

Good Morning. My name is Jane Trombly. I have been a member of Our Mother of Consolation Parish since 1996. As a member of this parish, I have tried to work on my relationship with God through my stewardship both in church and through the school. But when it comes to truly praying, sitting down, and talking with God, I struggle.

A year ago, I sat at 9am mass and listened as a parishioner shared their personal experience with the Reach More formation. The speaker's story piqued my interest and listening to their story made me really want to join a group. But I walked out of church without signing up. My plate was too full. Yet I continue to raise my hand to add other things to my plate time and time again.

This year my neighbor and friend, Jenn Zabierek asked me to join her small prayer group during Lent and again I said no, thank you, my plate was just too full. Then Jenn delivered her speech at the 9am Mass I attended just before Lent – well that got me and I told her to sign me up.

While I knew many of the members of our small group already, and found comfort in the all women setting, I found myself nervous about coming together to read from the Bible and share our interpretations and thoughts. Yet as we spent time together, the praying became conversation, and the conversations became more and more interesting. We reflected on the readings of the Bible and really focused on what it was like for Jesus and for the Disciples who followed him. We shared our thoughts and brought our real-life stories into the mix while reflecting on the Readings each week.

What we all realized is that as Catholics we spend a lot of our time memorizing prayers, but as our collection of memorized prayers fade over time, so too does the time we spend praying. Together we discovered how we can just have a conversation with God. How we can pick up the Bible and reflect on a passage and grow in our relationship with God through it.

Through the faith and wisdom of one of our members, we learned more about Divine Mercy Sunday and the teachings of Sister Faustina. We really talked about what it means to be merciful and how to trust in God. Reminding each other to trust in God even when life gets tough, that God promised us Salvation – not Health, Happiness or Prosperity.

- I would like to share some quotes from other people in my group : I was seeking to grow and share my faith journey with fellow parishioners during Lent. I felt more connected to God through listening to others' experiences and watching as God revealed himself to our group.
- Sharing with the accomplished women in our group brought new insight for me to different interpretations of scripture readings. We all perceive and reflect on passages in our own way along this spiritual journey, but we can still journey together.
- It is so refreshing to me to meet a group of women, in this day and age, who want to be in a prayer group and want to talk openly about God.

As our small group met for our final session, surrounded by the 550 Tulips Jennifer planted (a must see in Chestnut Hill) everything really came together. There we were, a group of working women, happy to sit in a circle on a beautiful evening sipping prosecco and talking about God.

Praying together and not worrying about anyone who passed by wondering what we were doing.  
Trust in God and be Merciful!

I am telling you our story, so you too will not hesitate to put one more thing on your plate the next time you have the opportunity to join in a prayer group. In this crazy world we now live in, with a Pandemic, Racial injustice and Political Chaos, Trust in God, Talk to God, and Be Merciful to others.

Thank you.