



common ground 5

by Meg McElhaney

In Oklahoma, people are just friendly. It isn't hard to find something in common with the person standing next to you in the grocery store line or the local coffee shop—small talk is welcomed just about anywhere. For the women of Common Ground 5, they have taken these “small-talk” similarities and built a support system for each other, other women and the community.

The messages that they have come from everyday inspiration. Christy, for example, pulls from the loss of her son and other obstacles in her life to see the good. “As a decorator, I love to repurpose vintage treasures collected at garage and estate sales,” Christy said. “Collecting broken, cast-off rejects reminds me of God because He sees beauty in the broken.

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What started out as a gathering of acquaintances has grown into a group that has helped strengthen each other and allows them to use their talents to encourage others.

The idea of a women's group is nothing new. Ladies often gather for lunch, Bible studies and around reality TV shows to converse, laugh and relate to each other. What makes this gathering different is who is part of Common Ground 5. It is made up of a variety of local writers and speakers—successful ones at that. It started as a way for a few women that were writers and speakers to help sharpen each other's skills and play off their strengths and weaknesses.

Composing the group is Rachel Sinclair, author and speaker; Stefne Miller, author; Christy Johnson, speaker and award-winning writer; Diane Stout, author and speaker; and Jenny Broughton, speaker and former English teacher. While they all have similarities, it is easy to see how diverse this group still is. Even though they all have a talent for writing and speaking, each of them have their own backgrounds and other careers that provide unique perspectives. Such differences only enhance what is Common Ground 5.



In a similar way, God repurposed my life after my son died in a car accident. Adversity and tragedy have taught me how to choose joy and forgiveness in spite of my circumstances.”

Common Ground 5 isn't simply about talking—they are constantly working to *do more, be more and help more* women find their faith, their voices and their inner strength. “I love mentoring and connecting with others in these areas. Mentoring is a concern for all of us, so who knows how we will influence the community! In May, we will conclude our series, ‘A Night of Inspiration—Faith & Fun with Common Ground 5’ at the Inspirations Tea Room. We've enjoyed hosting five events where women connect with one another and hear a faith-based message from each one of us.”

For more information on the group, visit commonground5.wordpress.com for upcoming events, links to speaker information, book listings and personal websites of each of the five women.