Sacred Space: A Resource for Small-group Ministry

Enduring Principles Series
Facilitator Notes

_Sacred Space: A Small-group Resource—Enduring Principle Series_ is primarily for people who come together in an informal Community of Christ setting to share a conversation and build relationships. The outline is meant to serve as a guide as people enter conversation, share their stories, ask questions, and express joys and concerns.

Small-group ministry also introduces Community of Christ to people and invites all who seek to follow Christ to be shaped and formed in his image.

Readings or scriptures are provided for specific elements of the gathering: Prayer for Peace, Sharing Around the Table, and Generosity Statement. These readings appear in the body of each outline. They also appear separately so an individual reading or scripture can be shared easily with persons responsible for a particular part of the gathering. For example, as people gather, invite someone to share the Prayer for Peace. Hand the person a hard copy for that specific portion of the gathering. Part of the facilitator’s role in an informal setting is to cue participants as the gathering unfolds. Only the facilitator will need the complete outline.

The handout section for each gathering outline also includes optional additions for Communion and Thoughts for Children, which can be integrated into the gathering as needed.

Each session begins with a Prayer for Peace and closes with a Generosity Statement, an invitation, a hymn, and a prayer. The main portion of each session is Sharing Around the Table, where we eat, study a scripture, and share. This sharing also can take place in a simple circle of chairs without food. In this way new relationships emerge, old relationships become stronger, and community forms. Bible references are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Doctrine and Covenants scriptures are from Community of Christ Doctrine and Covenants.

Using the _Sacred Space—Enduring Principle Series_ Materials

_Sacred Space—Enduring Principle Series_ follows the Christian calendar and over the course of the year introduces participants to Community of Christ through the lens of the Enduring Principles. A variety of themes and scriptures are explored to deepen understanding of Jesus Christ and invite people into a life of being shaped and formed in his image. Each week explores tangible ways people can live Christ’s mission in the context of their everyday lives.

Forty-eight outlines—four per month—bring a focus theme and related weekly topics. The outlines for Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas can be adjusted according to where each holiday or season falls on the yearly calendar.

Four additional outlines cover months with a fifth meeting day. The additional outlines provide an alternative small-group experience.

Outline Helps

_Gathering_

Invite everyone to have a seat. Welcome guests and introduce folks to one another. A short time of sharing joys and concerns sometimes helps people to know each other.

_Prayer for Peace_

A bell or chime is rung three times to begin the Prayer for Peace. This allows group members to focus their thoughts on Christ’s peace.
The candle is lit to symbolize the peace of Christ illuminating the world. Community of Christ services often include candles to symbolize the Christ made real in our lives.

*Note:* When first-time visitors are present, it is helpful for the facilitator to share the above statements before the chime is rung, candle lit, and prayer read. This provides important context that allows visitors to engage fully in the shared experience.

**Sharing Around the Table**

Studying the scripture and questions is a time to learn more about scripture, discipleship, and Community of Christ in an informal setting. Sharing food around a table helps people build relationships, develop trust and the courage to share their authentic selves, and experience safe space to question and explore.

Make arrangements for snacks or a meal before the meeting date. If one person or family is hosting the weekly meeting, ask others to coordinate the snack or meal.

Remind participants that sharing is sacred, safe space. Information or experiences shared in these meetings is to be held in confidence.

*Note:* Sharing Around the Table also can be facilitated in a circle without food, depending on the context and needs of the group.

**Generosity Statement and Invitation**

Place a basket for financial contributions where people can see it. Sharing the Generosity Statement reminds people of the opportunity to contribute to ministries of Community of Christ. Have information cards available with instructions for eTithing. Growing numbers of people prefer to handle finances electronically. Participants may wish to have their contributions recorded and receipted. Check with your mission center financial officer for instructions.

**Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper**

Serving Communion is an option if appropriate Community of Christ priesthood members are available to serve. Traditionally Communion is served on the first Sunday of the month, but it can be adjusted depending on the needs of the group and the availability of Community of Christ priesthood members. (For example, if a group meets on the second and fourth Sundays of the month, Communion can be shared on the second Sunday. If Community of Christ priesthood members are available only once a month or less frequently, Communion can be shared whatever day they are present.)

**Invitation to Next Meeting**

Always state the date, time, and location for the next meeting. Provide handouts with full information, including directions.

Encourage participants to invite others who are seeking safe space to process their spiritual journey. It can help to create a secret Facebook group to share changes in schedule and location. This also helps people stay connected between meetings.

To learn more about secret Facebook groups and how to create one, read Facebook 101. Visit [www.CofChrist.org/resources](http://www.CofChrist.org/resources) and search for “Facebook” in the Keyword Search on the page. If you have questions about Facebook, email Communications at Communications@CofChrist.org.
Prepare for Children

As facilitator, it is helpful to prepare for children. A blanket or quilt spread on the floor gives children a sense of place. Prepare activity bags with coloring pages, crayons, a small bottle of water, or other parent-approved snack. Quiet toys for infants also help.

The handout section of each gathering outline includes Thoughts for Children. This element easily can be added to the gathering when children are present. A list of materials appears at the top of the Thoughts for Children handout. Have these materials ready in a bag with the handout.

Materials
• Peace candle (see note) and lighter (Many facilities allow only flameless candles; check with your meeting place.)
• Chime or bell
• NRSV Bible
• Community of Christ Doctrine and Covenants
• Basket for people to offer financial contributions
• Information cards for eTithing
• *Community of Christ Sings* hymnals
• Hymnal recordings (on smart phone or computer with flash drive)
• Speaker
• Session outline
• Handouts for readings and scriptures (Prayer for Peace, Spiritual Practice, Sharing Around the Table, Generosity Statement)
• Snacks (It is helpful to ask people to take turns bringing snacks for each session.)

For Children
• Activity bags

Communion
• Communion prayer card
• Communion statement
• Communion trays, cups
• Bread, grape juice, water

Notes
At small-group gatherings it is helpful to have Community of Christ resources for first-time participants or those who would like more information about the church. Resources are available thorough Herald House ([www.HeraldHouse.org](http://www.HeraldHouse.org)).

Contact your mission center invitation support minister, mission center president, or your area’s president of seventy for more information about resources. Keep these resources on hand to give to seekers:
• *Sharing in Community of Christ: Exploring Identity, Mission, Message, and Beliefs*, 3rd edition
• *Community of Christ: an Illustrated History*
• Doctrine and Covenants
• Promise Cards
• Business cards with your contact information
Sacred Space: A Resource for Small-group Ministry

May

Focus: Spirituality

Topic: Pentecost

Gathering

Welcome

Prayer for Peace

Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.
Light the peace candle.

Today in our prayers we remember the people of Madagascar (authors: apostles assigned in USA Mission Fields in 2013)

Gracious and loving God, we pause in this moment as we do each day to raise our collective voices in praying for Christ’s peace to spread throughout the world.

We give thanks for the presence of your Holy Spirit, which shapes us and guides us in pursuing Christ’s peace on Earth.

We confess that we are not always open to the presence of your Spirit as our lives become filled with our own needs, agendas, and fears. Please forgive us for these times as we seek to realign our will with your will.

Thank you for not giving up on us, for continuing to love us, and for inviting us to love others as we love ourselves.

Thank you for breaking into our imaginations and providing glimpses of your vision of shalom for the world and how we can be part of bringing it about.

In the name of your example of peace, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sharing Around the Table

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a
tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

—Acts 2:1–12 NRSV

The day of Pentecost is observed in Christian community 50 days after Easter. It is the day the disciples powerfully and publicly experienced the Holy Spirit. The disciples and others were gathered in an upper room. There they experienced the Spirit in a way they would liken to wind and fire. Under the influence of the Spirit they were able to speak in languages not their own. People around them from other nations could not comprehend how these men from Galilee suddenly could speak in languages they could not themselves understand.

Certainly this was not the first time the disciples had felt the power of the Holy Spirit, but it seems this time was different. This was the power and presence of the Spirit that Jesus had promised them. This Spirit would empower them as witnesses of Jesus Christ to individuals, communities, and the world.

Questions
1. The Holy Spirit transformed the disciples into powerful witnesses. How has the Holy Spirit transformed you?
2. Why did Luke use wind and fire as metaphors for the Spirit at Pentecost? What metaphor would you use to describe the Spirit’s activity in your life?

Sending

Generosity Statement
“Sharing for the common good is the spirit of Zion” (Doctrine and Covenants 165:2f). We receive God’s grace and generosity. The offering basket is available if you would like to support ongoing small-group ministries as part of your generous response. This month’s offering prayer is adapted from A Disciple’s Generous Response:

Covenant God, As we navigate our world of debt and consumerism, help us to save wisely. In this way may we better prepare for the future and create a better tomorrow for our families, friends, the mission of Christ, and the world. Amen.

Invitation to Next Meeting

MAY—Focus: Spirituality; Topic: Pentecost
Closing Hymn

*CCS 46, “Holy Spirit, Come With Power”*

Closing Prayer

**Optional Additions Depending on Group**
- Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
- Thoughts for Children
Prayer for Peace

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Light the peace candle.

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We confess that we are not always open to the presence of your Spirit as our lives become filled with our own needs, agendas, and fears. Please forgive us for these times as we seek to realign our will with your will.

Thank you for not giving up on us and for continuing to love us, and for inviting us to love others as we love ourselves.

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Questions
1. The Holy Spirit transformed the disciples into powerful witnesses. How has the Holy Spirit transformed you?
2. Why did Luke use wind and fire as metaphors for the Spirit at Pentecost? What metaphor would you use to describe the Spirit’s activity in your life?
Generosity Statement

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This month’s offering prayer is adapted from A Disciple’s Generous Response:

Covenant God, As we navigate our world of debt and consumerism, help us to save wisely. In this way may we better prepare for the future and create a better tomorrow for our families, friends, the mission of Christ, and the world. Amen.
Communion Statement

We share in the Lord’s Supper “as a visible witness of loving Christian fellowship and shared remembrance of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection” (Doctrine and Covenants 164:4a).

All committed followers of Christ are invited to partake, but no one should feel pressured to receive the emblems.

Our experience of being together as we share in Communion is an expression of blessing, healing, peace, and community.

In preparation let’s sing Community of Christ Sings 529, “O Lord, How Can It Be.”
Thoughts for Children

Materials: red ribbons or streamers (enough for everyone)
Ask children to hand a ribbon to each person.

- Share: Ruach means “wind or breath of God.”
- Have children practice saying Ruach (roo-awkh). Have them put a hand in front of their mouth to feel their breath.
- Ruach is what the Holy Spirit was called on the day of Pentecost.
- Ask children to listen as the story of Pentecost is read. When the wind is mentioned, pause and have the children wave ribbons as if a great wind were blowing. Encourage everyone with a ribbon to participate.

All the disciples and other friends of Jesus gathered to hear the stories of Jesus. They enjoyed one another’s company and ate together. They discussed what Jesus had told them while he was with them. And they prayed together. While they were gathered a strange and wonderful event occurred.

Out of nowhere came the sound of a rushing, mighty wind (pause for ribbon waving).

It was as if a violent whirlwind were in the room with them!

And that isn’t all...

They saw flames above their heads!

And that still isn’t all...

They all experienced a powerful Spirit, and they all began to speak in languages they’d never spoken before!

The noise from the wind (pause for ribbon waving) and from all the people speaking at the same time was so loud people outside on the street were beginning to wonder what in the world was happening in that room!

People came from all around to learn what all the commotion was about. They were amazed and thought it was marvelous to hear people speaking in their own languages. That’s because they knew the people in the room were all from Galilee and probably wouldn’t know any language except their own.

Some people were thrilled to be hearing about the wonderful works of God. Other people didn’t understand what was going on and thought the people inside were crazy!

Peter stood up and started to preach to all the people standing outside. He explained that what they were seeing and hearing was the power of the Holy Spirit.
On that day, thousands of people decided to follow Jesus. They all continued to gather for meals, fellowship, and prayer, and they became a loving community energized by the Holy Spirit.

Thank children (and everyone) for participating.

(Adapted from www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Focus-moments.pdf)
Sacred Space: A Resource for Small-group Ministry

May

Focus: Spirituality

Topic: Holy Spirit

Gathering

Welcome

Prayer for Peace

Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.
Light the peace candle.

Today in our prayers we remember the people of Algeria.

Dear Lord of the Earth,

As we sit here in worship..., in our weakness give us strength. Help us to love all people and to forgive those who work against us.

Help us to become peacemakers so the day will come that the Earth will be full of your Spirit, and we will fulfill the reason we were created.

Help us to help those who are brokenhearted and crushed in spirit.

Create in us a pure heart, a new spirit. Help us to encourage one another daily. Your word is living and active, and it penetrates even to the dividing of soul and spirit. Your word judges our thought and attitudes of our hearts.

Therefore, when we embark in the service of God, help us to serve you with all that we are and all we can become. Let us be reconciled to you, for we truly love you. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Sharing Around the Table

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to
them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

—John 20:19–22 NRSV

God’s revelation in Jesus Christ and continuing presence through the Holy Spirit, as proclaimed by scripture, is the foundation of our faith, identity, mission, message, and beliefs.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, Giver of life, holy wisdom, true God. The Spirit moves through and sustains creation; endows the church for mission; frees the world from sin, injustice, and death; and transforms disciples. Wherever we find love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, or self-control, there the Holy Spirit is working (www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Sharing-in-Community-of-Christ-3rd-edition.pdf).

In scripture the work of the Holy Spirit is depicted in many ways, Fire, peace, light, life, wind, breath of life, healer, companion, and comforter. The Spirit hovered over the waters at creation and at the baptism of Jesus. The Spirit brings insight, offers guidance, and empowers God’s people for mission.

In scripture the Spirit of God is also the Spirit of Christ. Jesus was not only the recipient of the Spirit, but the giver as well. The Holy Spirit proceeds to the church and the world from the Father and through the Son. “He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22 NRSV).


Questions
1. In your experience, how has the Holy Spirit been a life-giving presence?
2. Which description of the Holy Spirit has the most meaning to you?

Sending
Generosity Statement
“Sharing for the common good is the spirit of Zion” (Doctrine and Covenants 165:2f).
We receive God’s grace and generosity. The offering basket is available if you would like to support ongoing small-group ministries as part of your generous response.
This month’s offering prayer is adapted from A Disciple’s Generous Response:

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Invitation to Next Meeting

Closing Hymn
CCS 190, “Breathe On Me Breath of God”

Closing Prayer

Optional Additions Depending on Group
• Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
• Thoughts for Children
Prayer for Peace

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Our experience of being together as we share in Communion is an expression of blessing, healing, peace, and community.

In preparation let’s sing Community of Christ Sings 529, “O Lord, How Can It Be.”
Thoughts for Children

Materials: warm, fuzzy blanket, candle, matches, or candle lighter
Say: When Jesus appeared to the disciples he said, “Receive the Holy Spirit,” and he breathed on them.

Ask children to cup their hands in front of their mouths and breathe out. Ask: Do you feel your breath? How does it feel? Warm? Can you see your breath?

Jesus promised the community of believers the presence of the Holy Spirit would be a comforter.

Ask: How have you felt the presence of the Holy Spirit, as a Comforter?

One way we may have felt it is as a comforter—just like the warm, comfy blankets we have at home. Show a soft, fuzzy comforter. Ask if anyone would like to wrap up in the comforter.


Say: When the Holy Spirit came to the disciples as they were preaching and teaching, it was like flames of fire.

Light a candle. Ask: If I were to put my hand over the flame, what would it feel like? Warm? Hot? Can I see the flame?

Ask: The Holy Spirit has been described in lots of ways, breath, comforter, flame. Which is your favorite description of the Holy Spirit?

Say: Today as we learn about the Holy Spirit think about how you have experienced God’s Spirit in your life.

Thank the children for participating.

(Adapted from www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Focus-moments.pdf)
Gathering
Welcome

Prayer for Peace
Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.
Light the peace candle.

Today in our prayers we remember the people of Myanmar (author Harry Fielding).

Lover of Peace:

At this moment throughout the world millions of people do not recognize your presence. May your Spirit resonate within their beings and cause them to recognize your love and your desire for all humanity to be united in the bond of your Spirit.

Our Creator and Sustainer, so often you are hidden from us, not because you have removed yourself, but because our spiritual eyes are closed. Grant us, we pray, the capacity to look within ourselves to find your presence.

May we be strengthened as we discover your presence in our neighbors and in the very fabric of the world you have created. In our selfishness we think of the world as “ours,” but in our better moments we know we are only visitors, living briefly on this planet, which preceded us and which will continue after we have gone. Help us to treat with respect all aspects of your creation. In doing this we become united with each other, with you, and with your world.

We pray for individuals, families, communities, and nations separated from the presence of peace. May each discover and release the essence of the Living God and become whole. May they discover what it is to be holy and to view the entire universe as sacred.

May each of us respond in love to the stirrings of your empowering presence within us, that we may each be an ambassador of peace. Amen.
Sharing Around the Table

Spiritual growth and guidance enrich involvement in Christ’s mission. The presiding evangelist and the Order of Evangelists, with their colleagues in ministry, should concentrate on spiritually forming communities of disciples and seekers that live deeply and generously in Christ’s Spirit. Offer the sacrament of evangelist blessing not only to individuals and congregations, but to families, households, and groups seeking spiritual guidance to more completely give themselves to Christ’s mission. Nothing in this instruction should be construed to lessen the importance of the sacrament of evangelist blessing for individuals.

—Doctrine and Covenants 165:5a

We continually are called by God to deepen our relationship with the Divine. Spiritual practices are ways we intentionally can deepen our experience with God (see www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Yearning-for-God.pdf). Engaging in spiritual practices, journaling, study, prayer, and participating in the sacramental life of the community all shape and form us spiritually. The sacrament of evangelist blessing is one way to experience a deepening sense of spiritual formation.

This sacrament expresses the universal love of God in very personal terms. It brings assurance, clarifies choices, and provides light for a lifetime of faithful discipleship in response to God. Individuals respond by affirming and hopefully strengthening their commitment or covenant to follow the ways of God throughout their lives.

This sacrament most often is given for individuals—members and friends of the church; however, the sacrament of blessings is also for families, households, groups, and congregations.


Questions
1. How would you describe spirituality? Are there spiritual practices that shape and form your discipleship?
2. What times in a person’s life might she or he desire an evangelist blessing?

Sending

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Invitation to Next Meeting
Closing Hymn

CCS 161, “In the Quiet of This Day”

Closing Prayer

Optional Additions Depending on Group

- Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
- Thoughts for Children
Prayer for Peace

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Spiritual growth and guidance enrich involvement in Christ’s mission. The presiding evangelist and the Order of Evangelists, with their colleagues in ministry, should concentrate on spiritually forming communities of disciples and seekers that live deeply and generously in Christ’s Spirit. Offer the sacrament of evangelist blessing not only to individuals and congregations, but to families, households, and groups seeking spiritual guidance to more completely give themselves to Christ’s mission. Nothing in this instruction should be construed to lessen the importance of the sacrament of evangelist blessing for individuals.

—Doctrine and Covenants 165:5a

We continually are called by God to deepen our relationship with the divine Presence. Spiritual practices are ways we intentionally can deepen our experience with God (see www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Yearning-for-God.pdf). Engaging in spiritual practices, journaling, study, prayer, and participating in the sacramental life of the community all shape and form us spiritually. The sacrament of evangelist blessing is one way to experience a deepening sense of spiritual formation.

This sacrament expresses the universal love of God in very personal terms. It brings assurance, clarifies choices, and provides light for a lifetime of faithful discipleship in response to God. Individuals respond by affirming and hopefully strengthening their commitment or covenant to follow the ways of God throughout their lives.

This sacrament is most often given for individuals—members and friends of the church; however, the sacrament of blessings is also for families, households, groups, and congregations.


Questions
1. How would you describe spirituality? Are there spiritual practices that shape and form your discipleship?
2. What times in a person’s life might she or he desire an evangelist blessing?
Generosity Statement

“Sharing for the common good is the spirit of Zion” (Doctrine and Covenants 165:2f). We receive God’s grace and generosity. The offering basket is available if you would like to support ongoing small-group church ministries as part of your generous response.

This month’s offering prayer is adapted from A Disciple’s Generous Response:

Covenant God, As we navigate our world of debt and consumerism, help us to save wisely. In this way may we better prepare for the future and create a better tomorrow for our families, friends, the mission of Christ, and the world. Amen.
Communion Statement

We share in the Lord’s Supper “as a visible witness of loving Christian fellowship and shared remembrance of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection” (Doctrine and Covenants 164:4a). All committed followers of Christ are invited to partake, but no one should feel pressured to receive the emblems.

Our experience of being together as we share in Communion is an expression of blessing, healing, peace, and community.

In preparation let’s sing *Community of Christ Sings* 529, “O Lord, How Can It Be.”
Thoughts for Children

Materials: copies of labyrinth handout

Jesus sought quiet times, withdrawal, and prayer and knew their value for his disciples. He invited his disciples to put down their burdens and find rest in him.

One way to find rest in Jesus is to learn a spiritual practice. Spiritual practices include prayer, meditation, mindfulness, and more. One practice is to walk a labyrinth.

Labyrinths have been used for centuries as a way of mindfulness, meditation, and transformation. Many are built into the architecture of churches around the world. A labyrinth sits on the rooftop garden at the Community of Christ Temple in Independence, Missouri.

A labyrinth leads you in a path to the center of a circle, and then it leads you out again. The process of “going in” and “going out” captures the mind so the person focuses on reflection and renewal.

Give a copy of the finger labyrinth page to each person. Invite each person to “walk” the labyrinth by slowly tracing the route with a finger. As they do, everybody should breathe in and out slowly, release worries, and listen.

Say: When you get to the end, pause and give thanks for the One who invites you to “come and find rest.”

(Adapted from www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Focus-moments.pdf)
Sacred Space: A Resource for Small-group Ministry

May

Focus: Spirituality

Topic: Prayer

Gathering
Welcome

Prayer for Peace

Ring bell or chime three times slowly.
Light the peace candle.

Today in our prayers we remember the people of southern Sudan (author Judy Haslee Scott).

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.

Let me accept my imperfections and past transgressions and move along my journey toward peaceful living.

Help me find ways to develop a personal spiritual depth that can be shared with those I touch.

Help me to be willing to risk for persons or causes that make positive ripples in the sea of living water.

Free me of the tendency to judge, to see life as good and bad.

Enable me to fully experience being present where I am, that I may not miss creating unique opportunities and memories.

Empower me to discern the genuine needs of others that I may minister to the problems, not the symptoms.

Remember me with your unconditional love and allow me to use the strength it brings to create peace around me and within me. Amen.
Sharing Around the Table

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say:

“Father, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
    for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.
And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’ And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.”

—Luke 11:1–6 NRSV

First-century Christians were familiar with the Jewish tradition of morning and evening prayers as well as the prayers recited together in the synagogue. This is a similar kind of prayer meant to be recited in community.

The address of “Father” is less about gender and more about Jesus teaching the disciples to pray in a more intimate way than had been the custom of the times.

The prayer Jesus spoke asks for basic things:

- God’s transforming reign to be fully realized, sustenance without greed, forgiveness for all in the community, restoration to right relationships, and deliverance from the real powers, evils, and oppressions in the world.

- The disciples are urged to persist in prayer. After all, if you persistently knock on a neighbors’ door, won’t he finally get up and see to what you need?

Questions

1. What or who are the powers with whom you struggle? How has God been present with you in the struggle?
2. When have you been persistent in prayer only to have God respond in a completely surprising and unexpected way?

Sending

Generosity Statement

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This month’s offering prayer is adapted from A Disciple’s Generous Response:
Covenant God, As we navigate our world of debt and consumerism, help us to save wisely. In this way may we better prepare for the future and create a better tomorrow for our families, friends, the mission of Christ, and the world. Amen.

Invitation to Next Meeting

Closing Hymn
CCS 196, “Hear Our Prayer, O Lord”

Closing Prayer

Optional Additions Depending on Group
- Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
- Thoughts for Children
Prayer for Peace

Ring bell or chime three times slowly.
Light the peace candle.

Today in our prayers we remember the people of southern Sudan (author Judy Haslee Scott).

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.
Let me accept my imperfections and past transgressions and move along my journey toward peaceful living.
Help me find ways to develop a personal spiritual depth that can be shared with those I touch.
Help me to be willing to risk for persons or causes that make positive ripples in the sea of living water.
Free me of the tendency to judge, to see life as good and bad.
Enable me to fully experience being present where I am, that I may not miss creating unique opportunities and memories.
Empower me to discern the genuine needs of others that I may minister to the problems, not the symptoms.
Remember me with your unconditional love and allow me to use the strength it brings to create peace around me and within me. Amen.
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“’Father, hallowed be your name.  
   Your kingdom come.  
   Give us each day our daily bread.  
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Questions

1. What or who are the powers with whom you struggle? How has God been present with you in the struggle?
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**Generosity Statement**

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This month’s offering prayer is adapted from A Disciple’s Generous Response:

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Communion Statement

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All committed followers of Christ are invited to partake, but no one should feel pressured to receive the emblems.

Our experience of being together as we share in Communion is an expression of blessing, healing, peace, and community.

In preparation let’s sing Community of Christ Sings 529, “O Lord, How Can It Be.”
Thoughts for Children

Materials: index cards, markers

Instructions: Play charades, showing all the places one might pray. First, brainstorm ideas of where participants pray: in bed at night, at a meal, in church, before taking a trip, in your private sacred place, with friends, at camp, with your parents, or others.

Participants may want to write an idea or two on index cards. Then, as in charades, have each one act out (without words) a favorite place to pray. Have others guess where it is.

Afterward, discuss:

• Do you say different prayers in different places?
• What do you pray when you are alone? With others?
• What are some places to pray that you haven’t tried?
• Name some places where people pray (Jews at the Western wall in Jerusalem, many legislative bodies at the beginning of a session, parents in their car.)

Invite all to discover a new place to pray in the coming week.

Thank the children for participating.

(Adapted from www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Focus-moments.pdf)
Sacred Space: A Resource for Small-group Ministry

June

Focus: Creation

Topic: Creation

Gathering

Welcome

Prayer for Peace

Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.

Light the peace candle.

Today in our prayers we remember the people of South Africa (author: Pam Robison).

In a world of beauty, why do we find hate?

In a world of enough, why do we hoard so that others starve?

In a world of diversity, why do we focus on differences that divide and not our uniqueness that delights?

God, you created us in your image with enough and to spare.

May this time, this space, this prayer call us to accountability.

May we learn to live simply that all may live.

Give us comfort in the assurance of your love and discomfort in our abuse of your creation.

Remind us that peace is more than nice words; it requires us to work.

Call us to be reflections of you, living in the image of the One who calls us to peace and in whose name we pray. Amen.

Sharing Around the Table

The earth, lovingly created as an environment for life to flourish, shudders in distress because creation’s natural and living systems are becoming exhausted from carrying the burden of human greed and conflict. Humankind must awaken from its illusion of independence and unrestrained consumption without lasting consequences.
Let the educational and community development endeavors of the church equip people of all ages to carry the ethics of Christ’s peace into all arenas of life. Prepare new generations of disciples to bring fresh vision to bear on the perplexing problems of poverty, disease, war, and environmental deterioration. Their contributions will be multiplied if their hearts are focused on God’s will for creation.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:4b–c

Community of Christ Basic Beliefs are:

...an open invitation to all to embark on the adventure of discipleship. As we seek God’s continuing guidance, we encourage all people to study the scriptures and think about their experiences as they engage in the life of the church.

Creation
As an expression of divine love, God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and called them “good.” Everything belongs to God and should be cherished and used justly according to divine purposes. God sees creation as a whole without separation of spirit and element. God calls people of every generation to join with God as stewards in the loving care of creation.


Questions
1. What is the responsibility of disciples to honestly look at their own consumerism?
2. What does it mean to you to “carry the ethics of Christ’s peace” into arenas of environmental distress?
3. There is no separation of spirit and element. How have you experienced the Earth as spiritual?

Sending
Generosity Statement
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This month’s offering prayer is adapted from A Disciple’s Generous Response:

Reconciling God, Be present with us as we plan our spending. May we use our resources in ways that build healthy, happy relationships with you, with others, and with the Earth. May we remember the teachings of Jesus that challenge us to make lifestyle choices that are counter to our culture of accumulation and excess. Amen.

Invitation to Next Meeting

Closing Hymn
CCS 137, “Touch the Earth Lightly”
Closing Prayer

Optional Additions Depending on Group

- Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
- Thoughts for Children
Prayer for Peace

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*Light the peace candle.*

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Thoughts for Children

Materials: M&M candy in a large bag, M&Ms in individually wrapped (fun size) bags. Show the large bag of M&M’s and the package of fun size M&M’s.

Ask children what is different about the two packages. You might have to guide the responses to help them see the difference is in the amount of packaging the candy comes in. Which package creates more trash?

Paper, plastic, and cardboard packaging contribute to the global problem of waste, litter, and environmental decay. Which items or food products in your daily life have the most packaging? How can you reduce the packaging you throw away by reusing or recycling? Are there alternatives you could use to reduce waste? For example, a dish towel instead of paper towels, a reusable water bottle rather than plastic disposable bottles, buying snacks in large bags instead of individually wrapped bags, and putting all recyclable paper and plastic in recycle bins.

God lovingly created the Earth and all its resources. We are called to treat the Earth with kindness.

Ask children to think of one thing they can do to reduce, reuse, or recycle.

Thank the children for participating and invite all to share the M&M’s (Bring a paper bag for the wrappings so they can be recycled).

(Adapted from www.CofChrist.org/creation-ideas-for-youth)
Sacred Space: A Resource for Small-group Ministry

June

Focus: Creation

Topic: Humanity

Gathering
Welcome

Prayer for Peace

*Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.*
*Light the peace candle.*

Today in our prayers we remember the people of Korea.

The peace that Christ gives is the peace that God has called us together in one body.

We affirm that we hold this peace in our hands to enfold it and treasure it but, in expectancy, also to share it.

Help us to use the spiritual disciplines we have been gifted with through your loving grace to put this peace into others’ hands and lives.

This is the peace born of righteousness, for we know peace is not possible until people’s hearts—our hearts—and the direction of our wills are changed.

Grant that the promised day may soon come when the peoples of the Earth can live in true peace with one another. Amen.

Sharing Around the Table

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

—Genesis 1:26–30 NRSV

In this account of God creating humankind, man and woman are created at the same time, both in the image of God. (A very different account in Genesis 2:13–24—the one most often told in Bible stories—is the creation first of man in God’s image and then woman as companion to man).

Why two creation stories? Current scholarship reveals there were separate records of sacred text kept by the northern and southern tribes of Israel. This became critical for northern tribes (the nation of Israel) as they were taken into captivity in Persia. Recording the oral traditions was essential to maintaining their heritage. In the meantime, the southern tribes (Judah) also recorded the oral traditions. When the nations were reunited the two scriptural records were combined with two accounts of many parts of the narrative.

Community of Christ’s understanding of humanity aligns with the creation account in Genesis 1.

**Basic Beliefs: Humanity**

Every human being is created in the image of God. In Jesus Christ, God took on the limits of human flesh and culture, and is known through them. We therefore affirm without exception the worth of every human being. We also affirm that God has blessed humankind with the gift of agency: the ability to choose whom or what we will serve within the circumstances of our lives.


To be created in the image of God, then, does not mean that we are in some way divine. Rather, it means that God created us to be living “reminders” of God to one another and to the creation of which we are a part.


**Questions**

1. What does it mean to you to be a living reminder of God to others?
2. In Genesis 1:27 man and woman are created equally. How has this been reflected, or not reflected, in your own life?
3. After God created humankind it was blessed and sent into creation. How are you blessed and sent in the image of God?

JUNE—Focus: Creation; Topic: Humanity
Sending

Generosity Statement

“Sharing for the common good is the spirit of Zion” (Doctrine and Covenants 165:2f).

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This month’s offering prayer is adapted from A Disciple’s Generous Response:

Reconciling God, Be present with us as we plan our spending. May we use our resources in ways that build healthy, happy relationships with you, with others, and with the Earth. May we remember the teachings of Jesus that challenge us to make lifestyle choices that are counter to our culture of accumulation and excess. Amen.

Invitation to Next Meeting

Closing Hymn

CCS 140, “Sacred the Body”

Closing Prayer

Optional Additions Depending on Group

- Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
- Thoughts for Children
Prayer for Peace

*Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.*

*Light the peace candle.*

Today in our prayers we remember the people of Korea.

The peace that Christ gives is the peace that God has called us together in one body.

We affirm that we hold this peace in our hands to enfold it and treasure it but, in expectancy, also to share it.

Help us to use the spiritual disciplines we have been gifted with through your loving grace to put this peace into others’ hands and lives.

This is the peace born of righteousness, for we know peace is not possible until people’s hearts—our hearts—and the direction of our wills are changed.

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Sharing Together

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—Understanding the Way,
Herald Publishing House, 2011, p. 42

Questions
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Our experience of being together as we share in Communion is an expression of blessing, healing, peace, and community.

In preparation let’s sing Community of Christ Sings 527, “Bread of the World.”
Thoughts for Children

Materials: Two unsliced loaves of bread, different in shape, size, color
Display two types or shapes of bread. Ask children to identify the types of bread on display.

Say: When making bread, varying ingredients and differing quantities of ingredients create different types of bread. Give examples (like wheat flour or white flour, cinnamon, or pumpkin).

The two loaves are different textures, sizes, colors, and shapes, but they both are wonderful, tasty bread.

They both were created with love, and both have nutritious value. One is not better than the other.

Just like all things in creation, God created people to look different but have equal value. Boys and girls are different, but both are people, and both are equal in the sight of God. We celebrate the differences in how God has created male and female just as we celebrate that we are of equal worth to God.

Break the bread in chunks and invite everyone to share in eating the bread (with parental permission).

Thank the children for participating.

(Adapted from: www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Focus-moments.pdf)
Sacred Space: A Resource for Small-group Ministry

June

Focus: Creation

Topic: Salvation

Gathering

Welcome

Prayer for Peace

Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.
Light the peace candle.

Today in our prayers we remember the people of Saudi Arabia (adapted from a prayer by Charmaine Chvala-Smith).

Gracious and loving God, as we gather to worship you today, we remember your desire to bless all of your creation. So we pray for the power of your peace to be freed in the world. Remembering that you came to us as a defenseless baby keeps us centered in the kind of peace you bring.

In our prayer for peace today we seek your clarity and your courage; clarity to recognize injustice against the most helpless in our society, and courage to act on their behalf. Help us to challenge the systems within our influence that value the wealth of some over the health and safety of the most vulnerable.

God, you showed us your love. In Christ’s life, ministry, and death, we begin to take in the depths of your compassion, and we know that you comprehend the pain and hope each one here feels.

We pray for those nearby and far away whose homes are the street and whose constant companions are need and fear. We pray for those whose innocence has been compromised by greed or neglect. We pray for those whose conscience has been crippled by racism, hate, or affluence; for those whose eyes have been blinded and hearts hardened by excess, by harm, or by ego.

We ask your Spirit’s nearness when we fail or stumble in our attempts to uphold each one as a child of yours. We need your presence so that we will not be discouraged in our efforts or lose sight of the ways in which your love connects us to each other.
We believe your kingdom is a place where each person can know worth, to you and to
the world as a whole. Guide us individually and as a body as we endeavor to create a
space for your kingdom in our midst.

We offer this prayer to you, that Christ’s way might more fully become our way. Amen.

Sharing Around the Table

Undertake compassionate and just actions to abolish poverty and end needless suffering.
Pursue peace on and for the Earth.

Let nothing separate you from this mission. It reveals divine intent for personal, societal,
and environmental salvation; a fullness of gospel witness for creation’s restoration.

—Doctrine and Covenants 165:1d–e

The gospel is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ: forgiveness of sin, and
healing from separation, brokenness, and the power of violence and death. This healing
is for individuals, human societies, and all of creation. This new life is the loving gift of
God’s grace that becomes ours through faith and repentance. Baptism is how we
initially express our commitment to lifelong discipleship. As we yield our lives to Christ
in baptism we enter Christian community (the body of Christ) and have the promise of
salvation. We experience salvation through Jesus Christ, but affirm that God’s grace has
no bounds, and God’s love is greater than we can know.

-Community-of-Christ-3rd-edition.pdf, p. 15

Grace has to do with divine power. Grace is not a lifeless substance, but God’s love in
action. As saving, life-renewing power, God’s grace justifies or “rights” the sinner (Romans

...When we say that we have been “saved by grace,” what do we mean? We mean first
that our status as children of God is grounded in God’s mercy. We do not find
acceptance by doing all the right things. Nor do we choose discipleship because we are
so smart or so good. What brings us to God starts with God. Second, we mean the
healing of our humanity is not a do-it-yourself project. The changes needed are far too
radical for that. Only the crucified and risen Love of the Living God can mend us, and so
we believe that we can be saved only by grace. Third, we mean that apart from all we
can do or achieve, we ever remain fallible, broken creatures serving in an imperfect
vessel called the church. Our journeys bring daily proof of how fragile our lives are and
how deep the roots of sin lie buried in our hearts. In Christ, we who are always sinners
are at the same time always his people. We mean, finally, that we are not better, nobler,
or more beloved of God than others. That we have heard God’s call is a humbling
mystery. Nothing about us merits our being in this path, receiving these gifts, offering
this service. We can adequately express our awe only by confessing that we are saved by grace.


Questions
1. Salvation for individuals often is talked about, but what does it mean that societies and all creation need healing through God’s grace?
2. What does it mean to you that the church is an imperfect vessel?
3. How have you experienced God’s saving grace?

Sending

Generosity Statement
“Sharing for the common good is the spirit of Zion” (Doctrine and Covenants 165:2f).
We receive God’s grace and generosity. The offering basket is available if you would like to support ongoing small-group ministries as part of your generous response. This month’s offering prayer is adapted from *A Disciple’s Generous Response*:

Reconciling God, Be present with us as we plan our spending. May we use our resources in ways that build healthy, happy relationships with you, with others, and with the Earth. May we remember the teachings of Jesus that challenge us to make lifestyle choices that are counter to our culture of accumulation and excess. Amen.

Invitation to Next Meeting

Closing Hymn
*CCS 576, “Sing a New World into Being”*

Closing Prayer

Optional Additions Depending on Group
- Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
- Thoughts for Children
Prayer for Peace

Creation

*Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.*
*Light the peace candle.*

Today in our prayers we remember the people of Saudi Arabia (adapted from a prayer by Charmaine Chvala-Smith).

Gracious and loving God, as we gather to worship you today, we remember your desire to bless all of your creation. So we pray for the power of your peace to be freed in the world. Remembering that you came to us as a defenseless baby keeps us centered in the kind of peace you bring.

In our prayer for peace today we seek your clarity and your courage; clarity to recognize injustice against the most helpless in our society, and courage to act on their behalf. Help us to challenge the systems within our influence that value the wealth of some over the health and safety of the most vulnerable.

God, you showed us your love. In Christ’s life, ministry, and death, we begin to take in the depths of your compassion, and we know that you comprehend the pain and hope each one here feels.

We pray for those nearby and far away whose homes are the street and whose constant companions are need and fear. We pray for those whose innocence has been compromised by greed or neglect. We pray for those whose conscience has been crippled by racism, hate, or affluence; for those whose eyes have been blinded and hearts hardened by excess, by harm, or by ego.

We ask your Spirit’s nearness when we fail or stumble in our attempts to uphold each one as a child of yours. We need your presence so that we will not be discouraged in our efforts or lose sight of the ways in which your love connects us to each other.

We believe your kingdom is a place where each person can know worth, to you and to the world as a whole. Guide us individually and as a body as we endeavor to create a space for your kingdom in our midst.

We offer this prayer to you, that Christ’s way might more fully become our way. Amen.
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The gospel is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ: forgiveness of sin, and healing from separation, brokenness, and the power of violence and death. This healing is for individuals, human societies, and all of creation. This new life is the loving gift of God’s grace that becomes ours through faith and repentance. Baptism is how we initially express our commitment to lifelong discipleship. As we yield our lives to Christ in baptism we enter Christian community (the body of Christ) and have the promise of salvation. We experience salvation through Jesus Christ, but affirm that God’s grace has no bounds, and God’s love is greater than we can know.


Grace has to do with divine power. Grace is not a lifeless substance, but God’s love in action. As saving, life-renewing power God’s grace justifies or “rights” the sinner (Romans 3:24). It brings salvation and trains us to live a new kind of life (Titus 2:11–12).

...When we say that we have been “saved by grace,” what do we mean? We mean first that our status as children of God is grounded in God’s mercy. We do not find acceptance by doing all the right things. Nor do we choose discipleship because we are so smart or so good. What brings us to God starts with God. Second, we mean the healing of our humanity is not a do-it-yourself project. The changes needed are far too radical for that. Only the crucified and risen Love of the Living God can mend us, and so we believe that we can be saved only by grace. Third, we mean that apart from all we can do or achieve, we ever remain fallible, broken creatures serving in an imperfect vessel called the church. Our journeys bring daily proof of how fragile our lives are and how deep the roots of sin lie buried in our hearts. In Christ, we who are always sinners are at the same time always his people. We mean, finally, that we are not better, nobler, or more beloved of God than others. That we have heard God’s call is a humbling mystery. Nothing about us merits our being in this path, receiving these gifts, offering this service. We can adequately express our awe only by confessing that we are saved by grace.

—Understanding the Way,
Herald Publishing House, 2011, pp. 52–53
**Questions**

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May we remember the teachings of Jesus that challenge us to make lifestyle choices
that are counter to our culture of accumulation and excess. Amen.
Communion Statement

We share in the Lord’s Supper “as a visible witness of loving Christian fellowship and shared remembrance of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection” (Doctrine and Covenants 164:4a). All committed followers of Christ are invited to partake, but no one should feel pressured to receive the emblems. Our experience of being together as we share in Communion is an expression of blessing, healing, peace, and community.

In preparation, let’s sing Community of Christ Sings 527, “Bread of the World.”
Thoughts for Children

Materials: magnet, metal items
Say: When we follow Jesus we participate in God’s salvation for the world. Salvation means that God always is yearning for all people to be in relationship with each other, with God, and with the Earth. Salvation takes place in our lives as we allow God to draw us close.
Show how the magnet draws the metal items to it. Let the children take turns with the magnet.
Say: Just like the magnet, God draws us close. As we live our life with Jesus we experience the loving gift of God’s grace. When we are 8 years old, we can ask to be baptized. This is how we express our commitment to lifelong discipleship in community with other disciples.
We experience salvation (drawing close to God) through Jesus Christ, but we also realize that God’s grace and love can work in many ways.
Thank the children for participating.
Sacred Space: A Resource for Small-group Ministry

June

Focus: Creation

Topic: Relationships

Gathering
Welcome

Prayer for Peace

*Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.*

*Light the peace candle.*

Today in our prayers we remember the people of Somalia (author Bruce Lindgren).

Our Gracious God,

We pause to offer a prayer that peace may reign within your creation. As we consider the world you have made, we stand in wonder of its beauty and its starkness. We ponder its power and its tranquility; its mighty rushing winds and its moments and places of quietness.

We recognize that we, the people you have created to live here, have expressed the best and worst of the potential you have placed in us. We have tried to dominate others for our ends, and we have made great sacrifices for other people. We have taken far more than our fair share of the Earth’s resources, and we have striven to live simply. We have stood by and allowed others to suffer, and we have given our lives for those we have not even known.

Give us eyes, O God, to see ourselves as you see us—eyes to see ourselves as we truly are and as we may become. Give us ears to hear—ears to hear ourselves as we sound to others and ears to hear the deep expressions of another’s heart. Give us minds to understand—minds that sense things as they are and minds that realize what might be possible. Give us hearts with which to love—hearts that forgive offenses against us and hearts that inspire us to reach out to others.

Give us peace, O God, and make us agents of your peace. Let us act with love, justice, and true insight. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.
**Sharing Around the Table**

As revealed in Christ, God, the Creator of all, ultimately is concerned about behaviors and relationships that uphold the worth and giftedness of all people and that protect the most vulnerable. Such relationships are to be rooted in the principles of Christ-like love, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, covenant, and faithfulness, against which there is no law.

If the church more fully will understand and consistently apply these principles, questions arising about responsible human sexuality; gender identities, roles, and relationships; marriage; and other issues may be resolved according to God’s divine purposes. Be assured, nothing within these principles condones selfish, irresponsible, promiscuous, degrading, or abusive relationships.

—Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a–b

Relationships and how they are shaped, formed, and nurtured, are important aspects of our life in Christ.

From the draft statement “Theological Foundations”:

The [Community of Christ] Enduring Principle, Worth of All Persons, stresses that “God wants all people to experience wholeness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships.” In scripture, Jesus’ ministry often results in the blessing of wholeness in response to physical, spiritual, mental, or relational difficulties. Referring to Temple ministries, the desirability of wholeness in human life is lifted up in Doctrine and Covenants 156:5c:

By its [Temple] ministries an attitude of wholeness of body, mind, and spirit as a desirable end toward which to strive will be fostered.

What is wholeness? Wholeness is balance, harmony, and well-being of body, mind, spirit, and relationships. It affirms the interconnectedness of body, mind, and spirit in the created order. It does not mean a static perfected state, but rather the blessing of true peace....


**Questions**

1. How do principles that guide our relationships differ from following rules or policies?
2. How do your own relationships reflect the principles of Christ-like love, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, covenant, and faithfulness?

**Sending**

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Invitation to Next Meeting

Closing Hymn

CCS 374, “Bear Each Other’s Burdens”

Closing Prayer

Optional Additions Depending on Group

- Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
- Thoughts for Children
Prayer for Peace

*Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.*
*Light the peace candle.*

Today in our prayers we remember the people of Somalia (author Bruce Lindgren, Independence, Missouri).

Our Gracious God,

We pause to offer a prayer that peace may reign within your creation. As we consider the world you have made, we stand in wonder of its beauty and its starkness. We ponder its power and its tranquility; its mighty rushing winds and its moments and places of quietness.

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Our experience of being together as we share in Communion is an expression of blessing, healing, peace, and community.

In preparation let’s sing from Community of Christ Sings 527, “Bread of the World.”
Thoughts for Children

Materials: Two wastepaper baskets

Say: God has made a covenant to be with us, to be our God, and we are to be a people of God. A covenant is a promise. When we accept God’s love for us, we promise to show that love to our friends, family, people we meet, and to the Earth. We do this by being kind, compassionate, and by caring for the Earth.

- Ask children to share a time when they were kind to someone else.
- Ask children to share a time when they helped someone.
- Ask children to share a way they can care for the Earth.

Say: One way we can be in healthy relationship with the Earth is to recycle.

Ask the children to help everyone present remember to recycle cans and bottles in one basket, and paper in the other.

Thank the children for participating.

(Adapted from www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Focus-moments.pdf)