

REMINDE ME AGAIN

Facilitator Guide

41 Sessions Based on the Poetry of Joe Davis

Sessions written by

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About This Facilitator Guide

This guide includes 41 sessions that correspond to the forty-one poems in *Remind Me Again: Poems and Practices for Remembering Who We Are* by Joe Davis. This guide makes the poetry collection accessible, relevant, and inspiring for your groups that want to gather, learn, and grow together in Christian community. Additionally, with its intersectional components and strategies to build awareness of self and others, this guide actively disrupts the one-directional teaching that relies on surface methodologies to maintain the racialized status quo. All sessions are written by Rev. Dr. Jia Starr Brown, an educator, activist, and curriculum designer who is also a good friend of Joe.

What are these poems about?

Spoken word artist Joe Davis wrote this collection of poems to “help us remember what matters most, what we forgot we already knew.” While the session format may fit well with high school student ministry, these poems speak to people across the generations, because we all need reminders from time to time of the importance “of reclaiming our full selves.”

Who are these sessions designed for?

Remind Me Again: Poems and Practices for Remembering Who We Are was written with high school students in mind. However, Joe Davis says that this collection of poetry is also fitting for adults in all stages of life. That means these sessions could be used for parent-teen discussions, intergenerational gatherings and retreats, and adult groups who want to explore poetry together.

For people with limited mobility, sensory impairments, or other needs, make sure the whole group can access your space, and provide additional supports so everyone can see, hear, and experience the poems and activities.

What’s in each session?

Each session directs the leader to do pre-work activities to prepare to lead people through a poem that challenges, inspires, and connects. The framework is designed for leaders to facilitate sessions lasting about 45–60 minutes. Each session includes poem-based activities, biblical connections, and community actions. If a poem is a great fit with a lesson from another curriculum, consider using just the poetry-focused parts of a session for about 10–15 minutes of content. You may also find it helpful to include a way for participants to engage their bodies if a method is not included in session activities. Stretches, a prayer walk, or a quick visit to an outdoor space get participants moving their bodies.

When should I schedule these sessions?

The 41 sessions have been designed for wide and varying use. They can align with a youth program's school or ministry year or expand to a multi-year cycle. Some poems correspond with specific church holidays or will fit with local events or other happenings in your community. Sessions are constructed to be freestanding rather than completed in a specific sequence. Individual activities can be used during retreats, weeklong church camps, or other types of special programming.

Where can these sessions be held?

Plan to implement sessions in spaces where participants can gather, observe, and engage comfortably. For each session, plan to meet in a spot where everyone can sit comfortably in a circle. Several sessions describe the use of a whiteboard or chart paper, so make sure everyone can see where you post or draw content. Some sessions require larger spaces for the activities. Additional support and space may be needed to accommodate participants with limited mobility, sensory impairments, or other needs. Environment can be pivotal to the learning process; consider different areas for gathering, such as your front steps, the sanctuary, a green space on your church grounds, or another community space.

What do I need for each session?

Provide each participant with a copy of *Remind Me Again: Poems and Practices for Remembering Who We Are* by Joe Davis, writing utensils, and session-specific supplies described in this guide. Also offer each person a journal or notebook to reflect on the poems, write their ideas, and draw or sketch. Let them know that journaling can look like many things—detailed note-taking, short reflections, lists, doodles, or any other writing method that helps them reflect on the poem. Provide permanent markers, decorative tape, stickers, and other art supplies for them to decorate their journal covers.

How do I get started with this guide?

Keep reading to learn more about the structure used to facilitate each session. Then review the poems in *Remind Me Again* and choose a few you would like to explore with your group. Finally, read through the sessions for the selected poems for guidelines on how to lead. Sessions are numbered to locate them easily but can be scheduled in any order.

Session Structure

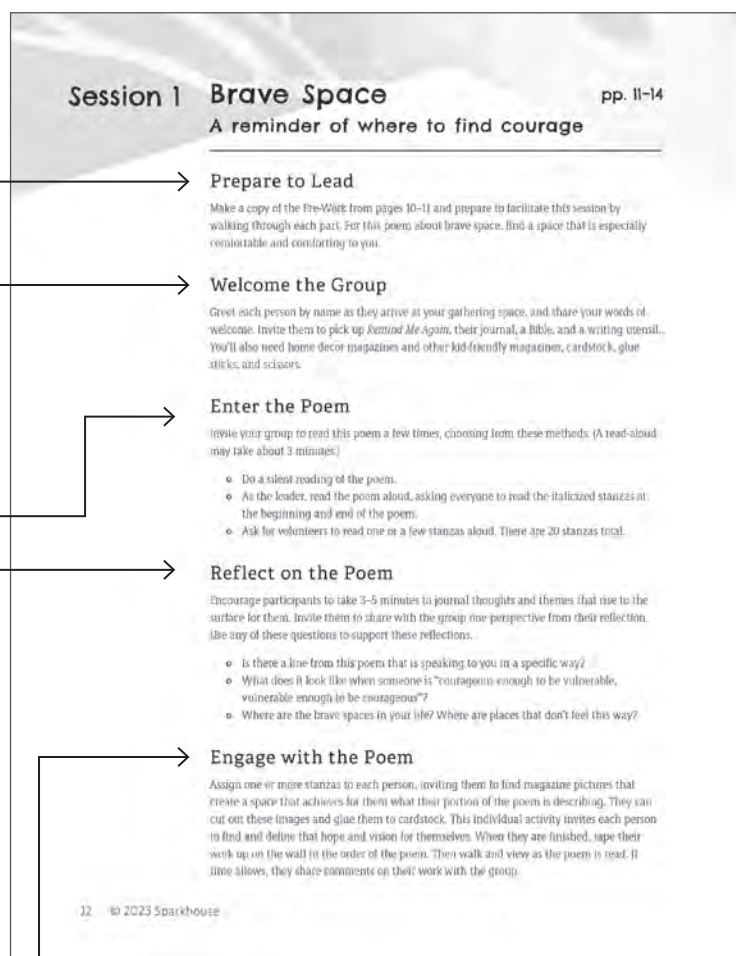
As the facilitator of these sessions, you'll guide a group through exploring a poem written by Joe Davis. Setting aside time and space to focus on session preparation is incredibly important for leading this work. Investing effort in preparing yourself before leading others will pay off in many ways. Plan to spend at least 20 minutes on this preparation.

Prepare to Lead by becoming familiar with the poem and the session activities. You'll need your copy of *Remind Me Again*, a Bible, and your favorite writing utensils. A comforting snack and beverage will add to the ambiance as you prepare. Make a copy of the Pre-Work on pages 10–11 for each session, and fill in the blanks. Tune in to any special considerations for the specific poem.

Welcome the Group warmly each and every time. Ensure you have a way to learn and remember every participant's name so you can greet everyone by name. Decide on how you want to greet people by choosing words of welcome that are inspired by one of the poems, such as "Welcome to this brave space," "Thank you for showing up," or "You belong here."

Enter the Poem by reading it at least twice in preparation for leading the group. Get comfortable with reading it aloud. (That's how poetry really shines!) Follow the guide's suggestions for entering the poem in creative, meaningful ways. Each session includes an estimate of how long it takes to read the poem aloud. Keep in mind that people have different rates of silent and spoken reading and that some people are uncomfortable with being asked to read aloud. These repeated readings are inspired by the practice of *lectio divina*, a way of reading the Bible that encourages contemplation and focus. Help participants enter the practice of reading poetry with the same kind of focused attention as they would give to reading scripture.

Reflect on the Poem with the questions provided. Use all the questions or just the ones that seem to best fit your group. The first question is the same each time: Is there a line from this poem that is speaking to you in a specific way? Be prepared to sit with longer silences as participants reflect on each question.



Engage with the Poem through the activity that is described. Consider preparing the project ahead of time to show participants what they'll be creating, and check on supply availability.

Note: At the end of each poem in *Remind Me Again*, you'll find "Try This Practice"—activities designed for readers who are engaging with these poems individually. These activities are not mentioned in the Facilitator Guide sessions. If any of these practices are compelling and relevant for your group, feel free to include them.

Enter the Bible

What does Jesus say about love? A lot! Invite someone to read John 13:34-35 aloud as everyone else follows along. These verses provide a new commandment for Jesus' followers then invite us to love one another, as Jesus loves us. Ask some of these questions about the poem's connection to this Bible text.

- Notice the capitalization of "Love" in the poem. Why do you think the poet made that choice?
- What do you think Jesus would say about this poem?
- How do you think Jesus invites us to receive and give Love to others?
- What is this poem inviting you to do?

Connect with Community

Identify and share a relevant current event connected to the poem that you discovered in your pre-work. Invite participants into deeper engagement or action by guiding them to read an article or watch a news story that discusses the local current event. After this personal and collective time with the poem Brave Space, lead a discussion to explore ways that the group can show up in this Love-filled way.

- Where is the need?
- What is the ask, both spoken and unspoken?
- Who needs support in this situation? How can we lift them up?
- What can our group do in brave encouragement and support in response to this story?

Pray Together

Give thanks to God for sharing this brave space together. Finish your prayer by blessing each person with these words from the poem:

[Person's name], may you reclaim yourself as a Brave Haven!

Enter the Bible by reading the scripture texts provided. Spend some time with these readings to notice their connections to the themes and ideas raised in the poem.

Connect with Community by trying the idea shared in the guide, which will require that you learn more about the neighbors, needs, and gifts in the community that surrounds your church. This activity will often take some additional pre-work, and you may need to talk with church staff and other leaders in the congregation. Adapt it as needed for your context. If another activity is a better fit given the specifics of your context (existing ministries with your community, your church's location), do that instead.

Pray Together to end the session. Use a similar format each time by giving thanks to God for your time together. Then including prayers specific to your group. Use the idea provided that weaves in the poem's themes and language.

A reminder of where to find courage

Prepare to Lead

Make a copy of the Pre-Work from pages 10–11 and prepare to facilitate this session by walking through each part. For this poem about brave space, find a space that is especially comfortable and comforting to you.

Welcome the Group

Greet each person by name as they arrive at your gathering space, and share your words of welcome. Invite them to pick up *Remind Me Again*, their journal, a Bible, and a writing utensil. You'll also need home decor magazines and other kid-friendly magazines, cardstock, glue sticks, and scissors.

Enter the Poem

Invite your group to read this poem a few times, choosing from these methods. (A read-aloud may take about 3 minutes.)

- Do a silent reading of the poem.
- As the leader, read the poem aloud, asking everyone to read the italicized stanzas at the beginning and end of the poem.
- Ask for volunteers to read one or a few stanzas aloud. There are 20 stanzas total.

Reflect on the Poem

Encourage participants to take 3–5 minutes to journal thoughts and themes that rise to the surface for them. Invite them to share one perspective from their reflection with the group. Use any of these questions to support these reflections.

- Is there a line from this poem that is speaking to you in a specific way?
- What does it look like when someone is “courageous enough to be vulnerable, vulnerable enough to be courageous”?
- Where are the brave spaces in your life? Where are places that don't feel this way?

Engage with the Poem

Assign one or more stanzas to each person, inviting them to find magazine pictures that create a space that achieves for them what their portion of the poem is describing. They can cut out these images and glue them to cardstock. This individual activity invites each person to find and define that hope and vision for themselves. When they are finished, tape their work up on the wall in the order of the poem. Then walk and view as the poem is read. If time allows, they can share comments on their work with the group.

Enter the Bible

What does Jesus say about love? A lot! Invite someone to read John 13:34-35 aloud as everyone else follows along. These verses provide a new commandment for Jesus' followers then *and now*: to love one another, as Jesus loves us. Ask some of these questions about the poem's connection to this Bible text.

- Notice the capitalization of "Love" in the poem. Why do you think the poet made that choice?
- What do you think Jesus would say about this poem?
- How do you think Jesus invites us to receive and give Love to others?
- What is this poem inviting *you* to do?

Connect with Community

Briefly describe a relevant current event connected to the poem that you discovered in your pre-work. Invite participants into deeper engagement or action by guiding them to read an article or watch a news story that discusses the local current event. After this personal and collective time with the poem Brave Space, lead a discussion to explore ways that the group can show up in this Love-filled way.

- Where is the need?
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