

## Leader's Guide

**Chosen Topics for Discussion Taken From:      The Fifth Week of Lent**

**Chapter 6 Disability Mosquito**

**Chapter 7 Disability Lessons**

**Chapter 8 Disability Foundations**

**\*Instead of reading the entire chapter, participants may choose to read only the designated sections listed below to answer the discussion question.**

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### **Assignment for Week 5:**

- Read the designated sections below and answer the questions for Chapters 6, 7 and 8 from My Body is Not a Prayer Request

### **Scripture Readings:**

Disability Metaphors:

**Isaiah 56: 9 - 10**

**Matthew 23: 16-17**

**Video: Sims Lynn**

### **Discussion Questions for Chapter 6 Disability Mosquito:**

Amy Kenny discusses her frustration with disabilities being used as a metaphor for weakness. People within her church community accuse her of being overly sensitive because after all, Jesus uses disabilities such as blindness as a metaphor for weakness in the Bible.

On page 93 she says, "Using disability as a metaphor, sets disabled people aside as "others". Blind, deaf, mute, lame, crippled, dumb are all frequent metaphors predicated on the idea that the bodies and minds of one-quarter of the US population are unwelcome or unworthy."

She presents each of us with a challenge when she says, "if you are thinking using these metaphors isn't so bad, ask yourself if you have ever heard them used in a positive way?" Has "lame" ever meant anything good? Have you ever experienced "crippled" as something powerful? Disability metaphors allow everyone to agree my body is bad.

1. In response to Amy's challenge, when you examine your own heart and mind, have you ever used metaphors that included language that might be disrespectful to someone with a disability? If so, what were some?
  - Blind as a bat
  - Fell on deaf ears

- That's lame
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2. Read Isaiah 56:9 - 10 and Matthew 23:16-17. What disabilities are referenced?
    - Blind
    - Unable to Speak
    - Cognitively challenged
  3. What does Amy Kenny mean by mosquito bites? See page 98 -100.
    - When microaggressions are dismissed as minuscule. They are like mosquito bites, one is not a big deal, but multiple bites are monumental.
  4. What does Amy Kenny mean by mosquito swatter? Read the Top Ten Mosquito Swatters on page 107 and discuss your thoughts.
    - Mosquito swatter is how she responds to a mosquito bite.
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### **Discussion Questions for Chapter 7 Disability Lessons:**

#### **Read pages 114-116 and half of 117.**

1. Explain the spoon theory
  - Spoons help explain fluctuating limitations and pain.
  - Each spoon can represent one activity or the energy spent performing that activity.
  - "Out of spoons" means you can't do anything else that day.
2. On page 116, Amy Kenny states that even in writing "My Body is Not a Prayer Request", that her relationship with her disability will be misunderstood. She worries that people will think she is frustrated that her life is not "normal". She feels that people will pity her and be more awkward around her.

Amy says that the truth is that being disabled is hard, beautiful, heartbreaking, illuminating, full of loss and full of life. She is grateful she is disabled, and yet she would not wish it on anyone. She is proud to be disabled but it is not the sum of who she is. THE HARDEST PART OF BEING DISABLED ISN'T THE PAIN, IT IS THE PEOPLE. BUT SHE HOPES THAT ONE DAY, IT WILL BE THE PAIN.

What are some things that we can do to make her dream a reality?

- Listen to people with disabilities

- Learn from them
  - Love them
  - Don't try to fix their disability
  - Be an ally
  - Don't be an ableist
3. What is a disability ally?  
Someone who supports the cause of a marginalized group and uses their privilege to learn from that group and amplify their cause.
4. Do you consider yourself a disability ally? If not, what can you do to change this?
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### **Discussion Questions for Chapter 8 Disabled Foundations:**

1. Read pages 129-131 in Chapter 8 Disabled Foundations. How would you feel if you were Amy Kenny?
- Humiliated
  - Frustrated
  - Marginalized
2. On page 132, Amy Kenny says physical space reveals who the world is built for and who we expect to use it. She says that in the disability community, they talk about the need to bake disability inclusion in from the outset because it too often goes unnoticed by well-meaning nondisabled people. It's the blueberries in blueberry muffins, it can't be added in later!

As some areas of the church are being renovated are we considering the needs of all including those with disabilities?

What are some areas of our church that are not accessible for all?

- Sanctuary
  - Choir loft
  - Podium
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3. On page 134, Amy Kenny says we need to crip our church spaces and practices. What did she mean by this?
- We should not settle for "no ableism" or even "inclusion". We must foster belonging!
  - To "crip" something is to invite the way disability disrupts our ideas of what is normal and allow disability to lead how we gather and participate in communal space without hierarchy.

- Instead of adding accessibility as an afterthought, crip-space considers the needs of the disabled from the beginning.
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4. Read from the bottom of 140- to the top of 143. What does "assistive technology" mean to you? See definition below.
    - Any device that provides an alternate access so that someone with a disability can use it to function like a nondisabled person i.e. wheelchairs for mobility; hearing aids and listening devices for hearing impaired and deaf; glasses for visually impaired.
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  5. List some assistive technology devices that you now benefit from because they were originally developed for and/or with a person with a disability.
    - Typewriter
    - Touchscreens
    - Potato Peeler
    - Closed -captioning
    - Pencil grips
    - Screen Readers
  6. What does universal design mean to you? (See definition below). Who benefits from universal design?
    - If you design the world, with and for the disabled, we all benefit.
    - Lever handles on doors instead of knobs.
    - Ramps for baby strollers and wheelchairs.
    - Crossing signals that can be heard and seen.

### **Additional Activities:**

Read Chapters 6-8.

Read the Top Ten Disability Icebreakers on page 128 and discuss your thoughts.

Read the Top Ten Disability Accolades on page 146 and discuss your thoughts.

### **Terms:**

**Microaggression** - a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of subtle or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as racial or ethnic minority.

**Disability Ally** - Someone who supports the cause of a marginalized group and uses their privilege to learn from that group and amplify their cause.

**Assistive Technology** - According to the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATiA.org), "Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities."

**Universal Design** - According to the National Disability Authority, "Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. This is not a special requirement, for the benefit of only a minority of the population. It is a fundamental condition of good design. If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits. By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates products, services and environments that meet peoples' needs. Simply put, universal design is good design."

### **Closing Prayer**

*Eternal Father, Everlasting God, you have created the entire universe and all forms of life dwelling in it. Your works, O God, are powerful and wondrous and we adore, worship and magnify your Holy Name.  
Amen.*