

## Seeds of Hope Leader's Guide

### Introduction

*Welcome to the Seeds of Hope Prayer Retreat Guide!*

This guide was created to help you facilitate a prayer retreat day with your teams, (3 hours minimum), but the videos and individual reflection can be done on your own. You can send the retreat guide a few days in advance. The PDF is attached [here](#), and in the schedule below.

This guide will provide guidance through each individual reflection time. See below for an outline and designated reflection times during the retreat.

## Suggested Schedule and Resources:

**Introduction by Host:** *(feel free to modify for your context) Today, we are going to enter a time of prayer and reflection together as a team. We have created this space for you to meet with Jesus individually and in community through the Seeds of Hope material created by Bette Dickinson. This material is designed to help us enter this difficult season of loss and disappointment through prayer, lament, and discussion.*

**Bette's Bio:** *Bette Dickinson is the newly appointed Assistant Director of Spiritual Formation with InterVarsity and an artist, writer, and speaker. In her new role, she is developing creative projects and programs to awaken the soul of our staff and students through wonder and beauty. She earned her Masters of Divinity with an emphasis in Pastoral Studies from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, and is ordained in the Reformed Church in America.*

### Part 1: Sowing

- **Talk 1: Sowing by Bette Dickinson - [WATCH](#) (25 minutes)**
- **Individual [Reflection Guide](#): Part I: Sowing (Pages 1-9)**  
*Time suggestion: 30-60 minutes. If 30 minutes, have staff choose option 1 or 2):*
  - **Option 1:** Praying with Psalm 126 (pages 4-6 of Individual Reflection Guide)
  - **Option 2:** Pray Your Own Psalm of Lament (7-9 of Individual Reflection Guide)
- **Small Group Discussion:** Discussion Questions on page 2 of this handout  
*Time suggestion: 30-60 minutes*

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### Part 2: Waiting

- **Talk 2: Waiting by Bette Dickinson - [WATCH](#) (18 minutes)**
- **Individual [Reflection Guide](#): Part II: Waiting (pages 10-14)**  
*Time suggestion: 30-60 minutes*
  - Praying with Psalm 130
  - Looking for Signs of Spring
- **Small Group Discussion:** Discussion Questions on page 3 of this handout  
*Time suggestion: 30-60 minutes*

### Closing by Host

## Seeds of Hope Retreat Small Group Guide

### Part 1: Sowing

**Notes:** This section will be after their individual reflection time in either **Psalm 126** or **writing a Psalm of Lament**. Begin by telling them that naming feelings before God is one of the best ways to grieve in this season. It's counter-intuitive but actually saying feelings to God and others helps us process and metabolize them and they don't have as much power over us. Open in prayer.

### Discussion Questions

1. How did your time of reflection go? How did Jesus meet you in this time? Was there any part that was especially meaningful for you or difficult?
2. Invite each participant to share something from the **reflection in Psalm 126** (a God moment, how they have sown in tears, how they imagined the harvest) or share the **lament prayer** that they wrote. **You, the leader, share first** and model appropriate length and vulnerability.
3. If time, you could have a moment of silence after each person shares. They can pray or just use that space to honor the sharing.
4. If there is time after a person shares, someone in the group could ask a question or make an observation. I wonder how this was for you? Show empathy. "That must have been difficult. I can't imagine this, but I am so sorry, etc." Thank them. **(Make sure you as the leader says something about what each person shares.)**
5. Invite one person to pray for them based on what they heard.

### Additional questions (if time):

6. How are you or others around you going through a season of scarification (suffering)?
7. What are some of the things God is inviting you to surrender to Him in the soil of transformation? What fears, insecurities, doubts, or grief rises in you as you think about surrendering these things to the Lord?
8. What might you dare to hope that He could do through this process of transformation?
9. What do you need prayer for in order to do this well?

## Seeds of Hope Retreat Small Group Guide

### Part 2: Waiting

*Notes: This section will be after their **Part II: Sowing Individual Reflection Guide in Psalm 130**. Choose whichever discussion questions will best serve your context. You may not have time for them all!*

### Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you from this last section in the teaching or in your reflection time?
2. What areas in your life are you “waiting in the darkness of the soil” for God to bring resurrection?
3. What has God been showing you about “what’s growing under the soil” where you cannot see – in your own heart, in your ministry, or in the world? This may be an opportunity to ask the Lord together or do listening prayer for one another in pairs.
4. What parts of your shell (old self) do you think He is stripping away in the process of waiting? (What are you tempted to cling to for protection and hope instead of God?)
5. What are your “roots?” What are the systems and structures within your life that help you to stretch to seek God? (Quiet times, prayer, worship, community, etc.) Who are the people that help you cultivate this kind of growth?
6. Are there any areas in your life, ministry, or world where you are starting to see “signs of spring?” If so, what are they? Let’s celebrate those together.

I’d suggest making sure each person gets prayed for after each person shares. If the prayer request isn’t obvious—ask them “For what would you like to ask God?”