



DISCUSSION GUIDE: MAKE IT ZERO

Please refer to the Discussion Groups instructions before beginning

MAKE IT ZERO • MARY FRANCIS BOWLEY

Number of sessions: 5

Time per session: 2 hours

Mary Francis Bowley is the founder and executive director of Wellspring Living, an Atlanta agency with many services for survivors of sex trafficking. Wellspring served as a mentor to Ascent 121 for our first several years as a new provider. Bowley also authored *The White Umbrella: Walking With Survivors of Sex Trafficking* and *A League of Dangerous Women*. We encourage you to learn about Wellspring Living online and to enjoy her other titles.

Discussion questions in this study were written by Make It Zero. For more about them visit MakeItZero.net.

Suggested preparation

- ▶ Invite 8 to 16 of your friends and family (depending on the size of meeting location)
- ▶ Send out email or Facebook messages with the details three weeks in advance and again the week before you plan to begin so that your audience knows what to read in advance of the first meeting
- ▶ The more people coming, the longer the sessions may last
- ▶ Suggest to your group to buy the book (new or used) from Amazon
- ▶ Provide snacks!

First Meeting: Zero Poverty chapters 1-4

- ▶ Gather in a circle for introductions
- ▶ In “One Lifeline,” Amy felt unqualified to help, but it was her challenging past that made her just right to make a difference. Is there anything in your own life or history that could make you qualified to help in a unique way?
- ▶ Has a single gift or act of kindness changed your life (or at least one realm of your life - like your job or a relationship) the way Tanetta’s life was changed in “One Social Worker, Two Friends”?
- ▶ In “One Generational Shift” when Donna asked her class what they thought of when she referenced “the homeless” versus “a homeless person” how did you feel? What did it make you think about people you see on the street every day?
- ▶ Donna’s story has so many twists and turns most of us can’t even fathom. Did it surprise you that there seemed to be so many times she “slipped through the cracks” growing up?
- ▶ So much changed for Donna when she heard Susannah share her own story of generational poverty. It gave her hope. How do you think being transparent about tough things in your own past can help give someone else a glimpse of hope? Could that kind of vulnerability help

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you build a relationship with someone?

Second Meeting: Zero Hunger chapters 5 & 6

- ▶ Childhood hunger-fighting organization Share Our Strength has a saying. It goes something like this: “Go to your child’s classroom and count, ‘One, two, three, four, HUNGRY’ because that’s the statistic.” Does it shock you that one in five children in America are hungry or food insecure?
- ▶ Former WNBA player Ruth Riley (“One Hunger Game, Won”) has accomplished so much, partially because she had the nutrition she needed to excel in athletics and academics. What sort of tangible improvements do you think we could see in our country and our education system if every child was well nourished?
- ▶ Ruth talks a bit about the shame that kids feel about not having enough food - it brands them as “poor,” and yet, they desperately need assistance when it’s offered. What are some ways you think this stigma could be avoided?
- ▶ In his story (“One Good Meal Nourishes the Soul), Dave Phillips, founder of Children’s Hunger Fund, talks about a recent college graduate, Kim, who befriended a family who needed help. Does that seem brave that she stepped outside of her “normal” to help this family? Why?
- ▶ Dave shares how food boxes can be a bridge to building relationships and that, when we’re connected, we can help improve someone’s life. Can you think of a time in your own experience where you’ve seen this in practice?

Third Meeting: Zero Abuse chapters 7-10

- ▶ In “One Trained, Ten Safer,” Bridgette saw that there was an alarming rise in abuse reports in her county, so she DID something. Do you see opportunities in your own community to get involved? What are they?
- ▶ In Chapter 12, “One Way to Save a Life,” Dr. Jordan Greenbaum talks about how abuse affects the brain development and the overall health of a child / teen / young adult. Have you ever thought about how abuse affects the development of the brain?
- ▶ Dr. Greenbaum mentions how kids are always going to be more savvy than adults about the latest technology - and those digital connections can open minors to risks. How does this inspire you to “plug in” with the young ones you’re responsible for?

Fourth Meeting: Zero Isolation chapters 11 & 12

- ▶ In Cora’s story (“One is a Lonely Number”), there are so many times that someone could have stepped in and intercepted her from disaster. What specifically jumped out as an opportunity for someone outside of her family to help keep her safe?
- ▶ On page 117, Cora says that a stranger, Susan Norris, could see that she was in a desperate place. Instead of shrinking away, Susan held Cora’s hand while she poured out her story. How did that help turn the tide for Cora? What do you think that meant to her?
- ▶ It’s easy to think of “isolation” as kids with no immediate family. But, they can also be children whose parents have to work multiple jobs or latch key kids. Do you know any kids in your sphere of influence who could benefit from knowing you care for them?
- ▶ In Rick’s story (“One Life-Giving Gift”), he shares how heart-broken he was when he won a baseball award and no one was there to see it. He says, “I felt pretty sure I didn’t matter to anyone.” How does that make you feel?
- ▶ When Rick received his anonymous \$100 gift, he shared it by purchasing gifts from some of the other boys in the home. Does that inspire you? Why?
- ▶ Pam (“One Open Door”) and her husband are extraordinary - not many people would adopt so many teenagers. While not everyone is called to that kind of radical love, does it inspire you to help in a unique way in your own community, neighborhood or church?
- ▶ When you anticipated turning 18, how did you feel? Excited? What would you have felt if your 18th birthday was a deadline?

Fifth Meeting: Zero Trafficking chapter 15 to the end

- ▶ When you read Jada’s story (“One Good Fit”), it’s easy to see that she never felt like she fit in. What can you do to help a child (or an adult!) experience a positive, inclusive relationship?
- ▶ Dave’s story (“The Power of One”) shows how one person can shift course and really change things for an issue. Share with the group someone that you know of who took action to make a difference.
- ▶ In the “Take Action” section, you’re encouraged to purchase a pair of shoes for a child who needs them. What other online options are you aware of that you can engage with to provide something that’s needed - and can

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help the recipient feel a sense of belonging?

- ▶ How has your viewpoint changed through this book? Or has it?
- ▶ How has this book impacted you?

Next steps:

Congratulations on completing your study! Discuss as a group what you would like to do next. There are many options on the Ascent 121 website for service projects, volunteering, continued learning and upcoming events.

Learn more about trafficking legislation in Indiana on the Learn page at Ascent121.org.

If your discussion group is mostly men, go to <http://sharedhope.org/join-the-cause/become-a-defender/the-defenders-pledge/>

to read about the Defender's Pledge. This is an excellent way for men to take a stand in the effort to combat trafficking.

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