Sneak Peek

Next week's session invites us to reflect on the role of religion in relationships between individuals and groups. To help prepare for the discussion, watch the scene from the Scenes and Songs disc entitled, "Nothing Will Be Lost."

Closing Meditation

Play the song "Teach Me" from the Scenes and Songs disc. Music and lyrics by Barclay Martin, from the CD Zamboanga: Poverty, War, Music (Copyright © 2009 CFCA).

If it takes all night
If it takes all day
I'll reach out my hand
For you to lead the way

For you're reeling in the wheels
And the streets of smoke
When poverty prevails
Grinds your dreams to the stones

Won't you teach me about love?

You who wear the holes in your clothes
Know about beauty
You who feel the pangs of hunger
Know about plenty
You who cherish the rhythm of the generations
Know a family

Won't you teach me about love?

I have everything I want
But is it everything I need?

Is it everything I need?

If it takes all night
If it takes all day
I'll reach out my hand
For you to lead the way

The cries like a whisper
Whipping through the night
Disappearing in the veil of
Artificial light

Won't you teach me about love?

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'THEY WERE SO OTHERS'

SESSION 3

Introduction

Friendship is a wonderful gift and one component of a happy life. Part of growing up is making the journey into the other-centeredness that defines healthy adulthood. For this to happen it is important to establish new friendships and discover the joy to be found in relationships with others.

RISE AND DREAM
EXPLORING THE DREAM

Opening Reflection *(shared by leader)*

Digging Deeper

Read the following aloud within the group.

One of the reactions young people often have after seeing *Rise and Dream* is surprise that the teens in the film are, except perhaps for the circumstances of their lives, just like them. They have the same hopes and dreams, the same concerns about their future and the same struggles balancing school with other commitments. But one of the most striking things they have in common is something shared by people, young and old, the world over — the need for friendship.

It is good to remember that the 13 young people who performed in the concert did not know each other well at the start of the project. They came from different communities, were of different religions, and some even spoke different languages. Part of the story of *Rise and Dream* is how this group bonded over their common experience of training to perform together.

That ability to bond is one of the blessings of youth. A group of adults in a similar situation might also become close, but it would be more of a challenge because of the tendency adults have to be emotionally guarded and to bring their preconceived notions to new experiences. Young people are generally more open, and that spirit of openness — which inspired the *Rise and Dream* kids to participate in the concert in the first place — allows them to trust enough to establish new friendships.

The bonding of the young people in *Rise and Dream* is not unlike what other youth go through when they share intense experiences and work together toward common goals. Gathered activities such as team sports, school plays and youth ministry events are valuable because they provide for young people environments in which they can learn, grow and develop relationship-building skills. The friendships they establish in these activities may or may not last, but the skills — and the memories — certainly do.

A Closer Look

Watch the scene from the Scenes and Songs disc entitled "They Were So Others."

Questions for Group Discussion

1. Annaliza shared with the group how grateful she was to Christian for befriending her when she didn't know any of the other performers. Christian reached out to Annaliza because of a mutual friend and because he felt it was important for the group members to support each other. "If it is possible," Christian said, "I want all of them to be my friends." Can you think of a time when you were new in a group and the kindness of one person helped you feel at ease? What were your feelings during that experience?

2. Harold comes from an island south of Zamboanga and was, at first, a complete stranger to the group. His statement about being reluctant to become friends with his new band mates because "they were so others" perfectly captures the challenge of getting to know people who are different from ourselves. It is easy to separate people into "them" and "us" but not as easy to find things held in common that allow individuals to build relationships. When was a time that you stretched your personal comfort zone and reached out to a person who was 'other?'

3. C.S. Lewis said, "Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art, like the universe itself. … It has no survival value; rather it is one of those things which give value to survival." Reflect on this statement within the group. What does it mean? What are some of the other "unnecessary" things that give value to your life?

Call to Action

Choose one or more of the following, or develop other ideas within the group.

1. Choose one friend, either within or outside the discussion group. Write your responses to some or all of the following questions, then share them with each other: I first knew you were important to me when …; My favorite memory of our friendship is …; One thing I cherish that you bring to my life is …; My greatest hope for your future is …; One thing I really want to say to you now is …

2. Look for opportunities to provide companionship for people in hospitals or nursing homes. Choose one person to visit on a regular basis. Discovering interests you have in common (sports, movies, etc.) can provide a good foundation for building an ongoing relationship.

3. Check to see if churches or other agencies in your community offer settlement and/or transition services for families that have recently immigrated to the United States. Such outreaches are usually in need of items like furniture and appliances, as well as people to help the families shop, learn about local resources, etc. Perhaps your group could "adopt" a new family to assist.