

# THE DEFIANT MIDDLE

summer patio series 2023 | kick off party

## **Connect** with the members of your group

If there are new members in your group, begin by getting to know your group – **start by sharing your name, a bit about who you are, how you are connected to St. Michael's, and why you decided to join the patio series this summer.**

Then, **go around and share a word that describes how you are feeling coming to small group tonight.**

## **Discuss** the following questions (or pick the ones that resonate most!)

Early in chapter 1 the author uplifts the role models we have in young women **What surprises you about younger generations of women or girls? What have you learned from younger generations of women or girls?**

Later in chapter 1, the author shares a bit about her family of origin; her parents and her siblings. **Share a bit about what it was like to grow up in your home. Consider: who lived with you, what values were at the center, and what experiences shaped you. Can you see how your experiences in your family of origin shows up in who you are today?**

Oakes writes about Mary (Jesus' mother) and how the catholic church has projected a particular expression of womanhood onto her, especially in terms of her sexuality. This in turn, impacted the rise of purity culture in the church. **What messages did you receive about sex or sexuality from the church? Who was your primary sex educator?**

Oakes writes on page 29: "But our collective ageism and habitual moving of the older, the louder, the disappearing into even more marginalizing homes or planned communities where they can't be seen or heard by the rest of us is something I became acutely aware of as my body began to change after surgery." **Where do you see ageism most rampant? Share any experiences of ageism, particularly as a female, that you've experienced.**

Oakes names that her hysterectomy was a terminal point in her life. **What points in your life have been milestones or markers leading to who you are today?**

"For most of your life, you are told you're too young, and then one day, you wake up and the world has decided you're not young anymore. As we get older, it has its advantages...but it's also painful and isolating and strange to feel your body and mind changing and to watch people react to that." (pg. 46) **What advice or guiding words would you like to tell your younger self? What advice or guiding words would you like to tell your future self?**

**Close** your conversations with the following prompt:

"Looking back, I'm grateful I experienced \_\_\_\_\_ for it taught me \_\_\_\_\_"

**Pray** for your group

*God of life; the world is quick to tell us who we should be, how we should act, and in what ways we are valued. Remind us this summer through in this gift of this community, that we are first and foremost created good. Grant us courage to break free from the expectations that bind us, that we might know you, ourselves, and one another fully and wholly. Amen.*

**Pick** your next meeting location and time: \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday Group	Wednesday Group	Thursday Group
June 11 Chapters 1 &2 June 25 Chapters 3 & 4	June 14 Chapters 1 &2 June 28 Chapters 3 & 4	June 15 Chapters 1 &2 June 29 Chapters 3 & 4
July 9 Chapters 5 & 6 July 23 Chapter 7	July 12 Chapters 5 & 6 July 26 Chapter 7	July 13 Chapters 5 & 6 July 27 Chapter 7
August 13 Postlude	August 9 Postlude	August 10 Postlude

discussion guides are available at [www.stmichaelselca.com/patioseries](http://www.stmichaelselca.com/patioseries)