

## Facilitator Notes

*Sacred Space: A Small-group Resource—Lectionary 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, Spiritual Practice, 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. It's where we eat, study a scripture, and share. This sharing can also take place in a simple circle of chairs without food. In this way new relationships emerge, old relationships become stronger, and authentic community forms. All 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—Lectionary Series Materials

*Sacred Space—Lectionary Series* follows the Christian calendar, using the Revised Common Lectionary. The Revised Common Lectionary is a three-year cycle of scripture passages for weekly worship. As we follow the lectionary we remember the events and ministry of the life of Jesus in ways that shape and strengthen our discipleship. The lectionary begins with the first Sunday of Advent and moves through the seasons and holy days of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Palm Sunday, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time (the Sundays after Pentecost).

There is a *Sacred Space* outline for each Sunday of the three-year cycle (Years A, B, and C). Some holy days do not always fall on Sunday (Christmas, December 25; Epiphany, January 6; Ascension Day, May 10; All Saints, November 1). Outlines, for usage at your discretion, are included for these days. The lectionary follows the liturgical calendar, which begins four weeks before Christmas. Unlike the monthly calendar the dates and length of the seasons and holy days vary each year. You can find where you are by looking at the **Scriptures and Themes** page on the Community of Christ website, [www.CofChrist.org/scriptures-and-themes](http://www.CofChrist.org/scriptures-and-themes).

## 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 become acquainted.

## **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 together 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 when 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. (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 time and location for the next meeting. If the location or time changes, provide printed handouts with times and directions.

Encourage participants to invite others who are seeking safe space on 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](mailto: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 are helpful.

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 (peace prayer, studying scripture, 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 helps to have Community of Christ resources for first-time participants or those who would like more information about the church. Resources are available through 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 Ed.
- *Community of Christ: an Illustrated History*

- Doctrine and Covenants
- Promise cards
- Business cards with your contact information