



Sacred and Significant SESSION FOUR

In partnership with



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breadfortheworld
INSTITUTE



With additional support from: Catholic Charities USA

Session Four

SACRED AND SIGNIFICANT

1 HOUR

This session (with the exception of the Signing) takes place after the first hour at the local social service agency. Signing is done immediately before the agency visit.

Overview All life, all things come from the “God of the Living.” Every life-form is sacred; no life is insignificant. God’s compassion wells up among those who are broken, oppressed, and overlooked.

Aim J-Walkers affirm that every form of life is sacred and precious to our Creator, and they explore their role in honoring all people as sacred and significant.

Environment In a designated meeting spot at the agency, arrange a circle of chairs. Put the prayer cloth in the center and place the Bible, candle, and newspaper on the cloth. Have the other materials close at hand. Write the session title (Image and Likeness) on the prayer cloth. J-Walkers should bring their journals and pens.

| SUPPLIES FOR THIS SESSION: | BROUGHT BY: |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Prayer cloth | |
| Pillar candle and matches | |
| Markers | |
| Bible (marked at Matthew 13:31-32 and Mark 9:33-37) | |
| CD player and the companion CD | |
| A piece of sidewalk chalk | |
| A copy of <i>No Room at the Table</i> | |
| A packet of mustard seeds | |
| A roll of scotch tape | |
| A current newspaper | |
| A small bowl | |
| A copy of the co-facilitation schedule | |
| Permission slips for Justice Pilgrimage (separate attachment) | |

| CO-FACILITATOR TASKS: | DONE BY: |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Review materials and gather supplies. | |
| Delegate facilitation roles. | |
| Write the session title on the prayer cloth. | |
| Identify a practical challenge to offer the group at closing. | |

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GATHERING 5 minutes + 10 minutes

You will need... a piece of sidewalk chalk; a current newspaper; a small bowl; a packet of mustard seeds.

BEFORE THE AGENCY VISIT (5 MINUTES):

1.1 Signing (5 minutes)

You will need... a piece of sidewalk chalk.

Gather at a meeting spot outside the agency (on the sidewalk or parking lot). Form a tight circle:

Again we come to this crossroads, willing to cross into people's lives and allow them to cross into ours. Touch us, God, through those we meet here today.

Make a cross on the pavement with the chalk and continue:

This is a reminder that God is close to those who suffer.

With these words invite everyone to silently make the sign of the cross:

Together, we are...

Formed by God... (Touch forehead)

Claimed by Christ... (Touch chest)

Sent by the Spirit... (Touch left, right shoulders)

Christ of the margins, cross into our lives...

AMEN.

Lead the group into the agency.

AFTER THE AGENCY VISIT (10 MINUTES):

1.2 Praying the News (10 minutes)

You will need... a recent newspaper.

Pray a news story.



Close with a response prayer, such as ***Lord have mercy*** or ***Lamb of God...***

(For a full description of "Praying the News," see Step One Overview, Attachment A.)

1.3 Symbol

You will need... a small bowl; a packet of mustard seeds.

Pour the mustard seeds into the bowl:

Seeds... harvest and hope... promise and potential... small yet significant.

Pass the bowl around and invite each person to touch the seeds:

It takes a botanist to look at a tiny seed and visualize the plant within. It takes a prophet to look at a broken world and visualize the promise of healing and wholeness within.

2 LISTENING 30 minutes

You will need... the Bible marked at Matthew 13:31-32; the bowlful of mustard seeds; roll of scotch tape; CD player and Companion CD cued to "Something Beautiful for God."

2.1 Life Signs (20 minutes)

You will need... the Bible marked at Matthew 13:31-32

Questions for the mind—Invite J-Walkers to respond to this question:

Who are the most influential people in our nation or world today?

Questions for the heart—Those who feel moved may respond to one of the following:

When you hear the word "sacred," what places, experiences, or people come to mind? What does "greatness" mean in our culture?

Questions for the soul—Invite participants to respond, keeping in mind the people at the agency:

***What types of people are treated as "insignificant" in our world?
Have you ever been treated as insignificant? How did it make you feel?***

⌘ Read Matthew 13:31-32 – *The Reign of God is like a mustard seed.*

2.2 Presenting the Theme (10 minutes)

You will need... the bowlful of mustard seeds; roll of scotch tape; the Bible marked at Mark 9:33-37; CD player and Companion CD cued to "Something Beautiful for God."

Lead the group in this echo prayer (Psalm 145:8):

Co-facilitator prays:

***God is kind and full of compassion...
Slow to anger, abounding in love...***

(Pause, then repeat the prayer.)

J-Walkers repeat:

***God is kind and full of compassion,
Slow to anger, abounding in love.***

Ask everyone to extend a hand to receive a miracle. Place one mustard seed in each palm:

From the nearest planet, the earth appears smaller than this seed.

Not long ago, we were all smaller than this grain of life.

You are handling a miracle - a tiny seed that holds a plant inside!

The outward appearance is deceiving; its smallness an illusion.

(Pause)

This seed is a parable that turns the world of domination on its head...

In the Reign of God, "small is GREAT!"



Read Mark 9:33-37 – *Servants of all, like children, are first in the Reign of God.*

We do not enter God's Realm by seeking importance or influence.

In the Reign of God, greatness is determined by the depth of our compassion.

God's Reign is for small people with great capacity for love.

Are we small enough to step down into the Reign of God?

(Pause)

Since all life belongs to God, it ALL deserves reverence and care.

Christ calls us to love those whom the world does not love.

But we cannot love what we do not know!

***Following Jesus means being in relationship with people who are disrespected
and disregarded by the dominant world.***

(Pause)

Think again about the people that our world treats as insignificant.

(Pause)

Call to mind a time when you were treated as insignificant.

(Pause)

Imagine how our lives would change if no one was considered insignificant!

Challenge J-Walkers to make space for the mustard seed in their lives:

***Put your seed in a place where you can keep track of it, perhaps taped into your
journal or in your prayer space at home. Let it teach you about the path that
turns greed into sharing, exploitation into justice, and dominance into love.***

(Offer J-Walkers a piece of scotch tape to place their seed in their journal, if desired.)

🎵 “Something Beautiful for God” from the companion CD.

3 SHARING 15 minutes

You will need... journals and pens; a copy of No Room at the Table; markers.

3.1 Journal Reflection

- ☐ Open space for journaling and silent reflection. You may choose to play reflective background music. After 5-10 minutes, call everyone back to the circle with their journals. Encourage participants to continue journaling at home during the week.

3.2 Dialogue (5-10 minutes)

If necessary, remind everyone of the following points:

Dialogue is about listening and sharing. Share freely about your reading of the text, your experience with the spiritual practice, your journal writing, our visit at the agency, or today’s theme. This is not a debate. Anyone can share, no one is required to speak, and all are expected to listen.

Let the group become comfortable with silence. No one should be pressured to talk. Use the following to spark dialogue:

What does it mean for you (your family, your school, your church) to be in “right relationship” with the places and people whom our world treats as insignificant? Where did you find sacredness in your experience at the social service agency?

Invite those who wish to write a word or phrase of wisdom from the session on the prayer cloth.

4 SENDING 15 minutes

You will need... a copy of the co-facilitation schedule, one copy per participant of the Justice Pilgrimage Permission Forms (separate attachment).

4.1 Solidarity Challenge

Challenge the group to stay faithful to the spiritual practice introduced during Session Three (Living with Enough) and offer one practical action everyone can take to honor the sacredness and significance of those who are often treated as insignificant in our society. (Co-facilitators decide on the practical action before the session.)

4.2 Announcements

Remind the group of the following:

- Date, time, and location for the Justice Pilgrimage.
- Names of the co-facilitation team for the pilgrimage and logistics for this event. (Distribute Justice Pilgrimage Permission slips—separate attachment).
- Reading assignment: Before the Justice Pilgrimage, read Chapters 5 and 6 of *No Room at the Table* (through page 105).

4.3 Closing

Invite J-Walkers to stand, linking hands to form a complete circle:

God of the overlooked, we turn to you... *(Share an insight)*
We ask your assistance... *(Speak of a situation of need)*
We hold in our hearts... *(Name people)*
We ask our guides to bless us... *(Name your patrons)*
AMEN.

End with a sign of peace, a word of thanks, and a reminder to pray for each other and their friends at the agency.