



**WE**  
are the  
**99**  
percent

## Occupy Wall Street: Congregational Discussion Guide

*Let there be a community among you, advocating what is good, demanding what is right, and eradicating what is wrong. These are indeed the successful.*

Qu'ran 3:104

*All people are the dependents of God. The most beloved of them to God is the one who is most beneficial to his dependents.*

Prophet Muhammad

These are tough times for all Americans. Activists from across the nation have taken to the streets in various cities capturing thoughts of many Americans about the inequity that currently exists in our nation.

The Occupy Wall Street website says,

"We are the 99 percent. We are getting kicked out of our homes. We are forced to choose between groceries and rent. We are denied quality medical care. We are suffering from environmental pollution. We are working long hours for little pay and no rights, if we're working at all. We are getting nothing while the other 1 percent is getting everything. We are the 99 percent."

We may or may not agree with or even understand everything the Wall Street protestors are trying to say but they have offered a teachable moment for our congregations. This is a good opportunity to talk about what we are doing and could be doing to help families hurt by this economy. We must put our faith into action during this crucial time.

1) Do you know people in your family or our congregation who have been hurt by the current economic downturn? How have you, personally, supported them? How have we supported them, as congregations, in these challenging days?

2) How does the economic downturn hurt those who have not lost their jobs? How have you been impacted?

3) Are the resources of the society being shared fairly? Is there some truth to the 99 percent – meaning almost all of us – being left out? What does our faith call us to do around questions of fairness and sharing?

4) Is it acceptable that 10 percent of America's workers are officially unemployed? Or that if you add under-employed people, those doing part-time work needing more hours, that rate climbs to 18 percent? Or that 22 percent of our children live in poverty? What does our faith say about our responsibility? The Prophet Muhammad said: "A believer is not the one who eats his fill when his neighbor is hungry." How many of our neighbors and their children are hungry?

5) What more could we do as congregations to see that the resources of society are shared with all people? Remember, the Prophet said: "You are not a true believer until you love for your brethren what you love for yourself."



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