

ONE GOD SERIES

Discussion Questions - Sherre Hirsch

- #1 Both Joey Shapiro and Sherre Hirsch talk about the importance of ritual.**
- What rituals, and stories about ritual, are there in your faith community, whether they are a central part of your religion or particular to your congregation?
 - In what rituals do you find the most meaning and why?
- #2 Hirsch talks specifically about prayer, an important component of all three Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. She talks about different ways of praying: Salaat, the Alenu, or a deep breath in the car.**
- How does your faith tradition think about and engage in prayer? How do you?
 - If you're comfortable doing so, share a prayer experience.
- #3 Hirsch distinguishes between intellectual traditions and experiential traditions, traditions of the mind and heart. She also discusses bringing these together.**
- What intellectual traditions does your faith have? What experiential traditions?
 - How does your faith community bring together heart and mind?
- #4 Hirsch talks about her own experiences of other faith traditions and how she has learned from them.**
- How have you experienced other religions?
 - Have you ever tried another religion on for size?
 - What have you learned from your experiences with other religions?
 - If you're comfortable doing so, share an experience of learning from another religious tradition.
- #5 Hirsch also talks about some aspects of her tradition being non-negotiable.**
- What aspects of your faith are non-negotiable?
 - What traditions and rituals would you refuse to give up?
 - What traditions from other faiths would you refuse to appropriate?
- #6 Both Hirsch and Patel suggest that young people today grow up encountering many religious traditions.**
- How do young people in your community experience other religions?
 - How would you like them to experience other religions?
 - How does their experience of other religions affect your community?

Discussion Questions - Eboo Patel

#1 While Eboo Patel was visiting his grandmother, he discovered a woman stranger in the house. He asked his grandmother why she would take in a stranger, especially when she could be putting herself in danger. Eboo's grandmother responded, "Because I'm a Muslim, and this is what Muslims do." For her, Islam was, at least in part, defined by a tradition of hospitality.

- What practices or actions define your faith community?
- What could someone ask about and have you reply, "I do this because I am Jewish/Christian/Muslim, and this is what we do."?
- How does hospitality play out in your faith tradition? What narratives of hospitality exist in your tradition? What practices of hospitality exist in your community?
- If you are comfortable doing so, share a meaningful experience of hospitality, either as a recipient or a giver of hospitality.
- Conversely, are there areas where your tradition or community is not hospitable? Are there people who are not acceptable in your tradition or community? Do you think this should change? If so, how might you go about changing it?

#2 Patel is clear that he learned a great deal from people of mature faith, such as Brother Wayne, the Dalai Lama, and his grandmother.

- How have you learned from the elders of your tradition or community?
- How do you go about teaching those younger than yourself?
- Is there something you have learned from a mature person from a faith tradition other than your own?

#3 Patel, Hirsch, and Chakoian spend some time in conversation about mercy, judgment, and blessing.

- How does your faith tradition talk about these three concepts?
- What stories in your faith tradition illustrate one or more of these three concepts?
- What do you know about how other faith traditions talk about these concepts?

#4 Patel says, "There is a theology of justice in each of our different traditions. There is a theology of service. There is a theology of cooperation."

- Do the young people in your church or synagogue or mosque know the theology of cooperation?
- If you were to say to your young people, 'What in your religion inspires you to cooperate with those who are different', would they be able to cite chapter and verse?"
- Where are these three traditions in your faith?
- What in your religion inspires you to cooperate with those who are different?

Study Questions - Christine Chakoian

#1 Many of Chakoian's stories are about eating with other people, whether of her own faith or other faiths.

- What role do shared meals play in your faith community?
- What eating-centered rituals do you have?
- How do you eat in less formal settings?
- What stories in your tradition focus on food and eating?
- If you are comfortable, share a meaningful experience of a meal shared.

#2 Chakoian says, "Most of us have traditions, practices of our faith to which we have grown accustomed. Often they're comforting to us, in part because they are simply so familiar. We've participated in them so many times it feels like home. But sometimes are practices can become rote and stale and somewhat flat. Yet, as I discovered, they do not have to be."

- What practices in your faith tradition do you think of as "feeling like home"?
- What practices in your faith tradition or community do you think of as rote or stale?
- How might you reinvigorate the practices that seem stale?

#3 Chakoian says, "I still love communion served on trays with little, tiny pieces of cut-up bread, and grape juice in tiny glasses passed along rows. And I enjoy communion shared by intinction as we tear a piece of bread off the loaf and dip it in the cup. But because of bread broken at table with Muslims and Jews, I experience communion in a fuller, richer way than I could have ever known without them. Back in eighth grade it would never have dawned on me that I could grow closer to Jesus Christ by sitting at table with people of other faiths. Who knew? It makes me wonder what more I can learn from them. My guess is, plenty."

- Have you shared meals with people from other faith traditions? If so, did that change anything in you?

#4 Sherre Hirsch asks Chakoian about dealing with "dark moments" in her tradition.

- What "dark moments" exist in your tradition or faith community?
- Do you deal with them openly, or do you pretend they didn't happen?
- If you do deal with them openly, how do you do that?
- What can result if these are not addressed openly?
- In what ways might it be helpful to your faith community to deal with them?

#5 Chakoian, Hirsch, and Patel spend some time discussing the power of parents' examples.

- If you are a parent, what example do you set for your child or children, when it comes to questions about the beliefs and practices of your faith?

- If you are not a parent, what example do you set for youth in your faith community?
- What example do you set for youth outside of your tradition?

#6 Chakoian speaks briefly about the sacredness of time and the importance of not squandering time.

- How is sacred time recognized and structured in your faith tradition? How is it measured? Does this make you treat all time differently? If so, how?