

SEE NO STRANGER

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Unity Church of Overland Park
Fall Faith Series 2025: See No Stranger

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Lessons & Practices in Revolutionary Love



A resource from:



The
Revolutionary
Love Project



“This work belongs to all of us. . . . We all have the ability to participate in this great love story. Imagine the stories we tell, the institutions we will build, and the lives we will lead when we affirm that every person **is** a person. Imagine the world we will birth when we see no stranger.”

[Kaur, 2020, p. 299]



Visit RevolutionaryLove.org/Learn to explore all the practices, download the FULL guide from which this is adapted, access more resources, and share your story of implementing Revolutionary Love in your classroom or community.

UCOP Fall Faith 2025: See No Stranger by Valarie Kaur

Kick-Off Sunday, September 21st

Small Groups begin meeting the week of September 21st at their appointed times/days and locations.

Thank you to all Small Group Facilitators!

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Fall Faith Gala Friday, November 7th 6pm-10pm

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS REVOLUTIONARY LOVE?

Watch Valarie Kaur's 2018 TED talk: [Three Lessons of Revolutionary Love in a Time of Rage](#) to examine and explore Kaur's definition of revolutionary love as a force for justice.

Description

*“Love is a form of **sweet labor**: fierce, bloody, imperfect, and life giving—a choice we make over and over again. Love can be taught, modeled, and practiced. . . .*

*“Revolutionary love” is the choice to enter into labor for **others**, for our **opponents**, and for **ourselves** in order to transform the world around us. It is not a formal code or prescription but an orientation to life that is personal and political, rooted in joy.”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 310)

See No Stranger: Chapter I Wonder

Week I – Wonder

Description

*“It is easy to **wonder** about the internal life of the people closest to us. It is harder to wonder about people who seem like strangers or outsiders. But when we choose to wonder about people we don’t know, when we imagine their lives and listen for their stories, we begin to expand the circle of those we see as part of us. We prepare ourselves to love beyond what evolution requires.”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 10-11)

“Seeing no stranger is an act of will. In brain-imaging studies, when people are shown a picture of a person of a different race long enough for comprehension, it is possible for them to dampen their unconscious fear response. We can change how we see.”

(Kaur, 2020, p. 26-27)

Opening Reflection

Wonder is the practice of looking at others — even strangers — and saying:

You are a part of me I do not yet know.

Write a free-write response (for approximately 3 minutes) to the following prompt.

In a free-write, the goal is to keep your pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) continually for the allotted time, without editing. There are no right or wrong responses. Use the space below, or write in a journal:

- “People expect me to be _____, but I’m actually _____.”

Now reflect on the following questions. Share your response with the group:

- How does it feel to be perceived or seen differently than you actually are?
- What do you think these expectations of you are based on?
- Do these expectations generally lead to positive treatment by others? If so how?
- Do you experience negative consequences from these expectations? If so, how?
- What do you wish other people knew about you?

Definition & Guiding Questions

Wonder is the first practice of revolutionary love for others. To wonder is to cultivate a sense of awe and openness to others' thoughts and experiences, their pain, their wants and needs. It is to look upon the face of anyone or anything and say: *You are a part of me I do not yet know.*

Wonder is an orientation to humility: recognizing that others are as complex and infinite to themselves as we are to ourselves. Wondering about a person gives us information for how to love them. You can practice wonder for *all* others – animals, trees, living beings, and the earth.

Wonder gives you information for how to care for them. Wonder is the wellspring of love.

- Recall a time you saw a stranger and felt connected to them. What made you notice them?
- Where in your life might curiosity open a door to compassion?
- What do we lose or risk by *not* wondering about others?
- What becomes possible for us and for our nation when we practice wonder and “seeing no stranger”?

Closing Reflection/Assignment

Each day, practice “see no stranger.” When you encounter someone new, silently repeat: *You are part of me I do not yet know.* Practice saying to yourself as you look at their faces: “Sibling, Sister, Brother, Aunt, Uncle, Son, Daughter, Grandparent, Family, etc. Keep a journal of moments when this shifted how you felt.

See No Stranger: Chapters 2 & 3

Week 2 – Grieve & Fight

Description

*“**Grief** has no end really. There is no fixing it, only bearing it. . . When we are brave enough to sit with our pain, it deepens our ability to sit with the pain of others. It shows us how to love them.”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 43-44)

*“When you love someone, you **fight** to protect them when they are in harm’s way. If you ‘see no stranger’ and choose to love all people, then you must fight for anyone who is suffering from the harm of injustice. This was the path of the warrior-sage: the warrior fights, the sage loves.”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 92)

Opening Reflection

Grief honors what we have lost and connects us to one another. Fighting, in the spirit of love, is choosing to protect what we love.

Definition & Guiding Questions (Grieve)

Grief is a necessary practice in loving others. To grieve with others is to share their pain, without trying to minimize or erase it. Grieving with others requires a willingness to be transformed by their experiences, especially those who have suffered trauma and violence. Grieving collectively and in community gives us the information to build solidarity, to fight for justice, and even to share in one another’s joy.

- **How is grieving an act of love? How can collective grieving with others be a practice of solidarity and a revolutionary act?**
- **How can the practice of wonder help us to love and grieve with others, even those we do not know?**

Prompts

- When have you grieved with others? How did that grief connect you?
- Where in your life could grief move you toward action?

Definition & Guiding Questions (Fight)

To fight is to choose to protect those in harm's way. To fight with revolutionary love is to fight against injustice alongside those most impacted by harm, in a way that preserves our opponents' humanity as well as our own. When we fight for those outside our immediate circle, our love becomes revolutionary.

- **Why is fighting necessary in the labor of revolutionary love?**
- **How can the practices of *wonder* and *grieving* help us to fight for justice?**
- **What are our own metaphorical swords and shields in the fight for justice?**

Prompts

- How will you cultivate relationships within your communities and across communities to build transformative solidarity?
- When we fight with revolutionary love, we work to embody the world we are fighting for. Fighting is not always the direct action of protest in the streets, but also the *slow and steady presence of building relationships, caring for one another, investing time and presence in our communities*. How can you fight with revolutionary love to embody the world we are fighting for?

Closing Reflection/Assignment

Share one grief story with another person this week. Name one action (large or small) you can take to defend the dignity of someone else.

In *See No Stranger*, Valarie Kaur writes about the importance of honing our “swords and shields” in the fight for justice. Kaur writes of her own Sikh faith and the Sikh warrior tradition of fighting to protect and love one another. She poses the following four questions:

- “First, what is your sword, your kirpan? What can you use to fight on behalf of others—your pen, your voice, your art, your pocketbook, your presence?”
- “Second, what is your shield, your dhal? What can you use to protect yourself and others when the fight is dangerous—your camera, legal counsel, a group of allies, public witness?”
- “Third, what is your instrument, your dilruba [to lift your spirit and center your mind]?”
- “Finally, who is your sacred community, your sangat?” (p. 98).

Reflect upon these questions from Kaur. **Free-write, journal, draw, or discuss** your responses to these questions. Use the space below, add paper, or use a journal.

See No Stranger: Chapters 4 & 5

Week 3 – Rage & Listen

Description

*“Divine **rage** is fierce, disciplined, and visionary. . . . The aim of divine rage is not vengeance but to reorder the world. It is precise and purposeful. . . . It points us to the humanity of even those who we were fighting.”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 130)

*“Deep **listening** is an act of surrender. We risk being changed by what we hear. . . . Empathy is cognitive and emotional—to inhabit another person’s view of the world is to feel the world with them. But I also know that it’s okay if I don’t feel very much for them at all. I just need to feel safe enough to stay curious. The most critical part of listening is asking what is at stake for the other person. . . . [Then] I ask myself, What is this story demanding of me? What will I do now that I know this?”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 144)

Opening Reflection

Rage shows us what we care about. Listening allows us to transform rage into energy for justice rather than destruction.

Definition & Guiding Questions (Rage)

In revolutionary love, rage is the first practice in loving our opponents. To rage is to express our body’s most fiery energy, it is to tap into our body’s power to protect ourselves and others. To rage is to honor and tend to our own pain so that trauma does not hijack our ability to see another’s humanity. When we listen deeply to our rage against injustice, we gain the information and energy we need to transform the world.

- In what ways is rage a practice of Revolutionary Love?
- Why is rage a necessary practice in loving opponents?

Prompts

- Recall a time you felt rage at injustice. What did that reveal about your love?
- How do you respond when someone expresses rage toward you?

Definition & Guiding Questions (Listen)

To listen to our opponents is to seek to understand them – not to change them, or persuade them, not to compromise with them, or legitimize them. Listening to our opponents preserves their humanity—and our own. This is how listening to our opponents becomes a powerful act of revolutionary love, especially when it is not safe for an accomplice to do so.

Definition of opponent

Kaur defines an opponent as “any person whose beliefs, words, or actions causes violence, injustice, or harm. The word ‘enemy’ implies permanence, but ‘opponent’ is fluid.” Listening to our opponents is rigorous work and difficult labor, especially if it means listening to opponents who may mean us harm. We may not always have the capacity to listen to our opponents—and this is okay.

The overall practice of loving opponents is called “tending the wound” (Kaur, 2020, p. 312). When we are tending to our own wounds, trauma, or rage, it is not the right time to listen to our opponents. But when and if we are able, we can practice listening to opponents so that we can listen for the ways in which their wounds drive them to cause harm.

- In what ways is listening to opponents an act of revolutionary love?
- What are the goals of listening to our opponents? What is required of us when we practice deep listening?
- What are the roles of allies or accomplices in the practice of listening to opponents?

Prompts

- How are the practices of listening and wonder (see Lesson 1: Wonder) related?
- Anger and divine rage are often important and necessary parts of these dialogues as well. How might expressions of anger or rage influenced these conversations? What

challenges or possibilities might expressions of anger have added to these conversations?

Closing Reflection/Assignment

Practice deep listening with someone you disagree with (perhaps **not** the person you *most* disagree with). Set aside judgment and listen for their humanity. As you listen, notice what is happening in your body—if you feel yourself tighten and tense, consider slowing down your breath so that you can continue to listen with wonder and curiosity. Journal what you noticed.

See No Stranger: Chapter 6

Week 4 – Reimagine

Description

*“In the traditional activist playbook, we resist the actions of our opponents with the goal of removing them from power. But the longer I spent listening to the stories of marginalized people, tending to their wounds, the more I heard a deeper longing—for a future where we were all safe and secure in our bodies, free to pursue our dreams, where our social, political, and economic institutions supported not just our survival but our flourishing. We could resist with all our might and never deliver such a future. We needed to do more than resist. We needed to **reimagine** the world.”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 171)

*“Any social harm can be traced to institutions that produce it, authorize it, or otherwise profit from it. To undo the injustice, we have to **imagine** new institutions—and step in to lead them.”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 172)

Opening Reflection

To reimagine is to see beyond the world as it is and dare to envision the world as it could be.

To reimagine is to exercise our collective imagination to create a world that honors the humanity of all of us. Reimagining requires more than resistance and replacing people who hold power in unjust systems. Reimagining requires the courage to create systems of justice that represent what we are **fighting for**, not only what we are fighting against.

“Imagination is the faculty of mind that images and forms; it is the power to shape and form thought. What we imagine, we form; what we form, we become.”

(Charles Fillmore, Keep a True Lent, p. 146)

“Imagination gives us the ability to project ourselves beyond what is into the realm of what can be. It is the spiritual faculty that enables us to see with the eyes of God.”

(Eric Butterworth, The Creative Life)

Both Fillmore and Butterworth describe imagination as a divine faculty — the power to “form thought” and to “see with the eyes of God.” When we reimagine, we are not just dreaming; we are participating in shaping what becomes possible.

Where do you see opportunities in your life, community, or the world to exercise spiritual imagination — not only resisting what is unjust, but creating what could honor the humanity of all?

Definition & Guiding Questions

To reimagine is to explore a vision of a relationship, community, and world where we all flourish. Reimagining means that we’re doing more than resisting our opponents. We are looking at the cultures that radicalize them and institutions that authorize them. This is the moment to declare what is obsolete, what can be reformed, and what must be reimagined. Reimagining focuses us not just on what we are fighting against, but the future that we are fighting for.

- What is the role of imagination in loving opponents and fighting against injustice?
- How would you reimagine the world you want to live in? What does a collective reimagining of our world require of us?
- What does a world, or a nation, rooted in revolutionary love look like?

Prompts

Reimagining our world is not a futile or frivolous exercise. Rather, as poet Lucille Clifton writes, **“We cannot create what we can't imagine.”** Reimagining systems that seem to be enduring and unchangeable is a necessary practice in birthing a world through revolutionary love (Kaur, 2020).

- What is one system you wish could be different (e.g., prisons, schools, healthcare)?
- How might **love** help us reimagine it?

Closing Reflection/Assignment

Create a simple **sketch, journal entry, painting, poem, or song** envisioning a world shaped by love. Share with your group if you feel comfortable.

See No Stranger: Chapters 7 & 8

Week 5 – Breathe & Push

Description

*“The world sends a barrage of signals that our bodies—as women, people of color, women of color, queer people, trans people, and disabled people—are not beautiful or strong or worthy of love. Taking the time to **breathe**—literally and metaphorically—is a way to assert that our bodies are worthy and beloved. Loving our bodies is the first and primal act of loving ourselves.”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 217)

*“When I was finally ready to love myself, I had to learn how to **breathe and push** through my grief, rage, and trauma. On the other side, I found what seemed utterly impossible before: healing, forgiveness, and even reconciliation.”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 253)

Opening Reflection

Breathing is about sustaining ourselves and each other. **Pushing** is the labor of accountability, holding systems and people to the demands of justice.

- Make a list of the things that everyone needs to be whole and healthy:
 - in mind
 - in body
 - in soul or spirit?

Discuss:

- What do you notice about your list?
- What are some of the responses that your group had in common? How do these shared responses help define how we understand what “health” and “healthy” mean in our society?
- Which of the items on your lists are the most difficult to attain or secure? Why?
- In what ways do issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc. influence a community’s ability to access these requirements to be healthy and well?

Definition & Guiding Questions (Breathe)

Breathing is the practice of taking conscious deep breaths. It is also the act of creating space in our lives to slow down and care for our bodies, minds, and spirits. Breathing in community is how we sustain ourselves and our labors for justice — and let joy in.

Taking the time to breathe—literally and metaphorically—is a way to assert that our bodies are worthy and beloved. Loving our bodies is the first and primal act of loving ourselves. This is how breathing becomes an act of revolutionary love.

“Breathing creates space in our lives to think and see differently, enliven our imagination, awake to pleasure, move towards freedom, and let joy in. For those of us who live in bodies that are denigrated by society, breathing like this is a *political* act.” (Kaur, p. 216)

Note that Kaur uses the term “love for ourselves” rather than “love for self.” This reminds us that our health and well-being are connected to the wellness of the community as a whole. Caring for ourselves is a practice that we do with the support of others.

- How is the practice of breathing an act of revolutionary love for ourselves?
- How can the practices of breathing help to love others and opponents, to wonder, grieve, fight, rage, listen, and reimagine?

Prompts

- When in your life have you felt unable to “breathe”? Who or what helped restore you?
- What do you notice? What did you learn about yourself and your community through this discussion?

Definition & Guiding Questions (Push)

To push is to choose to enter grief, rage, or trauma as part of a healing process. Pushing requires us to discern the right times to breathe and rest, and the right time to push through painful sensations, emotions, and thoughts to birth new possibilities in ourselves and others.

- What does it mean to “breathe and push” in the labor of revolutionary love?
- How can the practices of breathing and pushing lead us towards healing, accountability, forgiveness, and reconciliation?

Prompts

How would you respond to Kaur’s questions: “What does it mean for us to love ourselves as a people? What does it mean for us to **push** as a nation?”

- What could a national reconciliation look like, if it were rooted in belonging and healing, rather than systems of shame and punishment? What would this require of all of us?

Closing Reflection/Assignment

This week, commit to one act of care (for yourself or others) and one act of accountability (pushing for change).

Consider an opportunity for forgiveness and/or reconciliation. “Forgiveness is not forgetting. Forgiveness is freedom from hate” (Kaur, 2020, p. 263). Healing has its own timeline for everyone. *No one should be rushed to forgive someone who has harmed them.* As Kaur writes, “Sometimes the choice to withhold forgiveness is an act of agency too” (p. 263).

- **Forgiveness and reconciliation are related but distinct processes.** Forgiveness is a process that one can do on their own, and that does not require participation from the person who committed harm. **Reconciliation** rests on accountability and requires perpetrators to accept full responsibility for their actions.
- **Taking responsibility for the harm we have caused can also reflect love for ourselves.** adrienne maree brown writes that accountability and growth should stem from a deep sense of belonging to ourselves. She writes, “From that deep place of belonging to ourselves, we can understand that we are inherently worthy of each other.

Even when we make mistakes, harm each other, lose our way, we are worthy. . . . A proper apology is rooted in this worthiness—'I was at my worst. Even at my worst, I am worthy, so I will grow.'"

You are worthy to give and to receive forgiveness. Is there an opportunity calling you? What action might you take this week- journal, conversation, letter- to engage the practice of forgiveness and/or reconciliation. *Perhaps simply creating time to reflect on whether or not now is the time for you to breathe or push is enough.*

See No Stranger: Chapter 9 & Epilogue

Week 6 – Transition & Joy

Description

*“The final stage of birthing labor is the most dangerous stage, and the most painful. . . . The medical term is ‘transition.’ **Transition** feels like dying but it is the stage that precedes the birth of new life. . . . In all our various creative labors—making a living, raising a family, building a nation—there are moments that are so painful, we want to give up. But inside searing pain and encroaching numbness we might also find the depths of our courage, hear our deepest wisdom, and transition to the other side.”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 278-279)

*“**Joy** is the gift of love. Grief is the price of love. Anger protects that which is loved. And when we think we have reached our limit, wonder is the act that returns us to love.”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 278)

*“In the face of horrors visited upon our world daily, in the struggle to protect our loved ones, choosing to let in **joy is a revolutionary act**. In joy, we see even darkness with new eyes. Joy returns us to everything that is good and beautiful and worth fighting for.”*

(Kaur, 2020, p. 307)

Opening Reflection

Transitions are both endings and beginnings. **Joy** is more than happiness — it is the deep well of resilience that sustains **love in action**.

How do you experience transitions? How do you experience joy?

Definition & Guiding Questions (Transition)

Transition is both a noun and a verb. Transition is the fiery process that is required to move from one reality into another. To transition is to summon the courage to stay in the labors of love and justice, even when we want to give up. It requires us to draw upon collective wisdom to birth something new together.

Transition, like each of the practices of revolutionary love, is both personal and political.

- *How can understanding the transition stage help us to respond to the challenges of the present time?*
- *In what ways is the practice of transition an act of loving ourselves?*

Prompts

- Reflect on a transition in your life. What was lost? What was gained?
- How would you describe the state of the world today? What challenges do we face?
- How would you answer Kaur's question, and why: Is this the darkness of the tomb? Or the darkness of the womb? Is it both? In what ways?

Definition & Guiding Questions (Joy)

Joy is the core practice that sustains all others. To let in joy is to give our senses over to what is beautiful, delightful, pleasurable, or wondrous in the present moment.

Joy is the gift of love. Joy returns us to everything good and beautiful and worth fighting for. It gives us energy for the long labor.

- *Why is joy a necessary practice of revolutionary love?*
- *What is gained—for others, opponents, and ourselves—when we practice, protect, and cultivate our joy?*

Prompts

- How is joy a source of strength for you?
- Kaur writes, “Joy is possible even amid great labors—the labor of dying, the labor of birthing, and the labors between. . . . In the face of horrors visited upon our world daily, in the struggle to protect our loved ones, choosing to let in joy is a revolutionary act” (p. 307). Have you experienced this to be true in your life? How so?

Closing Reflection/Assignment

Do you find that transition tends to bring you joy, or are you more inclined to feel stress or anxiety? What is your relationship with change and with joy?

Assignment: *Nurturing Our Joy*

For 10 days (or a timeframe of your choosing), make nurturing joy an intentional daily and reflective practice. There are no right or wrong ways to do this. Your daily joy may be as simple as listening to your favorite song without any distractions, cooking a nourishing meal, taking a 10-minute walk, making time to talk with friends and loved ones.

- Each day, keep a journal or log and reflect (even for only 5 minutes daily) about this practice. You might also choose to use this reflection as a social media “Joy Challenge” and invite friends to post photos or reflections of their daily joy with you.
- As you reflect daily, consider some of the questions:
 - What did you do today to nurture and protect your joy?
 - How did this practice feel today? What did you notice about what makes you joyful? (e.g. Stillness? Movement? Solitude? Connection with others? Play? Rest?)
 - What lessons, if any, did this practice reveal for you?
 - Refer back to the opening reflection from this lesson: After this daily joy practice, how would you describe your relationship to joy? What might you do to protect and nurture your joy further? What daily or weekly practices might you develop in order to make joy a consistent practice moving forward?



PERMISSIONS

YOU CAN USE THE REVOLUTIONARY LOVE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE IN CLASSROOMS, CAMPUSES, INDIVIDUAL LEARNING GROUPS, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER SPACES OF LEARNING. YOU ARE PERMITTED TO ADAPT THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES SO LONG AS YOU MAINTAIN THE FIDELITY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LOVE FRAMEWORK AND PRACTICES. THE USE OF EDUCATOR'S GUIDE MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTION: CANLAS, MELISSA ANN (2020). SEE NO STRANGER: EDUCATOR'S GUIDE. REVOLUTIONARY LOVE PROJECT.