

Allie Reinsvold
Class of 2013

Of the many blessings I have received this past year, being a member of a Journey Group is definitely one of them. At first, the only reason I joined Journey Group was that my older sister told me I needed to. Once I joined I was surprised by how much I enjoyed it, and enjoyed it for more than just the delicious food. We are all busy college students, but it is important to set aside the time to reflect on where we are at on our lives' journey. Journey group provided me with the opportunity to get to know other women who are undergoing the same sorts of experiences I am, on a much deeper level than I would otherwise have had the chance to. This first year of college was a huge transition time, and it was amazing to have a place to go every month where I didn't have to worry about what the others were thinking about me or how they would react to what I said. In most cases forming a safe and open environment like that takes time and effort, but in the Journey Group setting it was assumed from the beginning.

I love the companionship and friendships I have formed, not only with my peers, but also with my moderators. It is a wonderful opportunity to be able to sit down with other women and openly and honestly discuss how we are doing, what challenges we are being faced with, and how we are working on our relationship with God. Sometimes before a Journey Group meeting setting aside the two hours to go seems daunting, consider all I have always leave the meeting feeling refreshed and am and where I want to go. I also love the time before we begin sharing, when we are just relaxing with each other and enjoying one another's company.



As an added bonus, being in a Journey Group has also really improved my listening skills and how comfortable I am with silence. At the first meeting I found it really difficult to respond to others and focus on them, instead of focusing on me and directing attention back to me, but it has gotten a lot easier since then. I have improved my ability to filter myself out of a conversation so that I can focus entirely on the person who is sharing. This is a skill that I have used in other

relationships in my life outside Journey Group. I think my ability to share has improved as well. Instead of focusing on the common surface level answers, I try to go deeper into who I am and how I actually feel about the questions being asked. At our last meeting of the year one of the girls in my group remarked on how difficult the reflection questions were to answer, but that is what this program is about. It is about asking the hard questions, and not necessarily finding answers but at least finding people to accompany you as you journey toward the answers. This program has provided me with good food, great times of reflection, and amazing relationships, and I am definitely thankful to be in such a program.