

Noven

by Edna King and Zoë Pappas

Brought to you by Metropolis of Atlanta's Family Life Ministry & Leadership 100

An Interactive Book
for the Modern Teenage Girl
on Orthodox Christianity

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE BOOK

"Woman has her mode of being, her own form of existence, the gift of weaving her entire being through her special relationship to God, others, and self."

– Paul Evdokimov in The Sacrament of Love

Woven is an Orthodox workbook and seminar designed to help modern girls see themselves as beloved by God, created in His image, and intended by God to reflect His love to others.

implementation

Woven will foster encouraging positive relationships between teen girls so they will have a positive impact on each other through the challenges our girls face as they grow up in this world. It includes stories, skits, craft projects, and short quizzes to engage the girls as they delve into important spiritual topics.

Woven could be implemented as a weekend retreat or could be taught on successive weeknights in a home or quiet room in the church. A private setting where the group won't be interrupted or disturbed by boys is desired. Each session should take about two hours. Woven could also be easily adapted for use by a mom with her daughters at home.

things to be aware of...

- Family Life Ministry recommends that three women teach Woven together when it's taught in a group setting. It would be best if these women were at different ages and stages of life. The parish priest should appoint these women.
- Try not to let girls overshare—this is not a class for telling too many personal stories or dominating in other ways. Don't let one girl overshadow the others with too much drama.
- On the other hand- notice the girl who doesn't share at all. Help the quiet girl in the corner feel comfortable but not spotlighted. All the topics in this book are about all of us in some way or another.
- Be an example of Christ's love to all the girls. The group leaders are modeling Christ's love to all the girls as they teach Woven. Keep a level of authority, but balance that with compassion and grace.
- Be sure to have your priest's approval before using Woven in a church setting and keep him apprised of how the classes are going.

getting ready

a month or more in advance

Meet with your priest and the other instructors decide how to promote Woven and register girls for the class. You may want to include girls from other parishes or just keep a close knit group from your own church. Make sure your priest and all instructors are aware of topics and delegate responsibilities for craft supplies and other organizational tasks. Choose a space for the class.

Read Woven and this Facilitator's Guide so you are familiar with all materials and won't have surprises while teaching. At least one instructor should make a sample of each craft so you are confident when showing the girls how to do them. That instructor could also purchase the materials for the craft they are in charge of. Commit to pray for the girls and for the class. Start promoting Woven and registering girls.

a week in advance

Prepare the space before the first class by being sure it's the right size, temperature, and quiet enough. Think about lighting and attractiveness. Send an e-mail to remind the girls about the class and welcome them. Be sure to introduce yourself or tell a little bit about each facilitator to help the girls feel comfortable with you before that first day.

In addition to supplies for each craft, large easel paper (preferably self-sticking like Post It pads) and colorful markers are recommended for making class lists and posters. Whiteboards could also be fine, but the easel pad posters are better because they can be used as review for the previous week's topics and to create a class atmosphere. The crafts are intended to foster group participation and unity, a reminder that we are creative because God is creative, and to give the girls a physical item to bring home to keep them mindful of the things we're learning in Woven.

Having the materials ready and organized will make the class time flow smoothly and lessen frustration for everyone. Some of the girls can help you in advance so they feel ownership of the crafts, too.

A projector could be used with a computer or cellphone to show memes from the Woven website to enhance learning, but is not required. We recommend that phones be turned off (or collected if needed) during each session. Each girl should bring their own Bible, but the instructors should have a few Bibles on hand in case someone forgets. Every girl also needs their own copy of Woven. Provide colorful pens for the girls to use for writing in class. Plan to provide or ask the girls to each bring snacks for a break within each session.

Welcome the girls with a teacher made poster. On a poster or chart paper, write this quote from The Sacrament of Love:

“Woman has her mode of being, her own form of existence, the gift of weaving her entire being though her special relationship to God, others and self.”

— Paul Evdokimov

Display it prominently in the room. Make sure it's pretty! As the class progresses, add more quotes on other posters. Let the girls write them and post them in the room. On the last day, the girls can each take one or more of these posters home.

on the days between class

Take the time to re-read that week's chapter. Pray for the class. Have all supplies ready in advance so you don't have a last minute rush because that will lessen your positive impact on the girls. The first day of class, be sure to learn every girl's name and use them. Get to know things about them during the ice breaker and be sure to interact with each girl each session. Don't let the easiest ones or the hardest ones monopolize you. They all need you.



session overviews

Session 1

Session 1 focuses on finding our identity through the fact that we were created to become like God and how we live that by participating in His grace through our spiritual gifts.

Session 2

Session 2 is about understanding our emotions and how to better understand the messages our emotions give us so we can react in healthy ways instead of destructive ways.

Session 3

Session 3 explores authenticity in our understanding of ourselves. Through social media and our appearance, we present ourselves to others and to ourselves in many ways that are designed to be someone we're not. Knowing that God created us to be a joy to Himself and to others can help us start to become delightful.

Session 4

Session 4 is about developing healthy friendships with other girls and exploring the kinds of all too common behaviors that get in the way of those friendships so we can change our habits and break unhealthy cycles.

Session 5

Session 5 explores our desire for romance and love. Modern society has given many of us unrealistic and unhealthy views on this and this session helps us untangle those views and to reinforce the smart, healthy choices that the church has always taught.

Session 6

Session 6 is entitled "Come as You Are" because Woven wraps up with a reminder that God is there for us, accepting us and loving us, knocking at our door. There is also an opportunity to review all the chapters.

chapter one: opening

Chapter 1 of Woven focuses on our purpose as created by God to become like Him. It includes a fun quiz to help girls discover their spiritual gifts and a craft activity – making Saint Brigid crosses. The session should take between 1 ½ hours and 2 hours- depending on how much discussion occurs in your class.

supplies provided by the instructor

- ball of yarn
- markers, easel paper or whiteboard
- straw (dried wheat stalks with the ends cut off- use the ends farther from the grains – they'll be more pliable, can be purchased here)
- pipe cleaners
- scissors
- snack and drinks
- paper plates for snacks - can double as work mats for craft projects.
- colorful pens for the girls to use in class
- extra Bibles

supplies brought by the girls

- copy of Woven
- Bible

icebreaker: ball of yarn activity

After welcoming the girls, introducing yourselves and getting supplies organized, you may want to have an icebreaker activity so the girls can get to know one another in a casual way. Holding on to the end of the string of yarn, toss a ball of yarn from one person to the next. The catcher has to introduce themselves and say one thing about themselves. To vary- say the name of the person you're tossing the yarn to. Repeat a few times until everyone has spoken aloud and you've "woven" a messy spider web.

opening prayer

Pray the Lord's Prayer together. Then, pray the following prayer:

Lord, Open the hearts, minds, and lips of these thy servants that we may understand Thy will, receive Thy mercy, and be strengthened in Thy love. Direct us in Thy ways and protect us on Thy path that we may give glory to You, For Thou are good and lovest all men. Amen.

This prayer can be used to open each session.

the lesson

Read the chapter together (as the instructor – you'll read aloud first—setting a tone and helping the girls feel comfortable) and do the activities. We've noted pages which require extra explanation or guidance.

This chapter introduces three women who set positive examples for the girls: The Virgin Mary, Corrie ten Boome and Saint Pelagia. Corrie's story is told in this teacher's guide.

Be sure to share it with the girls and encourage them to look her up at home to find out more about her inspiring life. Saint Pelagia's story will be told in detail in a later chapter. Encourage the girls to research their own patron saint and share what they know about them in an informal ice breaker at another session or during a snack time.

who is corrie ten boome?

Corrie ten Boome was a spinster watchmaker in the Netherlands who lived a quiet life with her older sister and elderly father until the Nazis invaded. Corrie and her family became part of the resistance. She helped organize a large group of teenagers who faced many dangers while saving the lives of Jewish people -the movie *Return to the Hiding Place* (2013) tells this story. Corrie and her family also hid Jewish people and others in their own home. They had a secret room which was so well hidden that even when their house was searched by the SS, the six people hiding were not found. Even though the hidden people weren't found, the Nazis arrested Corrie and her family and sent them to concentration camps.

At the concentration camp called Ravensbruck, Corrie and her sister Bessie were always hungry, abused by the guards, and forced to work all day making bombs. At night, Corrie and Bessie used a New Testament to read the Gospel aloud to other prisoners. Corrie described the beauty of Protestant, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox women praying and singing together. Even the fleas which infested their barracks brought a blessing- the guards didn't want to be near the fleas so the women were left alone at night which gave them the opportunity read the Gospel aloud. Bessie once said, "There is no pit so deep that God is not deeper still".

After years of imprisonment, Bessie died in the camp, but Corrie was released. She spent the rest of her life helping others by opening up rehabilitation centers for people who were emotionally or physically damaged by war experiences. After many years, she wrote a book, *The Hiding Place*, which described her experiences and how God was with Bessie and Corrie even when they were suffering most.

For more info:

- <http://www.crosswalk.com/faith/women/10-amazing-things-you-never-knew-about-corrie-ten-boom.html>
- <https://www.corrietenboom.com/en/the-museum>

(Corrie is mentioned on page 25 and 114 and at the end of today's lesson)

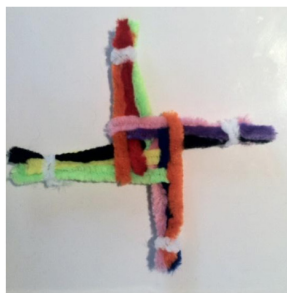
session notes

- Page 22 and 23 are great for posters/easel pad paper—get two of the girls to write on the posters as the class suggests ideas comparing Eve and the Virgin Mary.
- Pages 26-27 could be another poster—the girls will tell you attributes of people they know in real life who they admire. Use pretty colors and make this attractive
- Give the girls about 5-10 minutes to look up the verses on page 30 and then discuss as a class. The girls will answer the questions by themselves on pages 31 and 33 and then discuss their responses after they're done.
- The spiritual gifts quiz (pages 34-37) will take about 15 minutes—that's a good quiet time for you to set out snacks for them to enjoy after they finish because they'll want to compare their results. The craft activity will come shortly after the snack so double check supplies. If the girls will be using straw to weave crosses, be sure the straw is soaking in water 20-30 minutes ahead of time so they'll bend.

craft: st. brigid cross (15-20 mins)

"My prayer is to satisfy the poor, to banish every hardship, and to save every sorrowful man."

– St. Brigid of Kildare



Straw forms the most beautiful crosses, but if straw is hard to find, raffia crosses are pretty too. We recommend making a practice cross with pipe-cleaners before attempting the other materials. If you have a set apart space for the class, you could hang crosses from the ceiling to decorate the room. Creating a dedicated, welcoming space for Woven will foster comfort and a sense of belonging. The girls can also bring them home for a physical reminder of today's class.

closing: poem

Life is but a Weaving

By Corrie ten Boom

My life is but a weaving
Between my God and me.
I cannot choose the colors
He weaveth steadily.
Of times He weaveth sorrow;
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I the underside.
Not 'til the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the canvas
And reveal the reason why.
The dark threads are as needful
In the weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned
He knows, He loves, He cares;
Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him.



Corrie would show this tapestry when she read the poem to help us remember that God sees the beauty He's creating in us while we feel like our life looks like that ball of yarn from the beginning of the chapter.

closing: reflection

Let the girls write quietly for about 5 minutes.

Close with prayer.

other suggestions

We have movie suggestions for a fun girl's night activity after Woven sessions. A suggestion for a movie to watch after Chapter 1 is *Return to the Hiding Place* (2013).

Further Reading for Instructors:

- <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith7080>
- https://orthodoxwiki.org/Brigid_of_Kildare
- <http://antiochian.org/node/17477>
- <http://insight.typepad.co.uk/insight/2008/09/who-am-i.html>
- https://www.openbible.info/topics/our_identity_in_christ
- <http://myocn.net/generosity-saint-brigid/>
- <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/questionofgod/voices/boom.html>

chapter two: emotions

Chapter 2 of Woven focusses on our emotions and how to be aware of and handle the challenging ones. This chapter contains scenarios that should be common to all girls. It's not a chapter for dealing with heavy issues like death or big losses, but about the everyday things that can cause us to lose our cool. Diffuse any drama that comes from a girl with bigger issues by helping her see that we're all in these everyday situations together.

Emotions are not negatives, they are how we experience so much beauty and joy in life, but they can also help us gauge when something is not quite right and this chapter will help girls listen to their inner barometer.

supplies

Copies of Woven and Bibles

opening prayer

Pray the Lord's Prayer together. Then, pray the following prayer:

Lord, Open the hearts, minds, and lips of these thy servants that we may understand Thy will, receive Thy mercy, and be strengthened in Thy love. Direct us in Thy ways and protect us on Thy path that we may give glory to You, For Thou are good and lovest all men. Amen.

icebreaker: complete the sentences

Let the girls share just a few of their responses and let them choose which responses they share so no one's on the spot.

session notes

- Let the girls read the skits and stories out loud and let them be fun. Make sure everyone participates. They can share their responses on page 52 with a partner and then with the class if they want to.
- Have the girls practice calming down by covering their eyes and slowly breathing, counting to 5 as you breathe in and five as you breathe out as described on page 53.
- Page 55 discusses an anxiety scale to help the girls remember that not everything that happens to them is a crisis!
- Page 60 is an illustration of what grows from rejection. Talk about the roots of the tree and the bitter fruit that comes from it. Help the girls understand the terms and give examples—but not personal ones. The girls can add their own words to the tree. Do not advise them to add the words that most pertain to them because we don't want them to make themselves that vulnerable in a public setting. That may happen naturally, but don't point it out. Let them add the words they think grow from rejection and be sure to go over the list we provided. This would be a good time for a break and a snack. Move around a little.
- Page 66 illustrated the vicious cycle we get caught in when our negative thoughts cause negativity in our lives. Help the girls fill in words to illustrate the cycle showing how our thoughts and actions can cause reciprocal events- like a feedback loop. When I think someone is thinking something ugly about me, I might withdraw or be less friendly which in turn makes that person really be less friendly to me. Their action reinforces my negative thought which causes me to respond more negatively and so it goes, on and on.
- Once the girls understand the vicious cycle—let them think of a time in their own life when they got trapped in one and draw it out. Help them think of solutions to help us get out of this cycle in various situations. If this is too personal for your group- use examples from popular television shows or movies of situations like this for discussion purposes. Keep this practical and everyday. For further discussion—what might a virtuous cycle look like? How does a positive attitude replicate itself through our impact on others and their responses to us?
- Standard MO on pages 67-70 should be a light hearted quiz. Keep in mind that we all do all of these things. Sometimes we're frosty and sometimes we're something else. Being aware of what we tend to do most helps us moderate ourselves and not get out of balance.

- On page 73 there is a tree laden with fruit -- the tree of acceptance. What is acceptance? Acceptance can mean that you're OK, you can join our group, but it also might mean assenting to the reality of a situation. When we feel the acceptance that God gives us and the acceptance of those who love us, it gives us a foundation for being authentic. If God accepts me, and you accept me, and I accept reality, I can start to become my real self in Christ.
- Foster conversation about healing the bitter fruits. Review the list of bitter fruits on pages 58-59 and contrast them with fruits of acceptance. For example—in place of bitterness we can cultivate gratitude. Replace anger with mercy, defensiveness with winsomeness. Acceptance cultivates gratitude, confidence, trust, and joy. They can draw a healthy beautiful tree and label it.
- Discuss—How does God work within us to heal us from rejection? How do we nurture others? We will return to this topic in the next chapter.
- Journal—the girls should each look up these verses on page 77. You can have one person read them aloud and discuss the ways we can live out watchfulness in our own lives.
- Here is a great quote for a poster that the girls could make or that they could copy in their books and discuss:

“Watchfulness is a continual fixing and halting of
thought at the entrance to the heart.”

— St Hesychios the Priest

closing: reflection

Let the girls write quietly for about 5 minutes.

Close with prayer.

movie suggestion

Sense and Sensibility (1995)

chapter three: shine like stars

Chapter 3 of Woven focusses on our how we present ourselves to others, how others see the “real us” anyway, how to become the real, real us and how God sees us as beloved, created to be like Him.

This chapter discusses hot button issues like appearance, how we present ourselves on social media such as Instagram, sexting, and how to deal with all that while trying to show the face of Christ to others. Avoid gossip or oversharing in this chapter—no stories about how someone’s friend posted something awful. Be sure to promote the positives of how we can encourage each other on Instagram.

supplies

- mason jar for each girl
- brushes
- glow in the dark paint
- paper plates to use as a work surface for painting
- markers/easel pad
- scissors
- tea light candles
- matches/lighter
- small post it notes (just the right size for a Bible verse on each one)
- an icon of the Transfiguration

Glow in the dark fabric paint is available at walmart.com or various other craft suppliers for about \$7. One of those sets is more than enough for a class of 10-15 girls.

icebreaker: bible verse activity

As the girls enter, assign each girl one or more Bible verses from page 82. Have them look up the verses and summarize what the verse says about us with one or two words. Create a poster(s) out of their responses. Examples are shown below:

Accepted, Ephesians 1: 6
Loved, Ephesians 1: 4
Adopted, Ephesians 1: 5, 6
Forgiven, Ephesians 1: 7
A child of God, Romans 8: 16
A friend of Jesus, John 15: 14
Saved by grace, Ephesians 2: 8
Chosen, John 15: 16
Complete, Colossians 2: 10
Redeemed, Galatians 3: 13
Rescued, Colossians 1: 13
Cared for, 1 Peter 5: 7
Blessed, Ephesians 1: 3
Healed, 1 Peter 2: 24
Eternal, 1 John 5: 11, 12

A new person, 2 Corinthians 5: 17
A masterpiece, Ephesians 2: 10
An heir, Romans 8: 17
A temple, 1 Peter 2: 5
An example, Ephesians 5: 1
Not condemned, Romans 8: 1
Led by the Spirit, Romans 8: 14
Living by faith, 2 Corinthians 5: 7
Being transformed, Romans 12: 1, 2
Not afraid, 2 Timothy 1: 7
Strong in the Lord, Ephesians 6: 10
Victorious, Romans 8: 37
An overcomer, 1 John 4: 4
A co-worker with God, 1 Corinthians 3: 9

opening prayer

Pray the Lord's Prayer together. Then, pray the following prayer:

Lord, Open the hearts, minds, and lips of these thy servants that we may understand Thy will, receive Thy mercy, and be strengthened in Thy love. Direct us in Thy ways and protect us on Thy path that we may give glory to You, For Thou are good and lovest all men. Amen.

session notes

- Read the lesson, discuss, and do the activities. Much of this chapter involves writing in individual books. Give the girls enough time to formulate their own responses before discussing.

- **Possible responses for discussion on page 94**

1. *Most of us like to vary our style from time to time but many girls go through phases where they wear one kind of thing over and over. Why do you think we sometimes get stuck on that one same thing?*

A need for security. Yes, like that blanket you had when you were three. Maybe a sense of ritual. Maybe because a good memory is attached to that clothing.

2. *Ava likes to dress boyishly... does that mean she must be transgender? Is it fair to make assumptions about people because of how they dress?*

No, she might just feel uncomfortable with her body for now without it going that far. She might just prefer comfy clothes without really thinking about it in a tomboyish way.

Recent studies have shown that some girls are dressing more like boys to avoid the sexy fashions which has become so common and the resulting pressures they might get from boys for sex.

Ava and Ashley are based on close friends one of the authors has had. Ava is not transgendered, but she's risking being labeled that way because she's a bit of a tomboy. Modern girls who are tomboyish can risk being labeled, or becoming confused about things they aren't really confused about. Did you know that 80% of children who label themselves transgendered later desist, that is they go back to their biological gender? Many young teenagers are dealing with feelings that are confusing to them and being transgendered can seem like a solution because they don't understand the lifelong ramifications involved. Being transgendered seems to happen in clusters—when one child in a community comes out as transgendered- others do too. Transgendered kids might even be celebrated in their school, partly because the adults rightly view them as so vulnerable and partly because it furthers the view that gender is a societal construct instead of a physical reality. Our kids see this and are in classes with kids who are supportive of this.

Our kids may be feeling confused about themselves, too. Most of us really don't want to talk about this with our kids, but we must. These are complex issues, but we form judgements on them through the eyes of the church not through the modern world.

For a detailed explanation of that view:

- <http://www.antiochian.org/node/17905>
- <http://pemptousia.com/author/sofia-matzarioti-kostara/>

Ashley's image is a mirror version of Ava's- but both girls are wearing a kind of mask. Be sensitive to the fact that all of us wear some kind of mask- the Ava and Ashley story is meant to be exaggerated to help us see ourselves.

3. Can you guess how long it takes to get Kim Kardashian ready for an ordinary day?

According to Hello! magazine—Kim spends a couple of hours sitting while stylists put on her makeup and fix her hair. Each day. Do you think she picks out her own clothes?

4. Remember those silly bands bracelets you just had to have when you were sevenish? Sometimes we think we've just got to have that new style, and sometimes that's OK. How can we keep being in style in balance with being ourselves (unique girls who love God and are the face of Christ to others)?

We don't need to dress like we're Amish, but we should try to be modest. Look at Kate Middleton as a great example of being lovely and stylish without looking immodest.

- You can draw your own ten year old self cartoon (see page 98) to help the girls feel comfortable—make it simple, cute and fun—but it's better if they do this first so they aren't copying you.
- Keep the discussion kind through page 101. Stop for snack at “ God sees us as beautiful”
- After snacks the girls can paint their star jars: Set each jar on a paper plate. Pour about a teaspoon of glow in the dark paint onto each plate (your plate is your palette, too). Give each girl a brush. Paint polka-dots or stars on the mason jars. You can use just one color, but using several colors will be prettier. Tie raffia or twine around the neck or the jars. Set aside to dry and wash out the brushes with soapy water.

- After the break, pick back up on page 101 and then read about Saint Pelagia. Display this icon and discuss it.
- (Pages 106-107) How can Saint Pelagia inspire us today? Have volunteers write answers on an easel pad. Possible responses:
 - God sees our spiritual potential, not the outward stuff we're stuck on. As we look to Christ- that potential slowly becomes real.
 - We should pray for our friends, even the ones who seem far away from needing God, because they do need God
 - No matter how far we fall, God is ready to love us and heal us.
 - we could take a look at our own lives and Instagram photos to be sure we're keeping this in balance
 - our friends may want us to join them when they want to do something we all know is wrong.
 - Sometimes we have to leave situations where we know we'll fall.
- Discussion on page 110-111 should include NO personal details—keep this about everyone.
- While the girls work on page 112, walk around to see how they reworded the quote and discuss it briefly. If you have an icon of the Transfiguration, display it in the room and discuss it.
- Turn off the lights (or some of the lights) and light the tea lights in each girl's jar while talking about God knowing the stars by name. Then, have the girls blow out their candles so the jars glow in the dark. While it's dark, re-read the verse about being light in a dark generation.

closing: reflection

The girls can write down verses from the first activity to encourage them during the coming week. Use post-it notes so they can put them up somewhere that they'll keep seeing them.

Close with prayer.

this week at home: make a prayer book

<https://www.scribd.com/doc/19583232/Orthodox-Christian-Prayer-Book-Pocket-Size>

further reading

- <http://www.forbes.com/sites/learnvest/2012/04/03/what-your-clothes-say-about-you/#4b9bc19413d7>
- <https://www.common sense media.org/social-media/age/teens>
- <http://insight.typepad.co.uk/insight/2008/09/who-am-i.html>
- <http://us.hellomagazine.com/healthandbeauty/makeup/2016060131697/kim-kardashian-spends-two-hours-a-day-in-hair-and-make-up/>
- <http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2016/07/whats-missing-from-the-conversation-about-transgender-kids.html>
- Baumgartner, Jennifer J. *You Are What You Wear: What Your Clothes Reveal About You* Da Capo Lifelong Books (March 27, 2012)
- Sales, Nancy Jo *American Girls: Social Media and the Secret Lives of Teenagers* Knopf (February 23, 2016)
- Shalit, Wendy *A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue* Free Press; Anniversary edition (May 20, 2014)

chapter four: friendships

Chapter 4 of Woven is about friendship- how we can encourage each other in our faith and with love. This chapter highlights the friendship between the Virgin Mary and her cousin Elizabeth. Simple yet engaging skits will help all girls participate as they act the common situations which can challenge our friendships. At the end of the chapter, girls can help each other weave friendship bracelets.

supplies

- tape or large safety pins
- embroidery thread
- scissors

opening prayer

Pray the Lord's Prayer together. Then, pray the following prayer:

Lord, Open the hearts, minds, and lips of these thy servants that we may understand Thy will, receive Thy mercy, and be strengthened in Thy love. Direct us in Thy ways and protect us on Thy path that we may give glory to You, For Thou are good and lovest all men. Amen.

icebreaker: scripture

Read the Scripture on pages 118. Have the girls take turns reading paragraphs aloud.

session notes

- Pages 121 and 125 are skits for the girls to act out. Let them read it first and then let girls act them out (get up and move around—using lots of body language - not just reading) at the right time in the lesson.
- Page 129 discusses sincere apologies. Let the girls role play apologizing to one another for a range of things. They can come up with their own skits for this.
- Page 130 has a craft. Encourage the girls to make friendship bracelets in pairs. If that's awkward—the bracelets can be held steady using safety pins or tape.

craft: friendship bracelets

You can find lots of friendship bracelet instructions online, but fishtail braiding the bracelets is a simple option. Let the girls organize this so they have a sense of ownership and cooperation. Most of them will already know how to make these and they can teach each other. Instructions for weaving a Chevron pattern are included below.

Here is a source for buying the floss: <http://www.hobbylobby.com/Yarn-Needle-Art/Cross-Stitch/Floss-Thread/Primary-Cotton-Craft-Thread-Pack/p/37373>

Embroidery floss is available in many colors. Sets like this are about \$6.00. You'll need 15-20 skeins to be sure to have enough for a class of 15 girls. The girls can each measure their own strands and cut them. They can cut the strands to approximately the length of their arm—shoulder to fingertips.

Chevron Friendship Bracelets:

1. Organize your thread. You'll need three forty inch strands of floss, in 5 colors (15 total strands) for each bracelet. I used three strands, but two would have worked just as well and then you only need 10 lengths of floss.



2. Create a bundle by lining up all the threads so the tops match. Fold the bundle of floss in half, and carefully knot at the top, forming a loop. You'll want your loop to be large enough later to wrap the ends through to tie it onto your wrist. Your friends can hold the loop for you.

- Sort your thread. On each side, there should be three strands of each of your five colors. Keep each color together and make the sides symmetrical.



- Begin the bracelet by using the outside color to tie a knot, one at a time with each of the other colors. Start on the right side and work into the middle strands. Now start again on the left side. When the two colors match because you've reached the middle, tie them together. I started with magenta and used it to tie knots with each color.
- Continue weaving by tying knots with the next color in the same way. On my bracelet, that means I used green to tie knots with all the other colors, followed by the blue strands and so on.



- Continue to repeat steps 4 and 5 with every color, keeping the floss tight and organized. Use a safety pin to pin the loop to your clothing so everyone can weave at the same time.



- A really beautiful chevron pattern will emerge! To finish, tie a knot at the end and use the knot like a button to draw through the loop on the other end.

closing: reflection

Let the girls write quietly for about 5 minutes.

Close with prayer.

movie suggestion

Maleficent (2014)

chapter five: love & relationships

Chapter 5 of Woven is about love – romantic love and finding a deeper fulfillment in Christ's love.

supplies

- river rocks
- Sharpies
- blank canvases of varying sizes – such as (5x7, 8x10)
- acrylic paint in pretty colors like these for less than \$10
- brushes of varying sizes (3 inch and 1/2 inch stiff flat wash brushes)
- masking tape for stripes on the canvasses
- drop cloth or butcher paper, or inexpensive disposable plastic table cloth to cover the table where the girls will paint

opening prayer

Pray the Lord's Prayer together. Then, pray the following prayer:

Lord, Open the hearts, minds, and lips of these thy servants that we may understand Thy will, receive Thy mercy, and be strengthened in Thy love. Direct us in Thy ways and protect us on Thy path that we may give glory to You, For Thou are good and lovest all men. Amen.

icebreaker: river rocks

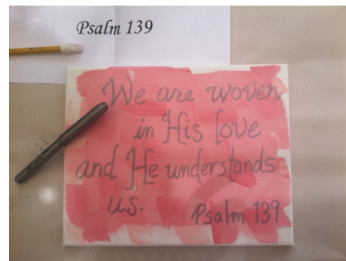
In the opening segment, the girls are writing a word that describes a healthy romantic relationship on a rock. The girls can draw on the river rock illustration in the book on page 134, but the teacher may choose to also bring in river rocks and sharpies for the girls to design an actual keepsake rock. River rocks are available at craft stores and home improvement stores.

During the discussion, tell them that when boys do the same thing one of the top ten words put is “fun.” Dating should be fun.

To wrap up the discussion- read these lyrics aloud and discuss:

Like a perfect scene
from a movie screen
we're a dream come true
suited perfectly for eternity
Me and you
— Kenny Chesney

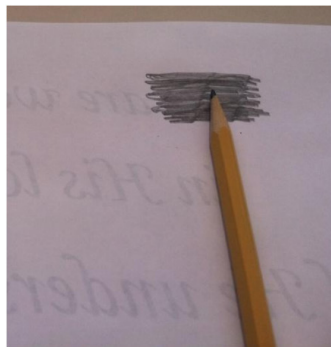
craft: canvas painting



Show examples of the paintings and provide canvases and a few choices of paint for the girls to paint the background. For now, they'll just paint a background on the canvas—maybe stripes, gentle birds, or just smudges.

When it's dry (probably by break/snack time), choose a quote to paint on the canvas—something from Woven or maybe one of the Scripture verses we've read. If you have access to a printer, print the verse centered on plain paper to help plan how to space the letters before writing on the canvas. You may want to measure the canvas and plan how big to write the letters. Or you can wing it like I did.

For those with challenging handwriting—you can use pencil to cover the back of the letters you printed and then flip the paper place it smudgy side down on your beautiful canvas (trust me) and by pressing down hard while going over the letters you'll leave ghost letters that have transferred onto the canvas. You can trace the ghost letters with a paint pen or shiny marker.



session notes

- Page 138 is about rejection. Refer back to the trees on pages 60 (rejection) and page 71 (acceptance)
- Don't discuss the rejection journaling- let that be just for them.
- The next several pages are serious. Read them together and keep discussion short.
- Examples of modern stories showing life as purposeless are all over. Here is one from the TV show Person of Interest:

"One day, I realized all the dumb, selfish things people do... it's not our fault. No one designed us. We're just an accident, Harold. We're just bad code."

Root, Person of Interest -The Contingency [2.01]

- Anger at being lost in a meaningless universe is how this character justifies terrible actions, but the underlying concept is not uncommon in our culture. We can justify all kinds of things when we feel there is no purpose anyway. The world often expresses this kind of hopelessness, but still won't turn to God.
- Page 150 is a good time to set out snacks. This chapter is meant to inspire not condemn. You don't know what struggles the girl in your class are going through so be sensitive about tone. Girls today face so much pressure in these areas. We want to inspire them and help them know they are loved just as they are so they can make strong, wise healthy decisions.
- When reading page 152, ask why they think we chose an illustration of Christ with a Lamb? How does that make them feel?
- On page 153 have all the girls look up the Scripture passages and assign one to read each aloud.

closing: reflection

Let the girls write quietly for about 5 minutes. Close with prayer.

movie suggestion

Watch *Cinderella* (2015) and discuss how Cinderella chooses virtue.

further reading

- Jordan, Marian *Sex and the City Uncovered* Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing (September 1, 2007)
- <http://www.pravmir.com/straight-talk-to-a-single-christian-about-sex/>
- <http://www.teenvogue.com/story/bisexuality-girls-on-the-rise>
- Pennock, Dee *Who is God? Who am I? Who are you?* St. Tikhon's Press (1973)
- <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/46284.htm>
- <https://mospat.ru/en/documents/social-concepts/kh/>

chapter six: conclusion

Chapter 6 is a review and wrap up of the previous chapters with a lot of encouragement to help the girls live what they've learned.

We titled this chapter Come as You Are because each girl needs to respond to God from where she is, right now. To prepare for this lesson, we recommend that the instructors read this in advance: <http://www.pravmir.com/we-are-saved-by-our-response-to-god-s-love-sermon-on-the-14th-sunday-after-pentecost/>

Before class, have easel pads and colored markers—5 large pages with a chapter heading on each one in the color that matches the color of that chapter in the book. Display them in different areas or wall in the room.

supplies

- Easel pads
- Colored markers

opening prayer

Pray the Lord's Prayer together. Then, pray the following prayer:

Lord, Open the hearts, minds, and lips of these thy servants that we may understand Thy will, receive Thy mercy, and be strengthened in Thy love. Direct us in Thy ways and protect us on Thy path that we may give glory to You, For Thou are good and lovest all men. Amen.

session notes

- Read the Scripture about the vineyard.
- Discuss the headings on each poster briefly then the girls can move around the room writing on each of the posters so they can share things they learned from Woven.
- The girls will share what was written on the posters and discuss it—keep things positive and loving. We want the girls to feel encouraged and strengthened in their faith and to know that many challenges they face are common among all girls in one way or another and that God’s mercy and love is greater than anything they can imagine.
- As Bessie Ten Boome (story from chapter 1 only in the Teacher’s Guide) said in the concentration camp—“no pit is so deep that God is not deeper still.”
- No matter how far down we may feel in a “pit,” God is with us there and bringing us up to His light.

closing: reflection

Discuss the quote from Father Seraphim Rose and how that would look in our lives.

closing: prayer

Thank you God for created us, woven in Your image and likeness. We thank you for understanding us even when we don’t understand ourselves. We pray that Your mercy will endure for us and that Your love will encompass us as we seek to be more like You in our love for You, others and for ourselves. Help us to live in a way that we see Your face in others. Help us as we seek to shine Your love to others as a bright, beautiful light in the world. Amen.