



## Materials

- the song “Simplify” by Brendan James
- Service Day Guide (from Bethlehem Farm website)
- Letter Writing Day Guides (from Bethlehem Farm website)

## Opening Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace!  
That where there is hatred, I may bring love.  
That where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness.  
That where there is discord, I may bring harmony.  
That where there is error, I may bring truth.  
That where there is doubt, I may bring faith.  
That where there is despair, I may bring hope.  
That where there are shadows, I may bring light.  
That where there is sadness, I may bring joy.  
Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort, than to be comforted.  
To understand, than to be understood.  
To love, than to be loved.  
For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.  
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.  
It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life.

- Prayer of St. Francis by St. Francis of Assisi

## Group Discussion

*Lead the group in a discussion with the following questions:*

- At the farm what did you like about living simply? What was challenging about living simply?
- Have you continued living simply since the farm? And if so, how? If not, why not?

## Hot Seat Activity: Living Simply Tap-In Group Debate

The debate seeks to argue the question: *Why live simply at all? Choose two participants to start the debate with another writing down the pluses and minuses of living simply. You can have the rest of the group make a semicircle around the two debaters.*

*The rest of the group may tap in on either side at any time, but they are not allowed to use any of the reasons used before unless they elaborate on it in a new way.*

*At the end ask the group which side was more compelling and discuss their reactions to the game and points brought up.*

### Roles:

- Person A argues against living simply.
- Person B advocates for living simply.
- Person C: records Person A & B's ideas

## Simplicity, Martin Luther King Jr. & Taking Action

*Share how MLK Jr. is known for civil rights and justice, but he also recognized the interconnectedness of all the world's problems. "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (MLK Jr.). Through living simply, we take an active role in addressing the injustice of our systems that create gaps between people of different social classes and races.*

### **MLK Jr. Quote**

*Read the Martin Luther King Jr. quotes from the handout:*

*"All too many of those who live in affluent America ignore those who exist in poor America; in doing so, the affluent Americans will eventually have to face themselves with the question that Eichmann chose to ignore: how responsible am I for the well-being of my fellows? To ignore evil is to become an accomplice to it. We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or the size of our automobiles, rather than by the quality of our service and relationship to humanity. As long as there is poverty in the world I can never be rich, even if I have a billion dollars. As long as diseases are rampant and millions of people in this world cannot expect to live more than twenty-eight or thirty years, I can never be totally healthy even if I just got a good checkup at Mayo clinic. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the way our world is made. No individual or nation can stand out boasting of being independent. We are interdependent.*

*I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, other-centered men can build up. "*

*~ Martin Luther King Jr.*

## Individual Reflection

*Have participants review the "Simplicity List" Handout. Play Brendan James' song "Simplify" as they reflect and complete the handout.*

*When they finish, have them meet with their accountability partner and review their responses.*

## Closing Prayer

Lord of True Liberty,

You who commissioned Moses  
to lead Your chosen children from bondage in Egypt  
to the freedom of a new land,  
help me to find a real freedom in simplicity.

Cure me, Lord, of “buyer’s itch”;  
heal me of the consumer’s consumption  
that keeps me constantly discontent  
and continuously craving more and more.

Show to me the joys of a simple lifestyle  
whereby in my “freedom from things”  
I shall have more time and energy  
to invest in my relationships with those I love,  
with myself, and with You, my God.

Help me, by the example of Your Son, Jesus,  
to place my value in those things  
that neither moth nor thief can take from me.

And, as I strive for greater simplicity—  
in my prayers, my lifestyle, my desires—  
I shall find greater happiness in life itself.

May my efforts at simplicity not cease  
and looking into my closet and counting clothes,  
but may they take on their greatest energy and zeal  
when looking into my heart  
and removing all that is not in the fashion  
of Your divine heart,  
all that blocks my loving others.

May I be reminded frequently that whatever form  
my attempts at simplicity may take  
that it is a simple heart  
which You first and foremost desire.

I ask this, Lord, through the intercession  
of Your Son, Jesus the Christ,  
who lives with You and the Holy Spirit,  
now and forever. Amen

# SIMPLICITY & MLK JR.

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# SIMPLICITY LIST

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“Carry your cross joyfully, and it will carry you.”

— Thomas A Kempis

## Waste and Resources

- If it's yellow, let it mellow
- Limit your showers per week (fewer showers or shorter showers, or both)
  - Or Take a cold shower instead- it can be good for you (<http://rebootedbody.com/cold-conditioning/>).
- Abstain from meat and fish every Friday or once a week. Or, resolve to only eat local/sustainable meat
- Walk anywhere within 2 miles of your house, if it's farther bike whenever possible.
- Always unplug your laptop and computers when not in use
- If you only have a half-load of laundry, see if your roommate has things they want washed
- Learn to cook, avoid eating at restaurants on the week days.
- Cook your meals for the week on the weekend.
- Learn about “Clean Food Resources” - Monterrey Bay Aquarium fish lists, the Dirty Dozen and Clean 15

## Less Trash

- Do not use disposable bags, if you do use one wash it and use it again and again. Pack your lunch in Tupperware, Mason Jar, or Pyrex.
- Use a handkerchief
- Bring reusable grocery bags to the store or farmers market
- Find a reusable water bottle and vow to use it instead of disposable water bottles
- Don't get coffee unless you have your own thermos with you
- Use real plates and cups instead of paper, plastic, or Styrofoam.
- Recycle
- Compost

## Possessions

- Resolve to buy used clothing from consignment shops and thrift stores.
- Count how many items of clothing you have, challenge yourself to get as close to 100 items as possible.
- Donate or give away one item of clothing that you actually like and sometimes wear, but don't actually need.
- Wear your clothes into the ground. Patch, re-patch, and repurpose whatever you can.

### **Possessions** *(continued)*

- Substitute one thing on your shopping list per week for something that is fair-trade & "sweat free."
- Take great care with your electronics so as not to replace them often (don't get a new phone until yours is actually broken). Avoid the urge to get the latest, coolest gadget that you don't need. Always see what you can find used on eBay. Recycle any and all broken electronics.
- Buy in bulk when you can, find a grocery store (like a co-op or farmer's market) that will let you bring your own reusable container.

### **Presence**

- Put away all electronics for a given time period once a day to engage in a conversation, game, or activity
- Get to know the city you live in, its struggles and its gifts.
- Get to know the people on the street, in the shelters, and the refugee population and share with them.
- Smile at people when you pass them.
- Be honest with panhandlers. If you have money, don't lie and say you don't. If you prefer to give to charities that can help more people than you can, then say so and listen to the response.

### **Questions for reflection**

- A. Which of these sound most appealing to you? Most challenging? Why?
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- B. How do you plan to live more simply in the coming year? What do you need to do to make this happen?