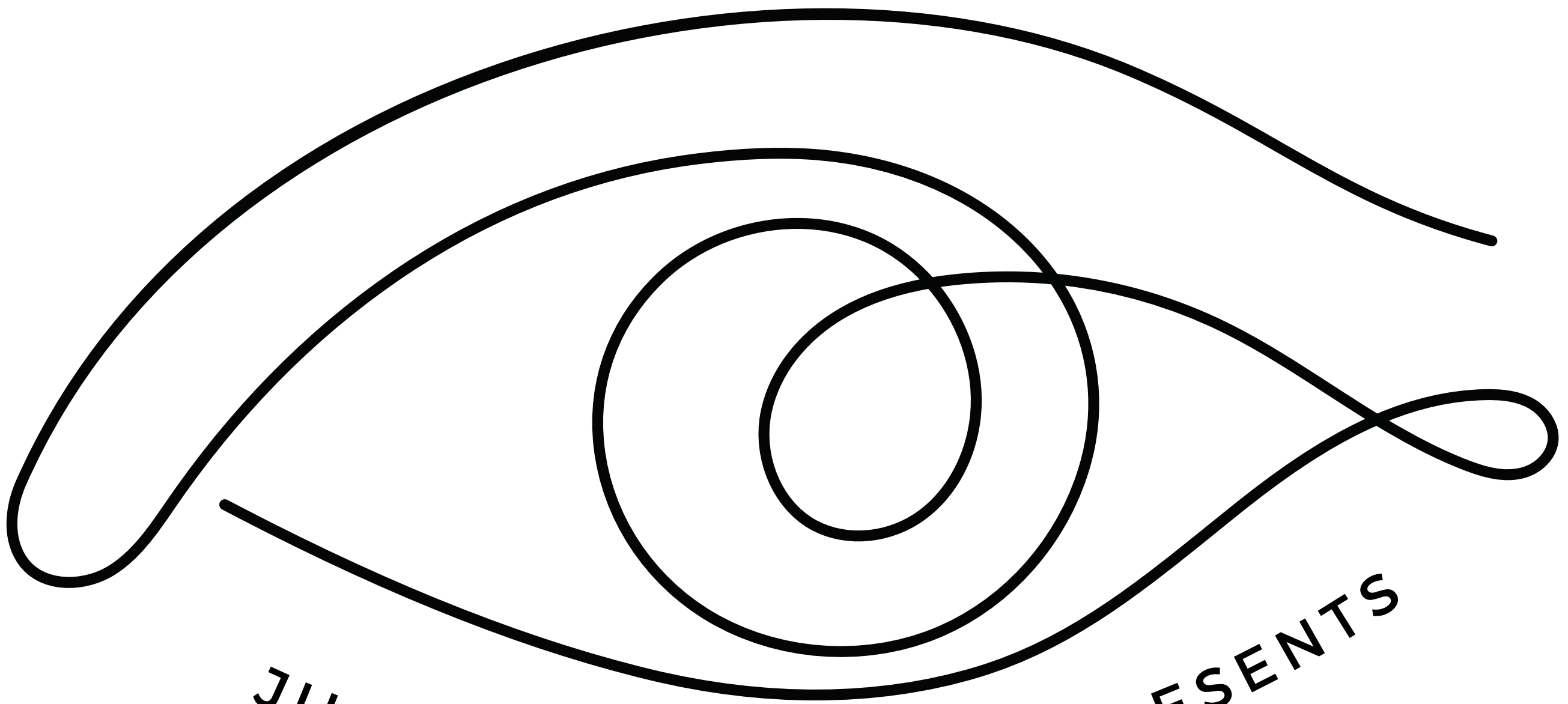

SAMPLE

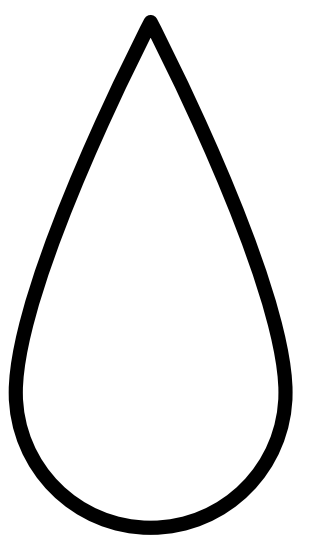
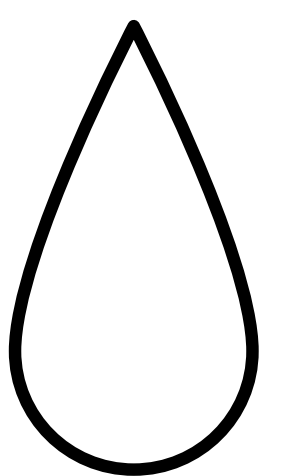
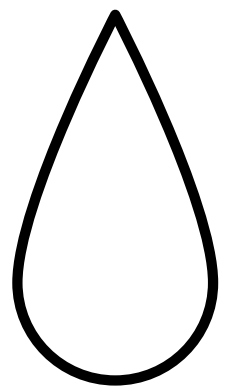
A group study. A start to sermon preparation. A personal devotion.



JUST BRAVE ENOUGH PRESENTS

IN THE TIME OF JUDGES:

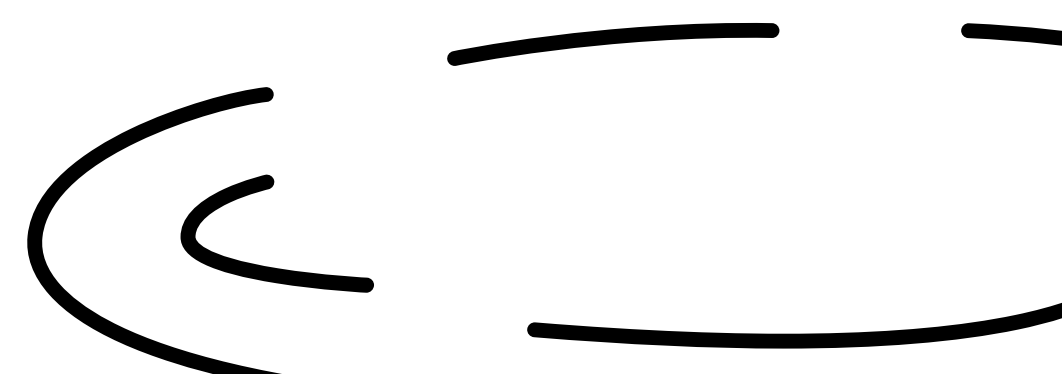
bearing
witness to
violence



Women from the book of Judges




JUSTBRAVEENOUGH.COM



Just Brave Enough is a project of Called to Nourish LLC. We are a collective of women in ministry who feel called to create resources for worshipping communities. Though we have different gifts, we are of the same Spirit, collaborating through all aspects of the content. Our Mission is to encourage ourselves and others as we engage with scripture by highlighting women's stories. Our hope is that by hearing their stories you will be encouraged to share your own story. All content is written by humans, not AI.

This work is the collaboration of the creators, Becca Bateman, Laura Franks Benton, Jessica Dixon-Ebner, and Yena K. Hwang of Just Brave Enough. We have worked in a variety of church settings, and created these resources with churches in mind. We know your context and needs are unique; if there is something we can help you brainstorm or modify, let us know. Additionally, we are available for retreats and speaking engagements. Contact us at justbraveenough5@gmail.com. This guide was crafted and published in Fall 2024.

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JUSTBRAVEENOUGH 

Called to Nourish LLC
217 Benton Woods Drive, Matthews, NC 28105

**IN THE TIME
OF JUDGES:**
bearing
witness to
violence

Women from the book of Judges





Women of the book of Judges

Deborah

Judges 4:1-16 (5:1-22)

by Becca Bateman and Laura Franks Benton

Jael

Judges 4:17-23 (5:1-22)

by Laura Franks Benton

The Women of Samson's Story: His Mother and Delilah

Judges 13; 16:4-22

by Jessica Dixon-Ebner

The Mother of Micah

Judges 17

by Becca Bateman

Judges 19 Woman

Judges 19

by Yena K. Hwang

**Liturgy set includes
Lord's Supper Liturgy**

**Study Guide set includes
Prayer of Confession Activity**

Blessing of the Judges 19 Woman in Our Midst



DISCLAIMER

The story of the Hebrew people does not have a happy ending in Judges; redemption comes later. It must be noted that the society portrayed in Judges was characterized by violence both in warfare and against individuals as the Hebrew people are lost to the will of God. In the scripture, the violence increases to horrifying levels. The narratives and themes likewise do not shy away from this reality. Particular care should be taken with the Judges 19 woman at the end of the study. We have included these hard stories because they are included in our scripture. We encourage you to take care as you work through the narratives and curriculum.



ABOUT THE NARRATIVES

Thank you for your purchase of *In the Time of Judges: The Women Who Bear Witness to Violence*, part of the *Just Brave Enough* series. This is a collection of narratives that will engage participants through the Biblical book of Judges by highlighting some female roles. These narratives may be used for a group study, a start to sermon preparation, or for personal devotion.

Each narrative tells the story of one of the diverse women of Judges. Some were wives or mothers. Two influenced battles. Half are named. All witnessed or participated in some sort of violence. We aim to explore why these stories were included in the sacred scriptures. Their stories are overshadowed by men and may not have as much detail or dialogue attributed to them. At the same time, it is interesting what dialogue and details are attributed to them! In each narrative, members of the *Just Brave Enough* team present first person narratives written with holy imagination where Scripture provides scant details. These narratives, which participants can read or listen to, aim to paint a richer picture of each woman by drawing on cultural, historical, and contextual sources.

Why Judges?

The women in Genesis and Exodus “mother” and build up Israel, while the women in Judges play a different role. Many are neither Hebrew people nor mothers. They embody the breakdown of Hebrew society after Joshua's death and before the founding of the nation of Israel.

Moving from Genesis to Judges next for a study seemed natural for our *Just Brave Enough* team, not simply because it follows the scripture, but because both describe Israel's formation from different perspectives. Genesis focuses on Abraham's family and Jacob's twelve children, who become the twelve tribes of Israel. Judges begins with these tribes as a loose confederation united for military purposes, emphasizing a central identity that other people groups could join by covenant.



ABOUT THE NARRATIVES (CONTINUED)

The phrase, “In those days Israel had no king and everyone did what was right in their own eyes,” repeated throughout Judges, highlights this chaotic and lawless period. Our study aims to show how the already precarious status of women in Israel became even more fragile. Despite this, they were incredibly brave, occasionally assuming leadership roles particularly when men failed to take responsibility, leading to unexpected outcomes. We aim to explore why these stories were included in the sacred scriptures.

Studying Judges involves archaeological findings, historical geography, and the harsh realities of ancient warfare. What really drew us in was considering the storyteller’s motivation to reimagine a shared narrative and identity for these tribes.

**The Just Brave Enough Team,
Becca, Laura, Jessica, Yena**



ABOUT THE LITURGY

Thank you for your purchase of In the Time of Judges: The Women Who Bear Witness to Violence liturgy guide. This is a 6-week worship series for congregations of all sizes that will engage worshippers to hear and learn from the women in the Book of Judges.

Each liturgy includes:

Call to Worship
Call to Confession
Prayer of Confession
Promise of Forgiveness
Time With Children
Prayer for Illumination
Scripture
Sermon Notes
Affirmation of Faith
Call to the Offering
Prayer for the Offering
Prayers of the People
Blessing and Sending
Hymn Ideas

There is also a single Lord's Supper liturgy that can be used along with any of the weeks of the Liturgy series.

In this series, the Time with Children in worship will use a mindfulness exercise through storytelling and guided imagery. This tool can help children connect their minds and bodies, providing a strategy they can use independently or with the help of a grownup to manage their feelings and build resilience. Practicing mindfulness can help us stay calm and grounded in difficult moments and trust that when we face challenges that we are never alone- this builds a faith more confident in God's love and guidance.



ABOUT THE LITURGY (CONTINUED)

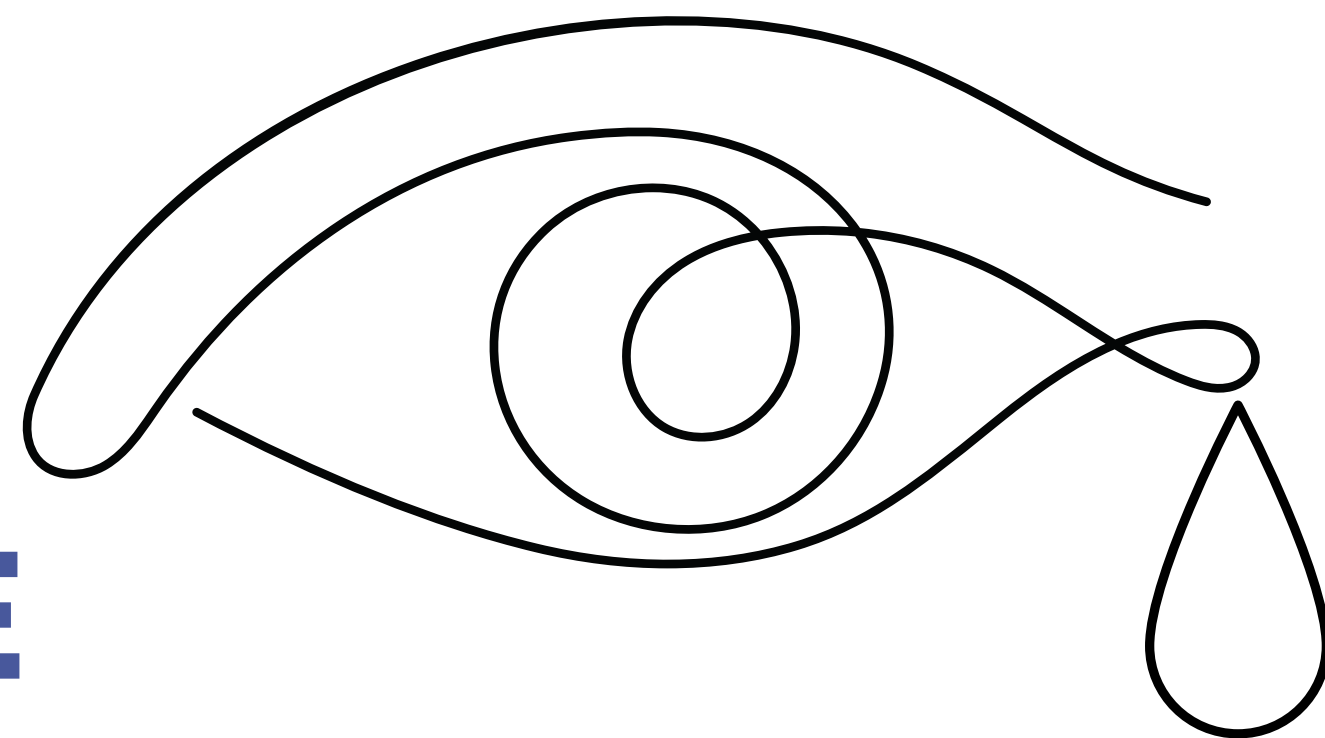
Talking openly about the hard accounts of scripture and history teaches children the importance of tolerance, respect, and inclusion, emphasizing that every person deserves respect, no matter their race, religion, age, wealth, or any other factor. It also highlights the dangers of hateful words which can transcend time and resurface later.

Providing accurate information in a safe environment helps prevent misconceptions and reduces anxiety. Children feel supported when they know the truth, told at their developmental level. Understanding these events helps prevent recurrence, and fosters resilience and commitment to a world where such horrors are never repeated.

We hope this liturgy work will speak to the community you serve and help in sharing the stories of these women through worship.

**The Just Brave Enough Team,
Becca, Laura, Jessica, Yena**

STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY GUIDE



Centering Prayer of Confession

The book of Judges has the repeated phrase, “Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.” The acknowledgment and the will to change become a prayer of confession. Confession is practiced in various ways in different faith traditions. The writers of this study come from the Reformed faith tradition. For Reformed Christians, confession is rooted in the recognition of human fallibility and the need for God's grace. This discipline invites believers to come before God with honesty and humility, acknowledging their sins and shortcomings. Confession is not merely an admission of guilt, but a transformative act that leads to repentance and reconciliation with God. It is a reminder of God's boundless mercy and forgiveness, fostering a deeper relationship with God. A prayer of confession can be corporate or individual. By regularly engaging in a prayer of confession, individuals experience the liberating power of grace, allowing us to live more fully in alignment with God's will and purpose for our lives. This practice has an emphasis on the continual need for spiritual renewal and the centrality of grace in a believer's journey of faith.

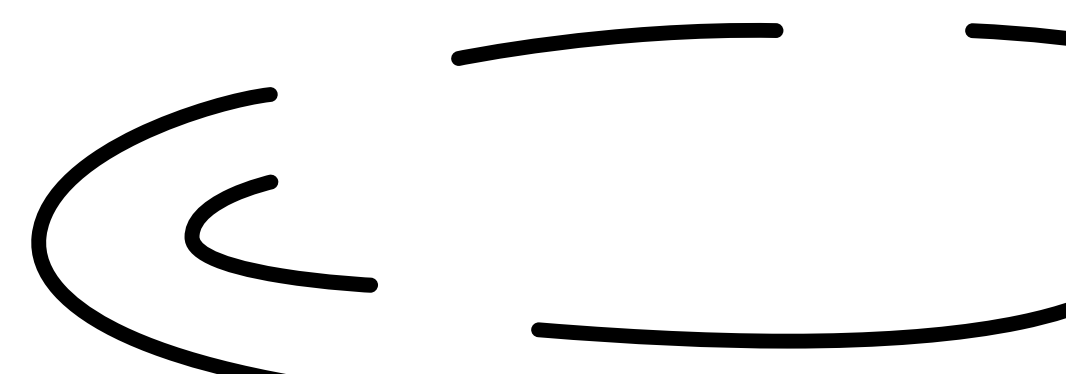
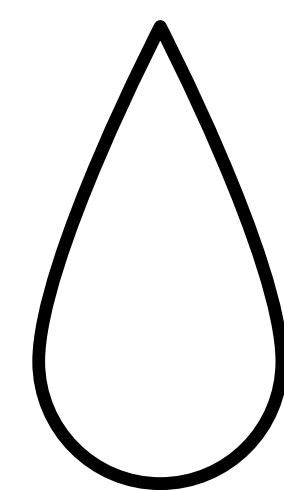
At the beginning and end of this study, participants will be invited to write their own prayers of confession, and since some prayers are hard to put together, we have provided a template to endlessly modify as desired. Light a candle. As the candle flickers, take a moment to pause, reflect and acknowledge. Ask God to bless this time of study and sharing.

Gather

We invite participants to take time at the beginning so as to draw closer into shared experiences and emotions. You will notice that the questions invite you to consider our overarching theme of bearing witness.

Read

It is intentional to begin by reading the scripture story first then to listen or read the narrative of the character being highlighted.



STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY GUIDE (CONTINUED)

Consider

After you have spent some time with the scripture story and the narrative, this section will include a few background details that might further inform your discussion. This is the place where we note specific connections between the women that might not be evident in a first read of the scripture.

Meditate

After self reflection, this part invites each present to enjoy hearing from one another in finding out what stood out and what parts were challenging. Let the questions encourage and guide conversation. We have more here than you can use, choose which ones you wish.

Closing Personal Prayer

The practice of writing a prayer of confession has an emphasis on the continual need for spiritual renewal and the centrality of grace in the believer's journey of faith. At the beginning and the end of this study, participants are invited to write their own prayers of confession. Since sometimes prayers are hard to put together, we have provided a template. See how your confessions change as you journey through this study. In each session there is a repetition of a centering prayer by lighting a candle, taking a moment to pause and reflect and then a blessing along with extinguishing the candle and ending the session.

Practice

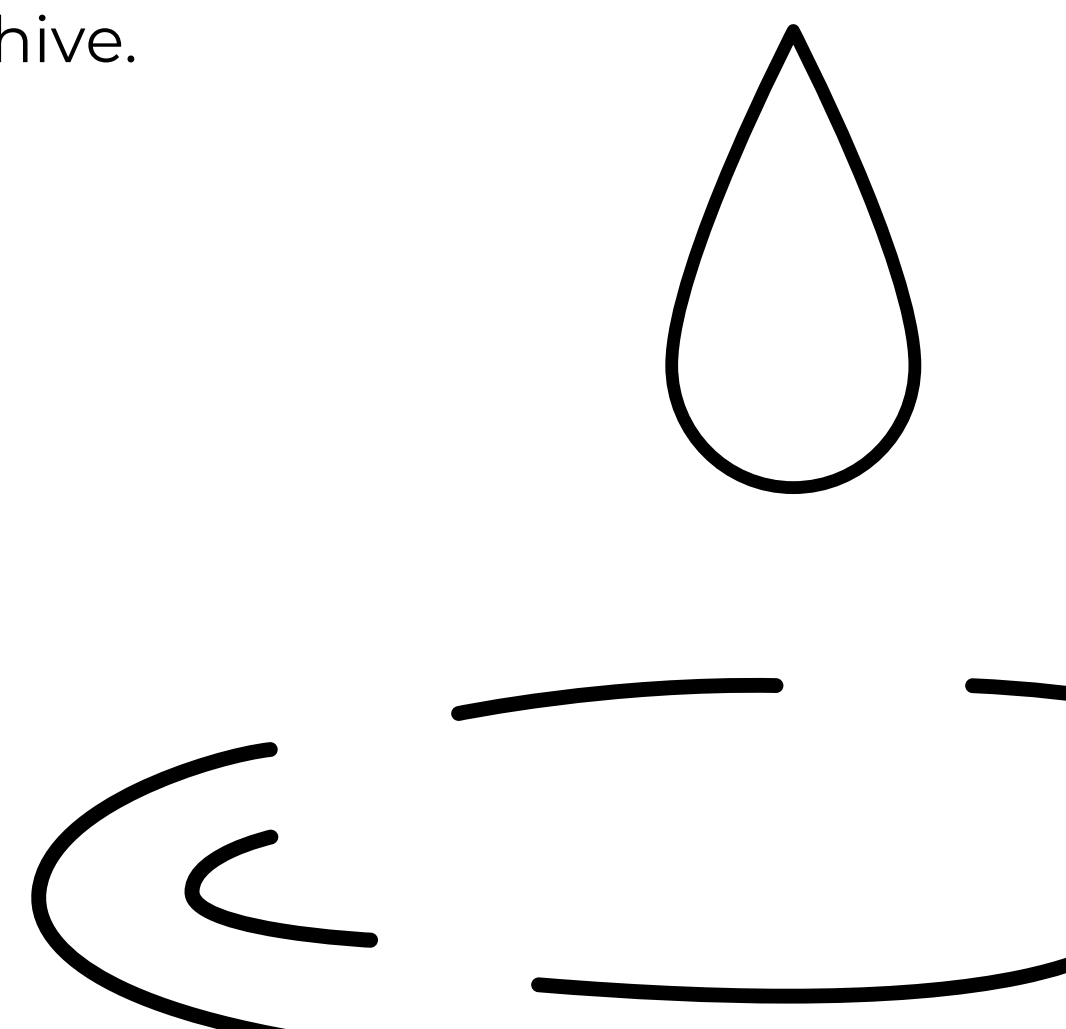
These practices are intended to go beyond the page and into the context of our daily lives. Consider keeping a journal for this study. We invite you each week to consider a certain prompt for further reflection.

For Further Exploration

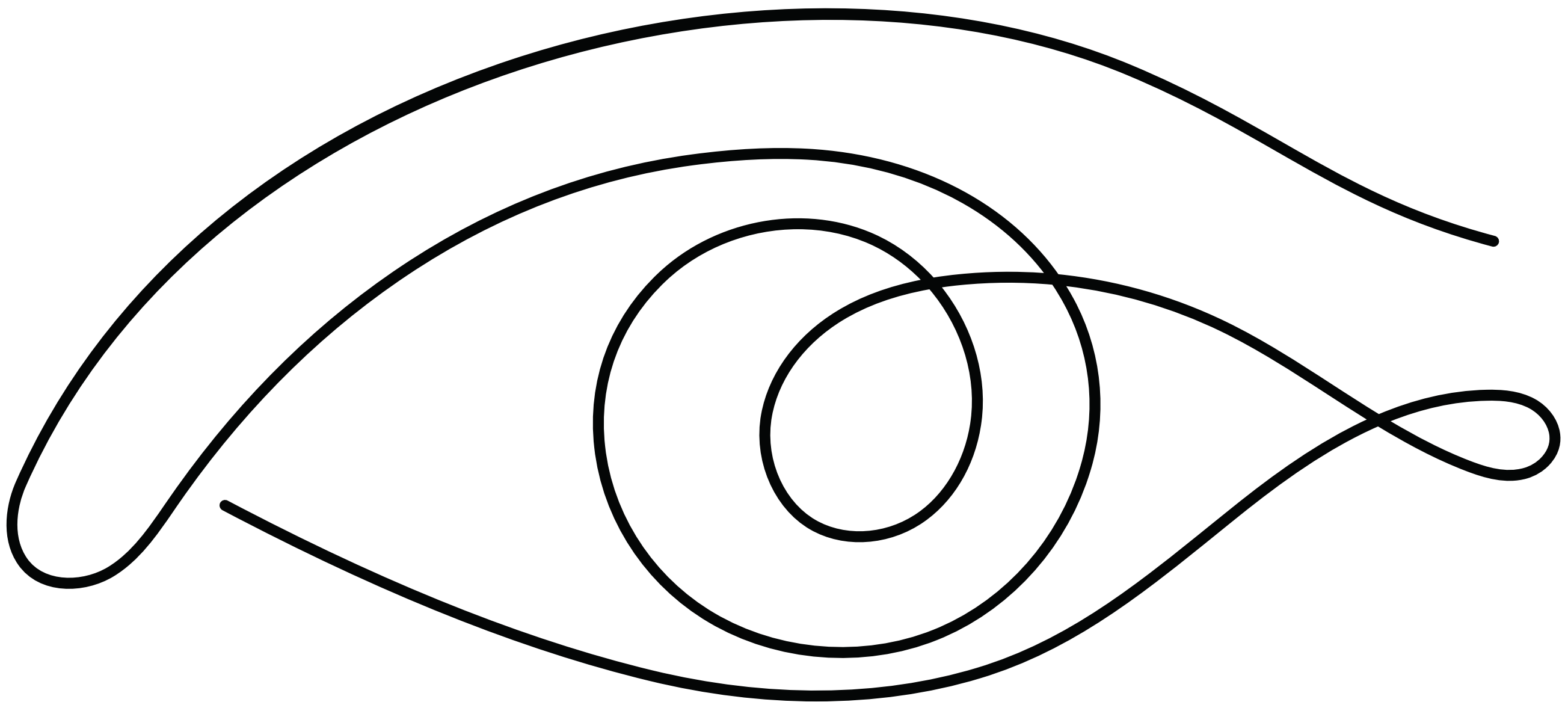
Here we list resources for further exploration beyond the content covered. If you are a lay leader presenting this curriculum, see if your pastor or church library have access to some of these resources. Our goal here (and our goal for Just Brave Enough) is to provide additional voices. Three sources we consistently consulted were *Judges in The Hebrew Bible: Translation and Commentary* by Robert Alter, and the online resources, The Bible Project and Jewish Women's Archive.

Let us know your thoughts and questions!

Connect with us at JustBraveEnough5@gmail.com

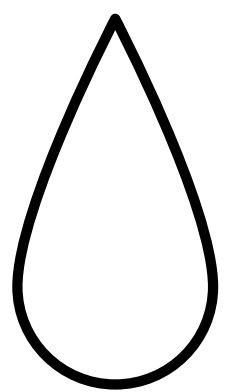


BLESSING

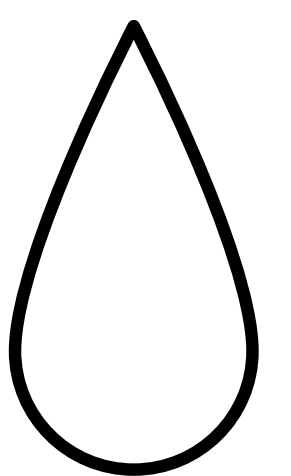


May you...

find the courage and strength to share your own stories, dear people of faith.

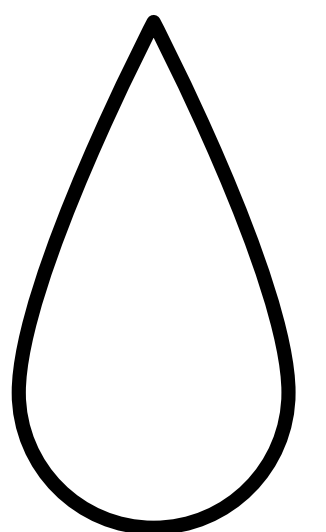


May your voice be heard, echoing with voices across time and space to inspire countless others.



May your vulnerability lead to healing, care lead to support, and openness lead to growth.

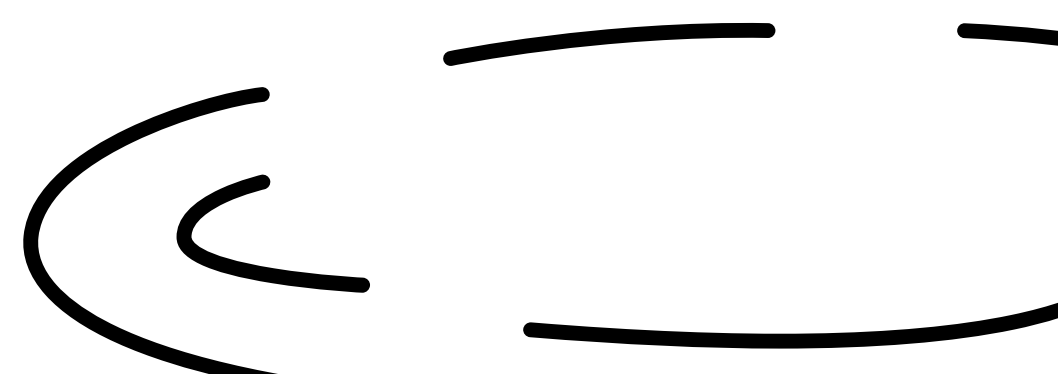
May you feel compelled as you listen, so that you may also become just brave enough.



Amen.



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