

WELCOME TO ANIMATE!

This Facilitator Guide will help you make the most out of the videos and the Journal. As you prepare to dive into this session, keep these things in mind:

- You know your group best. Adjust the activities as needed based on the interests, questions, and background of group members.
- Get ready for creativity. The Journal is meant to be a right brain experience. Think of the animate experience as a journey through the content with many stopping points based on the questions, wonderings, and interests of the group.
- You don't have to know everything. As a facilitator, you don't have to be the expert, or even agree with everything the speakers say. Be ready to spark conversation and see where this takes the group as you explore these ideas together.
- Social media can help. Think of ways to use social media and other online tools to keep the conversation going. How about a Facebook group, a Twitter hashtag, or posts on Instagram or Pinterest?

SESSION FLOW IDEAS

To get each session started, try this structure:

- Recap previous animate sessions or other learning experiences.
- Update the group on any between-session reflections or research.
- Explore the content on the first Journal spread.
- View the video.
- Dive into the rest of the Journal content together.

SESSION TITLES

GOD | FAITH IS A QUEST

RELIGION | SPIRITUALITY IS NOT ENOUGH

JESUS | THE REVOLUTION OF LOVE

SALVATION | ABUNDANT LIFE NOW

CROSS | WHERE GOD IS

BIBLE | A BOOK LIKE NO OTHER

CHURCH | AN IMPERFECT FAMILY

ICON WATCH

Look for these icons that guide you in activities.

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GROUP ACTIVITIES WITH QUESTIONS DESIGNED TO HELP ANIMATE CONVERSATION.

INTRODUCTORY AND OUT-GOING THOUGHTS TO SET-UP THE SESSION AND TO KEEP INTERACTIONS GOING BETWEEN SESSIONS.

LEADER TIPS: IDEAS TO HELP FACILITATORS FACILITATE.

FACTOIDS: INFORMATIONAL TIDBITS TO SPICE UP THE CONVERSATION.

QUOTES FROM THE VIDEO AND ELSEWHERE TO GET FOLKS THINKING.

FOOTNOTES: EXTRA BACKGROUND MATERIAL TO MAKE YOU SOUND EVEN SMARTER.



FOR BEST RESULTS

- Reproduce the Facilitator Guide in landscape format on 11x17 paper.
- Reproduce the Journal pages in landscape format on 8.5x11 paper.
- For both resources, use a color copier.

RELIGION | SPIRITUALITY IS NOT ENOUGH
LILLIAN DANIEL

WHERE DO YOU GROW; WHERE DO YOU THRIVE?

Brian McLaren encouraged us to reflect on what it means to be embarked on a quest for God. In this session, Lillian Daniel helps us reclaim religion, saying that spirituality is not enough. Lillian encourages us to root ourselves in the depths of the Christian tradition—its history and texts, beliefs, and practices.



FILL YOUR MEETING SPACE

with flowers—some cut and some rooted in pots. (Check first for any flower allergies). Play some music that might set a tongue-in-cheek tone such as “Give Me That Old Time Religion,” “For All the Saints,” or even, “In the Garden!”



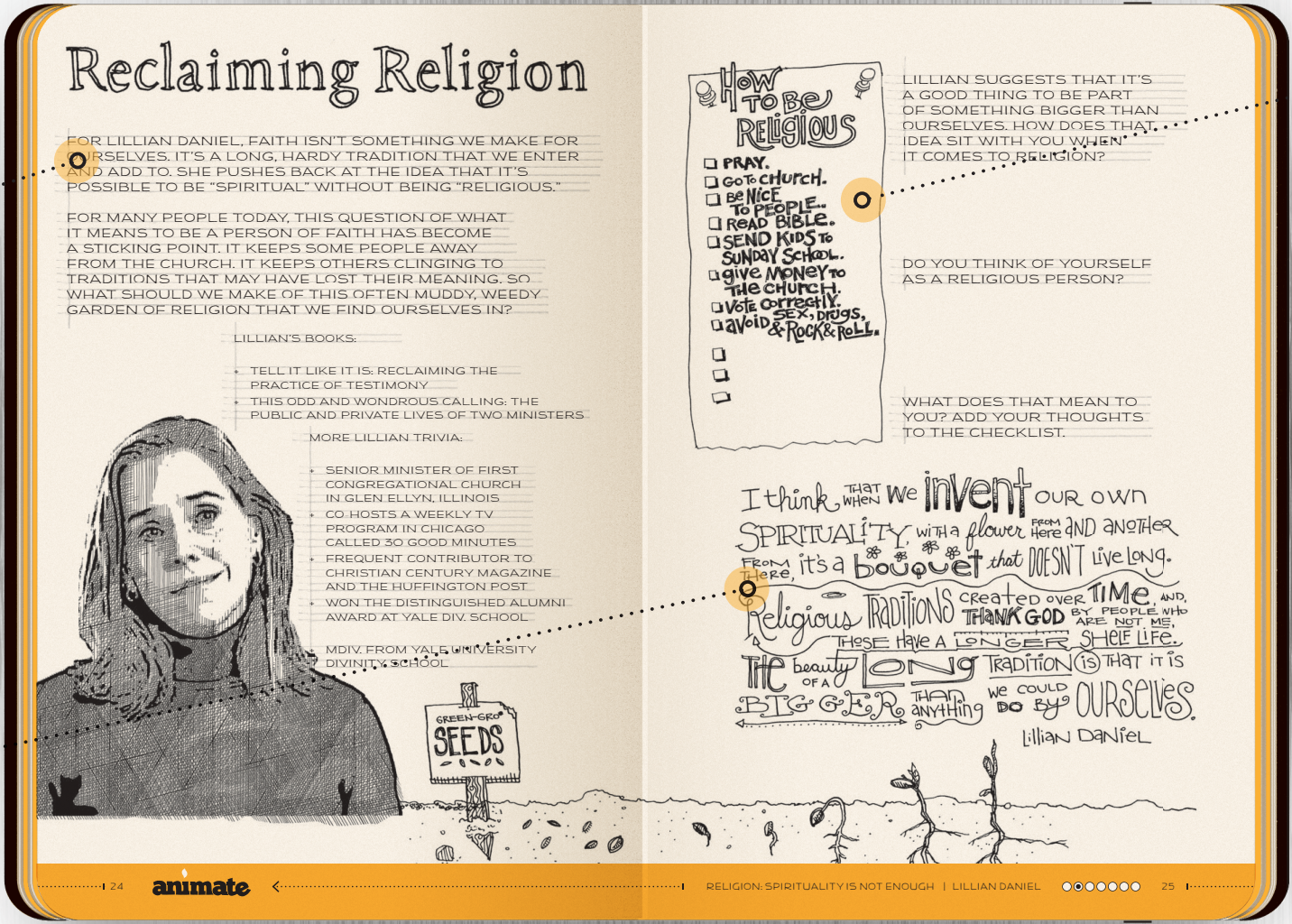
Read through Lillian’s bio together.

- What do you think of Lillian’s views on faith?
- Have you ever found yourself stuck trying to figure out what it means to be a person of faith? How did you move past it?
- Do you tend to cling to church traditions or stray away from the church? What calls you to be a part of this group?



Lillian is impatient with people who call themselves spiritual but not religious because in her opinion, being spiritual is not enough. Take a look at her flower metaphor together. Invite the group to circle, color, highlight, and doodle with the words that stand out for them. Take some time to unpack this significant idea together.

- Have you ever considered yourself spiritual but not religious? Why or why not?
- How have you rooted yourself in faith or vice versa?
- Circle the stage of plant growth in the Journal where you see yourself in this moment. Or draw an alternative stage of your own.
- Would you say you are growing or wilting? Why?



IN 2011, LILLIAN WROTE AN ONLINE DEVOTIONAL CALLED, “SPIRITUAL BUT NOT RELIGIOUS: STOP BORING ME.” THE PIECE WENT VIRAL. IT DREW STRONG AGREEMENT FROM SOME, VEHEMENT DISAGREEMENT FROM OTHERS. ([HTTP://WWW.UCC.ORG/FEED-YOUR-SPIRIT/DAILY-DEVOTIONAL/SPIRITUAL-BUT-NOT-RELIGIOUS.HTML](http://www.ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/daily-devotional/spiritual-but-not-religious.html))

- How to Be Religious
- ☐ PRAY.
 - ☐ GO TO CHURCH.
 - ☐ BE NICE TO PEOPLE.
 - ☐ READ BIBLE.
 - ☐ SEND KIDS TO SUNDAY SCHOOL.
 - ☐ GIVE MONEY TO THE CHURCH.
 - ☐ VOTE CORRECTLY.
 - ☐ AVOID SEX, DRUGS, & ROCK & ROLL.

LILLIAN SUGGESTS THAT IT’S A GOOD THING TO BE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER THAN OURSELVES. HOW DOES THAT IDEA SIT WITH YOU WHEN IT COMES TO RELIGION?

DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS A RELIGIOUS PERSON?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU? ADD YOUR THOUGHTS TO THE CHECKLIST.

I think ^{THAT} we ^{WHEN} invent OUR OWN SPIRITUALITY. WITH A flower FROM HERE AND ANOTHER FROM THERE, it’s a bouquet that DOESN’T live long. Religious TRADITIONS created over TIME, AND THANK GOD BY PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT ME, THESE HAVE A LONGER shelf life. THE beauty OF A LONG TRADITION (IS) THAT IT IS BIGGER THAN ANYTHING WE COULD DO BY OURSELVES. Lillian Daniel



Take time to free-associate with the word “religion.” Have someone record words people offer that describe religion. Invite people to offer their personal definitions of and experiences with religion. Work through the checklist and questions in the Journal together.

- If you do something “religiously,” what does that mean to you?
- How do you think colloquial use of the word “religious” affects the meaning of being a religious Christian?
- Why do you consider yourself “religious” or “not religious”?
- What would you add to the checklist?



CONSIDER THIS EXPANSION

to the group activity. Make a larger version of the checklist on a whiteboard or chart paper. See how many points the group can add. Coax them into honesty about this topic. Allow for snarky stereotypes to come out in addition to sincere thoughts. Invite them to study the group’s list and then write down several of their favorites on sticky notes. Have them post their selections together as kind of a top-ten list on “How to be Religious.”



LOOK UP THE DEFINITIONS

of “religion” and “spiritual” in a dictionary. Did you find what you expected? How do they relate to your personal definitions? Bring these thoughts to the discussion.

Want to dig deeper into the Latin roots of the word “religion”? Irmgard Busch, in her article “Religie,” asserts that the word “religion” could be derived from either the verbs religare or relegere. Religare means to bind together or to connect, while relegere is the action of considering or examining something repeatedly, observing something over and over again. Busch writes: “Religion, therefore, is a factor that creates cohesion and solidarity within groups and societies.” (Hedy d’Ancona et al., eds., Vrouwenlexicon: Tweehonderd jaar emancipatie van A tot Z (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 1989), 324-5).

Watch the video together.

- What seems most important about religion to Lillian?
- What would the kind of religion Lillian's talking about look like?
- What would it look like to be spiritual but not religious?
- What is it about organized religion that turns people off?
- What makes being spiritual but not religious attractive?

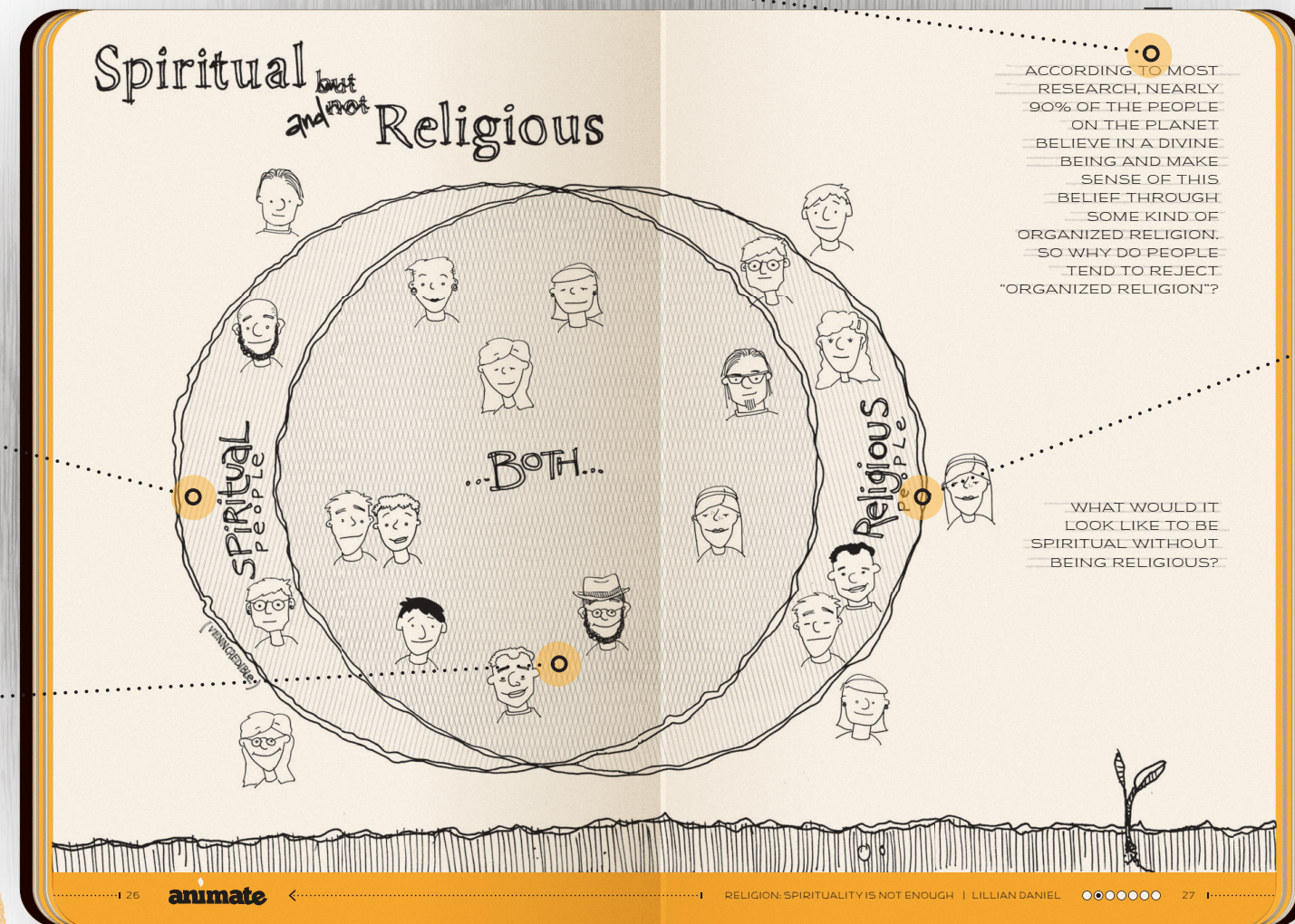
A 2009 NEWSWEEK POLL FOUND THAT 30% OF AMERICANS ARE "SPIRITUAL BUT NOT RELIGIOUS," WHILE 48% ARE "BOTH RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL." ([HTTP://WWW.THEDAILYBEAST.COM/NEWSWEEK/2009/04/06/ONE-NATION-UNDER-GOD.HTML](http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2009/04/06/one-nation-under-god.html))

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SPIRITUAL? WHEN A 1999 GALLUP SURVEY ASKED PEOPLE TO DEFINE "SPIRITUALITY," ALMOST A THIRD DEFINED IT WITHOUT REFERENCE TO GOD OR A HIGHER AUTHORITY: "A CALMNESS IN MY LIFE," "SOMETHING YOU REALLY PUT YOUR HEART INTO," OR "LIVING THE LIFE YOU FEEL IS PLEASING." ([HTTP://WWW.GALLUP.COM/POLL/7759/AMERICANS-SPIRITUAL-SEARCHES-TURN-INWARD.ASPX](http://www.gallup.com/poll/7759/americans-spiritual-searches-turn-inward.aspx))

Invite group members to draw where they really see themselves within the Venn diagram in the Journal.

- Do you consider yourself religious but not spiritual (what would that even look like?), spiritual and religious, or spiritual but not religious? Have an open conversation about where members in your group see themselves and why.
- Where would you put Jesus in this diagram?

After some initial thoughts, divvy up the following passages from the Gospel of Luke to deepen the group's conversation: Luke 9:1-6; Luke 11:1-4; Luke 11:37-44; Luke 13:22-30; Luke 14:1-6; Luke 17:11-19; Luke 18:9-17; Luke 21:1-6; Luke 24:13-35. Provide time for reading and reflection, and then have group members summarize their passage and indicate where they think it situates Jesus on the diagram.



ACCORDING TO MOST RESEARCH, NEARLY 90% OF THE PEOPLE ON THE PLANET BELIEVE IN A DIVINE BEING AND MAKE SENSE OF THIS BELIEF THROUGH SOME KIND OF ORGANIZED RELIGION. SO WHY DO PEOPLE TEND TO REJECT "ORGANIZED RELIGION"?

WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE TO BE SPIRITUAL WITHOUT BEING RELIGIOUS?



HOW IS YOUR GROUP RESPONDING to Lillian's video? She makes a strong argument against the individualization of religion. Does your group tend to agree or disagree? Make sure everyone feels welcome into the conversation—especially those who may feel like Lillian has criticized their point of view.

Divide your class into two groups. Assign one to be "Religious" and the other "Spiritual but Not Religious." Facilitate a lively debate between the two groups about which group is better. Afterward, talk about what's appealing about both sides of the argument.

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"ANYONE CAN FIND GOD ALONE ON A PICTURESQUE MOUNTAINTOP, THE HIKING TRAIL, OR THE SUNSET. THE MIRACLE IS THAT I CAN FIND GOD IN THE COMPANY OF OTHER PEOPLE WHO ARE JUST AS ANNOYING AS I AM." – LILLIAN DANIEL

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AMONG CRITICS OF ORGANIZED RELIGION, THERE IS NONE MORE VEHEMENT THAN CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS. IN A 2007 TALK ON FREE SPEECH, HITCHENS CONTENDED THAT ORGANIZED RELIGION IS "THE MAIN SOURCE OF HATRED IN THE WORLD." HE ADDED, "I THINK [RELIGION] SHOULD BE ... TREATED WITH RIDICULE AND HATRED AND CONTEMPT." ([HTTP://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=Y30TS5GS00E#FEATURE=RELMFU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y30TS5GS00E#feature=relmfu))

There is a Spiritual But Not Religious website at sbnr.org. The mission statement is: "SBNR.org serves the global population of individuals who walk a spiritual path outside traditional religion. This is your home for open source spirituality." You can read more about this topic in an article by Robert C. Fuller, a Religious Studies Prof. at Bradley University, called, "Spiritual but Not Religious," (<http://www.beliefnet.com/Entertainment/Books/2002/07/Spiritual-But-Not-Religious.aspx>)

Christopher Hitchens's most organized case against religion is his book, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2007).



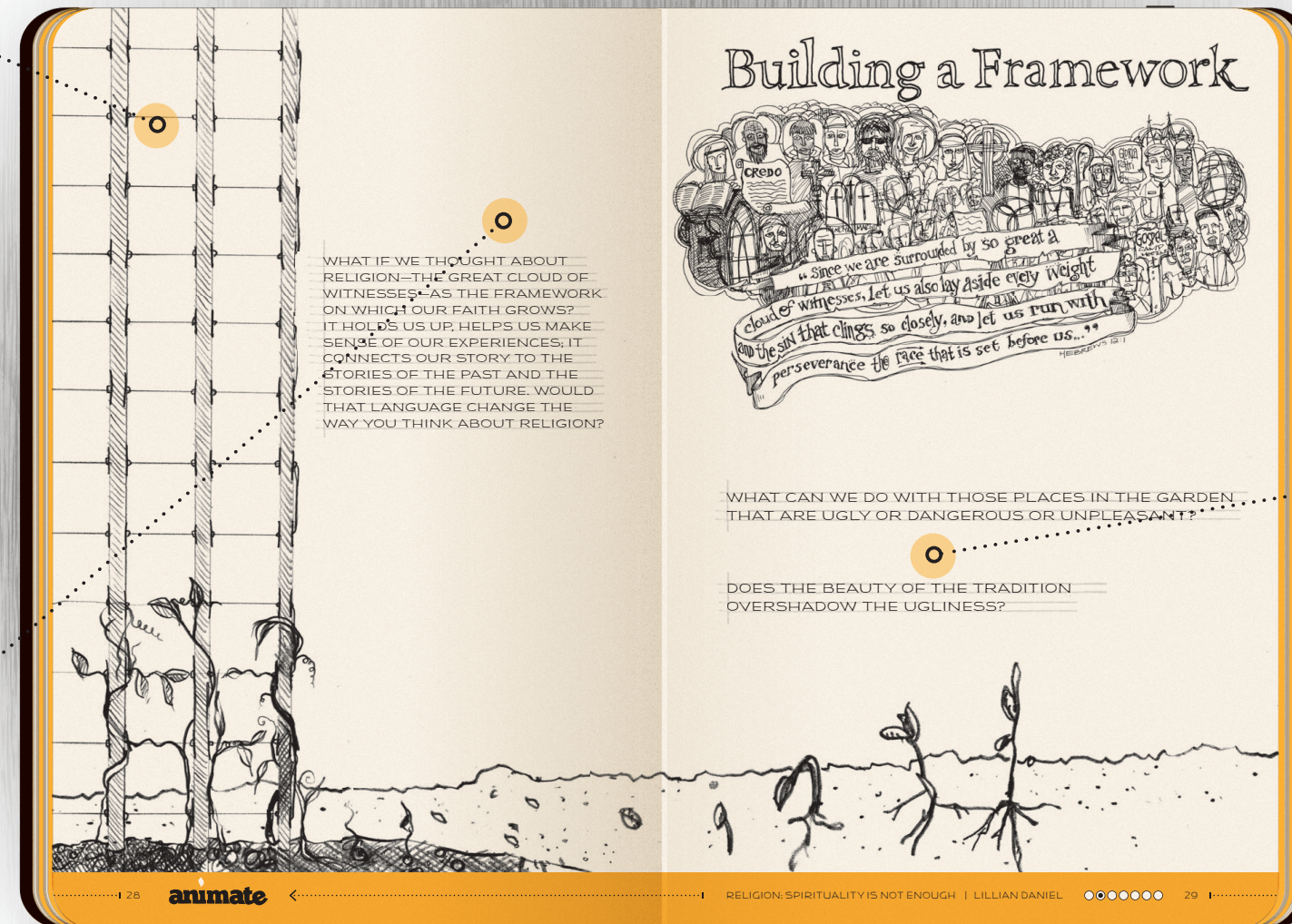
Read the quote in the middle of the page together. Hebrews 12:1-2 pictures the "great cloud of witnesses"—faithful folk whose faithful example supports us in our journey. Invite group members to share about someone who has influenced and inspired their faith. Some will be famous saints (Mother Teresa, MLK, St. Francis, et al.), but some will be everyday people. Have them add those people to the trellis. Then talk about the questions in the Journal together.



"I FINALLY FOUND SOME AMAZING [CHURCHES] THAT I COULD CALL HOME. AND THOSE PLACES DIDN'T JUST MEET MY NEEDS. I LIKE TO THINK THAT THEY CHANGED MY NEEDS—THAT THESE COMMUNITIES OF FAITH SHAPED ME AND CHALLENGED ME AND HELPED ME TO GROW CLOSER TO GOD."



If you are meeting in a church building, consider walking the hallways and sanctuary, noticing portraits on the walls, considering the people who have come before in that community, actually imagining "the great cloud of witnesses" in that church. If you are not meeting in a church, do the imaginative journey together, considering those who have gone before and what they've contributed to the faith life of your community. Do their voices affirm religious adherence, spiritual enrichment, both?



"IT'S PRETTY EASY TO PLAY BY THE RULES OF A RELIGION IN WHICH YOU WRITE YOUR OWN SCRIPT. MUCH HARDER TO FIND MEANING IN THE WORDS OF A BOOK THAT WE DID NOT WRITE FOR OURSELVES, FROM A VERY DIFFERENT TIME." — LILLIAN DANIEL



Lillian reminds us that the Bible pushes Christians out of narcissistic self-interest. Open Bibles in your group to Matthew 5:21-48 and read the "antitheses," the places where Jesus challenges us to go beyond normal expectations.

- What are the challenges in these verses?
- What impact does Jesus' high demand have on you?
- What impact has Jesus' high demand had on the world?
- How would your religious practices change if they were built on these words?



HAVE THE GROUP REVISIT

the plant growth stages at the bottom of this spread. Unpack the imagery: what's the soil, the trellis, the seed? Who or what is needed for growth? What's missing? Invite them to draw what they envision to be their next stage of faith development. Do they see their growth happening with or without the support of the trellis?

JESUS ONCE SAID, "ANYONE WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER IS MY MOTHER OR BROTHER OR SISTER." (MARK 3:31-35) MAYBE THAT'S WHY THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS CALLED ONE ANOTHER "BROTHER" AND "SISTER." THEY RELIED ON ONE ANOTHER AS COMMUNITY BECAUSE BY BECOMING CHRISTIANS MANY EXPERIENCED THE REJECTION OF THEIR FAMILIES.

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“TIRED OF DECORATING OUR LIVES WITH BOUQUETS OF OUR OWN CHOOSING, WE’RE READY TO GO DEEPER, AND EVEN READY TO PUT IN THE WORK IT REQUIRES. BECAUSE BEING PART OF A RELIGIOUS TRADITION TAKES WORK.” – LILLIAN DANIEL

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Some of the flowers pictured in the Journal have deep roots in the earth. Others are attached to chopsticks, like Lillian’s mother’s flowers. Invite the group to write in some parts of their personal religion that they feel are deeply rooted and some that may seem beautiful but might not be as strong.

- What did you discover as you reflected on your own religious experience?
- How have you put work into your religious beliefs and practices?
- What have you maybe glossed over or spent less time with that you might focus on in the future?
- If you disagree with Lillian, how might you be able to develop a religion “of [y]our own choosing” that is challenging and meaningful?

ON MANY OCCASIONS THE NEW TESTAMENT DESCRIBES “STAGES” OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH; FOR EXAMPLE, IN JAMES 1:19-27, GALATIANS 5:13-25; 2 PETER 1:3-8, AND ROMANS 12.



GROUPS WILL VARY WIDELY ON THIS TOPIC.

Be prepared to listen well so that you can animate the conversation in helpful ways. If you have many who are born-and-bred traditional Christians, the conversation will look much different than if your group is made up of people who have recently found their way to a church group.



Seeding the Soil

WHAT'S BEEN VALUABLE IN YOUR TRADITION?

WHAT HAVE YOU GATHERED FROM OTHER TRADITIONS THAT HAVE MADE YOUR FAITH MORE MEANINGFUL?

ADD SOME "PLANTS" TO YOUR GARDEN—THE YOGA RETREAT, YOUR GRANDPA'S JUDAISM, SOME WEIRD BOOK THAT'S SPIRITUAL BUT NOT RELIGIOUS—THINGS THAT HAVE SHAPED YOUR RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR OWN tradition? Facilitating this conversation may require some research on your part. What are the valuable fruits and blossoms of your own tradition that could be lifted up for the group? Denominational web sites are a great places to learn what your tradition believes and how it lives out faith today.

One appeal of personal spirituality is the prospect of collecting from various religions. Invite group members to use smartphones or other devices to find some practices from other religions that appeal to them—Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, etc. Have them write the practices they notice in their Journals.

- What practices from other religions appeal to you and why?
- What have you gathered from other traditions that have made your faith more meaningful?
- Why do you think some people are resistant to incorporating practices from other religions?

SAINT AUGUSTINE WAS GLAD TO BORROW CONCEPTS FROM PAGAN CULTURE IN ORDER TO BETTER UNDERSTAND GOD AND THE GOSPEL. HE CALLED THE GEMS OF PLATONISM “EGYPT’S GOLD,” REFERRING TO THE WAY ISRAEL ESCAPED EGYPT WITH GOLD PLUNDERED FROM THEIR CAPTORS.

THE “HISTORY OF RELIGIONS” SCHOOL OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY WAS AN APPROACH TO CHRISTIANITY THAT TRACED ITS BASIC BELIEFS AND RITUALS TO PAGAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS FROM THE SURROUNDING CULTURES. FOR EXAMPLE, BAPTISM AS A RITUAL OF DYING AND RISING HAS PARALLELS IN THE RITUALS OF ANCIENT MITHRAISM. SOME CHRISTIANS FEEL THREATENED BY THIS IDEA THAT THEIR FAITH MAY HAVE SIMILARITIES TO OTHER BELIEF SYSTEMS. OTHERS SEE THIS EVIDENCE OF GOD’S MORE INCLUSIVE LOVE FOR THE WORLD.

Saint Augustine was a fourth-century saint from North Africa. His allusion to the value of Plato’s philosophy as a framework for Christian doctrine is from On Christian Doctrine 40.60.

Lillian found her own flourish by tapping into the time-honored tradition of Christianity.

- What are the advantages of having a long history of faith?
- What advantage might come from having ancestors in faith who lived 2,000 years ago? What challenges does that present?
- Have you found a place in a garden bigger than your own?
- What would draw you to place deeper roots in the Christian religious tradition?

JESUS' FAMOUS "PARABLE OF THE SOWER" and other Kingdom parables in Matthew 13:1-43 could offer some great support to any conversation about putting down roots.

Hosea 14 is a call for people to return to God. Read this beautiful passage of fresh blooming together. What's surprisingly absent in many conversations about the relative value of spirituality versus religion is, ironically, God!

- Where is God in Hosea 14?
- What's God doing?
- What are the qualities of God?
- What insights does this text offer related to God's role in our "blooming" today?



THE PHILOSOPHER GEORGE SANTAYANA FAMOUSLY SAID, "THOSE WHO CANNOT REMEMBER THE PAST ARE DOOMED TO REPEAT IT." (LIFE OF REASON I) PARAPHRASE: WE LEARN HISTORY IN ORDER TO AVOID ITS MISTAKES. WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THAT IS A VERY NEGATIVE VIEW OF HISTORY. HOW OFTEN DOES AN EMPHASIS ON PAST MISTAKES KEEP US FROM SEEING THE VALUE OF ORGANIZED RELIGION?

Look up 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 and Romans 12:3-8.

- How does Paul picture the church?
- What part of the "body of Christ" are you?
- In the Journal, list three unique gifts you bring to the group.
- How could we use all of our gifts to create a strong religious community?
- How much more challenging would it be to create a community on your own with only your gifts?

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"THE BEAUTY OF A LONG TRADITION IS THAT IT IS BIGGER THAN ANYTHING WE COULD DO BY OURSELVES. THESE DAYS IT IS SOMEWHAT COUNTERCULTURAL TO SUGGEST THAT ONE MIGHT POSSIBLY BENEFIT FROM THE COMPANY OF OTHERS IN THE LIFE OF FAITH. PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US IN FAITH ... I WANTED MORE THAN JUST AN INTELLECTUAL EPIPHANY ... SOMETHING WITH A LONGER SHELF LIFE THAN MY OWN LATEST OPINION." - LILLIAN DANIEL

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Animated conversations bubble over, so don't be surprised if you've lost track of time. How will you extend your conversation between sessions? Consider assigning research projects, creating social media pages, or identifying ways your group can help each other bloom and bear fruit for God in that space between the spiritual and the religious.