

SLOWING
DOWN
TO
THE SPEED
OF JOY

SMALL GROUP
STUDY GUIDE

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SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



Dynamic Catholic

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INTRODUCTION

Busy is not your friend.

Unfortunately, everyone is busy. Our days are filled with countless activities, meetings, and projects. One thing leads to the next thing, and the cycle repeats. We are living our lives like Ferraris with no brakes.

This nonstop lifestyle may sound familiar to you. Maybe you've been feeling overwhelmed for a long time now. Maybe you don't know how to stop.

One of Matthew Kelly's biggest regrets is the speed at which he used to live his life. He spent 30 years rushing from one thing to the next, squeezing as much as humanly possible into one day, yet always striving for more at the end of it. The truth is, the faster you go, the more likely you are to crash. But we just keep going faster.

The speed and busyness of our lives stand in direct opposition to the things we say matter most: relationships, spirituality, health and wellbeing...the list goes on.

It's time for a new strategy. It's time to embrace the speed of joy.

Slowing Down to the Speed of Joy isn't just a book. It's a way of life. The benefits you experience when you slow down to the speed of joy are extraordinary. Slowing down will enhance your relationships. It will prevent stress, anxiety, and burnout. It will give you the clarity you need to make better decisions, increase your creativity, and expand your capacity to love and be loved.

It will, quite simply, and in every way imaginable, change your life.

INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

We've designed this study guide to help you reflect more deeply on what you are learning and inspire you to put these ideas into action. Our hope is that this experience will encourage you to banish busy and urgent from your life, so that you can flourish like never before.

It's time to slow down to the speed of joy.

May God bless you with a prayerful spirit and a peaceful heart,

The Dynamic Catholic Team

STUDY GUIDE

PURPOSE AND FORMAT

The purpose of this study guide is to help readers delve further into *Slowing Down to the Speed of Joy* by exploring personal reaction and application. While it has been produced primarily for use in small faith groups and book clubs, it can also be used by individuals for personal reflection.

The study guide comprises six sessions. These sessions could take place once a week or once a month, at the discretion of the group. Each session follows the same format:

- **Opening Prayer**
- **Discussion Questions**
- **Closing Prayer**
- **Holy Moment Challenge**
- **Announcements**

We recommend that a group meet for sixty to ninety minutes, but that the group agrees upon a fixed length of time and adheres to that time. It is assumed that participants will have completed the reading assignment before attending each session. However, during the first session, your group may read the “Introduction” section in the study guide and “The Jar of Life” together.

****Note:** Holy Moment Challenges for the week are optional, but they will help group members to apply the readings to everyday life!*

READING SCHEDULE

SESSION 1

THE JAR OF LIFE

Read “Prologue: The Jar of Life” in *Slowing Down to the Speed of Joy* and the introduction to this study guide

**These sections can be read in advance or as a group during the first session*

SESSION 2

BEYOND THE JOYLESS URGENCY

Read pages 1-25

SESSION 3

HUMAN FLOURISHING

Read pages 27-64

SESSION 4

THE ONE THING

Read pages 65-101

SESSION 5

THE SECRET OF LIFE

Read pages 103-149

SESSION 6

CONCLUSION

No assigned reading

TO THE LEADER

Hey there!

First and foremost, we want to thank you for taking the initiative to not only read *Slowing Down to the Speed of Joy*, but also go through the book in a group setting. Here at Dynamic Catholic, we are quite proud of this book. Not just because we are confident the message it holds will change lives, but because of the ordinary people who are willing to spread the message in such a simple, beautiful, inspiring way. These people are the reason Dynamic Catholic exists.

You are the reason why we do what we do. Our mission is to help ordinary people become extraordinary saints, one Holy Moment at a time. And you, leading this group, that's a Holy Moment. Know that we are praying for you and your endeavor to inspire others to slow down to the speed of joy.

BEST PRACTICES

Never led a small group? Don't sweat it! Here are five tips for creating a great environment for small groups.

- 1. Keep your meeting time and place consistent.** Aim to meet once a week, at a time convenient for all participants, in a location that has accessible parking.
- 2. Communicate in advance.** Make sure everyone knows what the assigned reading is for the next session. If you're meeting at someone's house, let people know beforehand where they can park (e.g. in the driveway, at the curb, down the street).
- 3. Get to know each other.** Even if you have already been meeting for some time, it can be beneficial to begin your time together as a group with a fun, lighthearted question. Starting sessions this way helps individuals get to know each other a little and feel more comfortable together. Here are some fun suggestions:
 - Which fictional character would you want to be your best friend?
 - What is your dream vacation?
 - If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life what would it be?
 - What is one of your favorite, funniest, or most awkward childhood memories?
- 4. Allow room for silence.** It's okay if there are moments of quiet in the group. It may feel uncomfortable or awkward, but often, people need time to process or to summon the courage to speak up.
- 5. Begin and end with prayer.** Start every session with the opening prayer (found at the beginning of each section), and close each session with the closing prayer (found at the end of each session). You can also give people the opportunity to offer personal prayer intentions.

We are very grateful for you and your decision to meet people where they are and lead them to where God is calling them to be. The Catholic Church needs people like you doing things like this!

SESSION 1

THE JAR OF LIFE

**Reminder! If you haven't already, please read the study guide introduction and the prologue for Slowing Down to the Speed of Joy as a group during this session.*

OPENING PRAYER

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds and allow us to slow down to the speed of joy. Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength, and wisdom to live out all the good things we explore here together. Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream for us to become the-best-versions-of-ourselves and have the clarity to see that busy is not our friend. We ask you to bless in a special way the anxious, the overwhelmed, the restless, and the discouraged. Remind us of our need to slow down, and inspire us to be filled with profound gratitude and true rest. We ask all this through your Son, Jesus. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are you hoping to get out of reading this book and participating in this small group?
2. On a scale of 1-10, rate how busy you currently are in your life. How open are you to slowing down and discovering the speed of joy?
3. What are you dissatisfied with at this time in your life? What is God saying to you through that dissatisfaction?
4. What stood out to you the most about The Jar of Life story that opens this book? What applications do you see to your own life?
5. In The Jar of Life, Matthew writes, "Joy erupts within us when we allow an experience to touch the very depths of our souls." Describe a time in your life when you felt joy like that.

SESSION 1 (CONTINUED)

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus,

Thank you for encouraging us to slow down to the speed of joy. As we dive into the upcoming week, enlighten our minds to recognize when we feel overwhelmed, and open our hearts to accept the rest you offer us instead.

Please reveal to us the ways in which we can better rely on you, and help us to be open to your dream for this experience.

Amen.

THIS WEEK'S HOLY MOMENT CHALLENGE

Spend ten minutes in the classroom of silence this week. Visit a church or find a comfortable place to sit, and rest in the peaceful quiet.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The reading assignment for our next gathering is *Part One: Beyond the Joyless Urgency*.

Visit DynamicCatholic.com to get a free share pack of *Slowing Down to the Speed of Joy* for your families and friends!

Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

SESSION 2

BEYOND THE JOYLESS URGENCY

OPENING PRAYER

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds and allow us to slow down to the speed of joy. Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength, and wisdom to live out all the good things we explore here together. Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream for us to become the-best-versions-of-ourselves and have the clarity to see that busy is not our friend. We ask you to bless in a special way the anxious, the overwhelmed, the restless, and the discouraged. Remind us of our need to slow down, and inspire us to be filled with profound gratitude and true rest. We ask all this through your Son, Jesus. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. On page 6, Matthew Kelly asks his friend, “Why are you so busy?” What about you? Do you feel busy, and if so, why?
2. Slowing down to the speed of joy includes taking time to pause throughout your day. What’s one small change you could make in your schedule to give yourself some time to pause and slow down?
3. In what ways is God calling you to slow down at this time in your life?
4. Throughout pages 9-11, Matthew discusses the fact that many of us are in a toxic relationship with busyness. What signs of that do you see in your life?
5. How has being busy affected your most important relationship in the past month?
6. What dream have you been delaying or putting on hold? How could slowing down to the speed of joy help make that dream possible?

SESSION 2 (CONTINUED)

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus,

Thank you for gathering us here today to examine our daily lives a little bit closer. Thank you for each person here, and for each person's desire to grow closer to you. Help us to be honest with ourselves about our weaknesses, motivated to make the changes you know we need to make, and content to rest in the present moment. Show us what true joy and rest look like. Please help us to say "no" to things this week that do not serve you, and "yes" to the things that do.

Amen.

THIS WEEK'S HOLY MOMENT CHALLENGE

Call a friend or family member you haven't talked to in a while.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The reading assignment for our next gathering is *Part Two: Human Flourishing*.

Visit DynamicCatholic.com to get a free share pack of *Slowing Down to the Speed of Joy* for your families and friends!

Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

SESSION 3

HUMAN FLOURISHING

OPENING PRAYER

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds and allow us to slow down to the speed of joy. Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength, and wisdom to live out all the good things we explore here together. Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream for us to become the-best-versions-of-ourselves and have the clarity to see that busy is not our friend. We ask you to bless in a special way the anxious, the overwhelmed, the restless, and the discouraged. Remind us of our need to slow down, and inspire us to be filled with profound gratitude and true rest. We ask all this through your Son, Jesus. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Matthew Kelly writes that the “speed of joy” is the ideal speed for each activity. What’s an activity that you’re not doing at the speed of joy (speeding to work, rushing through conversations, etc.)? What adjustment can you make to slow down?
2. What’s an area where you do slow down to the speed of joy (reading the Bible with breakfast, asking about someone’s day)? How do you feel in those moments?
3. What is one thing that you need to start saying “no” to in order to slow down to the speed of joy?
4. How do you feel and act when someone interrupts you? What does that tell you about the pace at which you are living your life?
5. Speed and busyness are obstacles to love. When you find yourself rushing, how do you find that it affects your time for others?
6. How do you feel God inviting you to slow down in one of your relationships?

SESSION 3 (CONTINUED)

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus,

Thank you for bringing us together today to reflect on the importance of slowing down to the speed of joy. Please bless each of us, our families, and our friends with peace. Make us more attentive so that we can be open to what others need and hear what You are telling us through their words and actions. Teach us to see your face in each person we meet. Encourage us to surrender each day to you, especially when we feel overwhelmed, anxious, or exhausted. Above all, help us slow down to better love others, for it is in better loving others that we better love you.

Amen.

THIS WEEK'S HOLY MOMENT CHALLENGE

Do something just for the joy of it this week.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The reading assignment for our next gathering is *Part Three: The One Thing*.

Visit [DynamicCatholic.com](https://www.dynamiccatholic.com) to get a free share pack of *Slowing Down to the Speed of Joy* for your families and friends!

Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

SESSION 4

THE ONE THING

OPENING PRAYER

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds and allow us to slow down to the speed of joy. Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength, and wisdom to live out all the good things we explore here together. Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream for us to become the-best-versions-of-ourselves and have the clarity to see that busy is not our friend. We ask you to bless in a special way the anxious, the overwhelmed, the restless, and the discouraged. Remind us of our need to slow down, and inspire us to be filled with profound gratitude and true rest. We ask all this through your Son, Jesus. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you could take a road trip with anyone, living or dead, who would you choose? Why?
2. What did you learn from this section about leisure? What surprised you or caught your attention?
3. How often are you able to live life at a leisurely pace? What needs to change in your life to make that possible?
4. Jesus was a peaceful presence in every room- never rushing, always present. Who is someone in your life who is a peaceful presence? How can you be a peaceful presence?
5. On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your friendship with silence?
6. If you were given a year-long sabbatical, how do you think you would spend it? How do you think it would change your life?
7. What does your Sabbath (Sunday) look like? What do you need to do to rest and slow down to the speed of joy every Sunday?

SESSION 4 (CONTINUED)

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus,

Thank you for giving us Sundays. You created them because you know we need to rest—help us to see the power of that rest. Even when it's difficult, remind us to slow down to the speed of joy, especially on Sundays. Teach us how to be more open to resting in you, and reveal to us the ways in which we can be a peaceful presence to others.

Amen.

THIS WEEK'S HOLY MOMENT CHALLENGE

Make one intentional change this coming Sunday to honor it as a day of rest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The reading assignment for our next gathering is *Part Three: The Secret of Life*.

Visit DynamicCatholic.com to get a free share pack of *Slowing Down to the Speed of Joy* for your families and friends!

Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

SESSION 5

THE SECRET OF LIFE

OPENING PRAYER

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds and allow us to slow down to the speed of joy. Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength, and wisdom to live out all the good things we explore here together. Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream for us to become the-best-versions-of-ourselves and have the clarity to see that busy is not our friend. We ask you to bless in a special way the anxious, the overwhelmed, the restless, and the discouraged. Remind us of our need to slow down, and inspire us to be filled with profound gratitude and true rest. We ask all this through your Son, Jesus. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We are getting close to the end of our journey. How is slowing down to the speed of joy going for you?
2. What's the best thing that's happened to you today?
3. What is bringing you joy during this season of your life?
4. Take a moment to think about the people who have helped you to pursue your dreams. How have they inspired you?
5. Our greatest ability is our availability. What are some ways you can be available to others and God this week?
6. A keystone decision is a single decision that is made today but has a compounding effect in the future. What is a good keystone decision you have made in the past month?
7. Gratitude is the path that leads to contentment. What are five things that you are grateful for today?

SESSION 5 (CONTINUED)

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus,

Thank you for giving us the gift of our hopes and dreams. Help us to use those desires to become the-best-versions-of-ourselves and follow your plan for our lives. Open our eyes to the opportunities to love others in small ways, and open our hearts to be more available to God.

Amen.

THIS WEEK'S HOLY MOMENT CHALLENGE

Express your appreciation for someone this week. Go out of your way to make them feel deeply appreciated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There is no assigned reading for next week, but come prepared to discuss the book as a whole as well as your main takeaways!

SESSION 6

CONCLUSION

OPENING PRAYER

Loving Father,

Open our hearts and minds and allow us to slow down to the speed of joy. Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength, and wisdom to live out all the good things we explore here together. Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream for us to become the-best-versions-of-ourselves and have the clarity to see that busy is not our friend. We ask you to bless in a special way the anxious, the overwhelmed, the restless, and the discouraged. Remind us of our need to slow down, and inspire us to be filled with profound gratitude and true rest. We ask all this through your Son, Jesus. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which part of this book was your favorite? Why?
2. What is one idea or lesson that you want to take with you for the rest of your life?
3. What is one way slowing down to the speed of joy has improved your relationship with God?
4. In what ways did you slow down to the speed of joy by reading this book and participating in this small study group? In what ways are you still working to embrace the speed of joy?
5. How many people do you know who need to hear the message of this book? How can you share it with them?

SESSION 6 (CONTINUED)

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus,

Thank you for bringing us to the successful completion of this book and for the relationships we've built along the way. We ask for your guidance in taking what we've learned and using it to slow down to the speed of joy. Continue to teach us how we can become the best-versions-of-ourselves. Help us remember that busy is not our friend, that we have the opportunity to do things with leisure, and that great things can be accomplished when we are peaceful and content.

Amen.

THIS WEEK'S HOLY MOMENT CHALLENGE

Have a Harry Day within the next month! Wake up, have breakfast, and decide what will bring you the most joy.



Dynamic Catholic

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