shortest distance between two people is tenderness."* How have you experienced this truth in your relationships?
2. George tries to explain the *"secret sauce"* of Homeboy Industries, saying *"it smells like belonging and tastes like heaven."* If you had a secret sauce, what would it do? What would it smell like and taste like?
3. Homie Sharkey was comforted by his mother's heartbeat, and when he walked into Homeboy, he felt that same heartbeat. Where do you find comfort in your life?
4. Boyle says, *"We don't have enemies; we have inner injuries. We don't have hate; we have wounds. We don't have fear; we have shared ruin of our common human brokenness."* How does this perspective resonate with your experiences?
5. What's the point of healing if it doesn't lead to a community of *cherished belonging*? How do we ensure that healing leads to deeper connection?
6. William Stafford suggests that our job is to *"find out what the world is trying to be."* What do you think the world is trying to become?
7. Boyle says that God hopes we will not only see victims as family members but also see perpetrators as family members. Do you think this is possible? Why or why not?

8. When describing the experience of receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Boyle says, “*How honorable it is, then, to be loved into your own awakened heart.*” How has your heart been awakened by love?
9. Boyle suggests that *our superpower is our intentionality—that it is the surest route.* What do you consider your superpower? How has your own intentionality shaped you?

(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.)

God of the long journey, thank You for walking with us, even when the road is slow and uncertain. Give us the patience to embrace the process, the courage to stay present, and the trust to know that love is always the fastest route to You. May we leave here committed to walking in tenderness, kinship, and grace, Cherished Belonging. Amen.

6. Next Steps & Goodbyes (5 min)

- Express heartfelt gratitude for each person's presence and participation, acknowledging the wisdom and experiences shared. Close with a warm thank-you.
- Decide as a group whether you'd like to continue these gatherings. If so, determine the preferred frequency—weekly, monthly, or occasionally.
- The **Holy Family website** will continue to provide additional books and discussion questions to support your journey if you choose to continue.

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Handout 9

Opening Prayer

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Amen.