



Matthew 5:1 "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Icebreaker

Tell about a time you received comfort when you didn't expect it? OR
What kinds of things do you find beautiful?

Conversation Starters

1. Talk about a story similar to the one Alice told about the dad who flew on 6 flights with his flight attendant daughter on Christmas Eve. Why did you find your story beautiful?
2. How often do you think of God and beauty? What do you find beautiful?
3. Talk together about the absurdity of calling the cross - the Roman form of execution - beautiful. What do you make of that? Why did God choose such an ugly image and how did he make it beautiful?
4. What do you think it means - and give *real, ordinary* examples from your *daily* life - to live a life formed in the shape of the cross -- What some writers call the "cruciform" life? Talk especially about actions of self-sacrifice - anything from giving up control of the remote to taking care of your ailing mother. Where might you start to ponder adding this kind of beautiful behavior into your day?
5. Do you ever feel poor spiritually? What do you tend to do when you feel that way? How does it make you feel that Jesus says this is one of the only entrance requirements into His Kingdom?
6. Are you comfortable receiving comfort from another person? Why or why not?
7. Why do you think we often struggle to give comfort appropriately and instead, give advice, or quote Scripture or offer trite cliches? Why do we have a hard time offering the quiet ministry of our compassionate presence when people are hurting?