

Sacred Space: A Resource for Small-group Ministry

Year C

All Saints' Day

Scripture: Luke 6:20–31 NRSV

Gathering

Welcome

All Saints' Day is a day to remember disciples of old, people who contributed to Christian community, and church members who lived in faithfulness and service. It is also a time to remember friends, family, and community members who have died during the year. In this way we honor those who have gone before us and reaffirm our belief in eternal life.

Prayer for Peace

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

Creating God,

Be with us as you have been with those who have worked for peace.

Sustain us in hope that violence will not endure, peace will reign.

Strengthen us that we may continue the work of our foremothers and forefathers, who shared the good news of your love and the coming of your peaceable reign.

Guide us to do those things that bring blessings of peace to others and to your Earth.

Committed to the message and ministry of Christ we pray. Amen.

Spiritual Practice

Giving Thanks

We will spend several minutes in the spiritual discipline of gratitude. We are grateful for many aspects of our lives, communities, and the Earth. As I say each one aloud, we will spend a few moments in silent gratitude, and then I will move to the next area of gratitude. After the last one I will close our practice of gratitude by saying, "Amen," aloud.

Find a comfortable position. You may close your eyes if you wish. We will begin:

God of the past, the present, and all that is to come,

We offer gratitude for:

Disciples of old who shared the story of Jesus.

Pause for silent reflection.

People who have worked for peace.

Pause for silent reflection.

Those who shared food and fellowship.

Pause for silent reflection.

People who shared their story of faith.

Pause for silent reflection.

Amen.

Invite group members to share reflections of gratitude that came into their awareness during this practice.

Offer a brief prayer of gratitude for all that has been shared and for the blessings of community past, present, and future.

Sharing Around the Table

Luke 6:20–31 NRSV

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

“Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.

“Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

“Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

“But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.

“Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.

“Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.

“Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

This passage is referred to a Luke’s “Sermon on the Plain.” It stands in contrast to Matthew’s “Sermon on the Mount” in several ways. Here Jesus is among the people and looks up to them. He speaks to hardships they endure in their everyday life: poverty, hunger, grief, and rejection. Jesus also cautions those who have not endured hardship that a time will come when their roles will be reversed, and they will experience what it is to suffer.

To all present, Jesus makes clear what is expected of those who follow him. They are to act in benevolent servanthood. This is what comprises “sainthood” or deep, enduring discipleship. When we follow the teachings of Jesus through our response to God’s grace in our lives, we are living among the community of saints. We stand on the shoulders of all disciples who have gone before us, and we carry forward the message and ministry of Jesus to those who will share in Christian community long after we are gone.

Questions

1. When have you been without a basic necessity? How would you have heard the blessings of Jesus at that time?
2. When have you lived in excess? How would you have heard the “woes” of this passage?
3. What thoughts come to your mind as you reflect on someone you have encountered who lives a deep, enduring discipleship?
4. What aspects of deep, enduring discipleship do you seek to cultivate?

Sending

Generosity Statement

“Faithful disciples respond to an increasing awareness of the abundant generosity of God by sharing according to the desires of their hearts; not by commandment or constraint” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:9). The offering basket is available if you would like to support ongoing small-group ministries as part of your generous response.

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

God, You have blessed generations before us and will bless generations yet to come.
May we be a generous people in response to your boundless grace and unending love.
Bless and magnify our offerings and our service to others. Let generosity become part of our nature, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to Next Meeting

Closing Hymn

CCS 379, "O for a World"

Closing Prayer

Optional Additions Depending on Group

- Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
- Thoughts for Children

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Communion Statement

We come together to 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.

We share in Communion as an expression of blessing, healing, peace, and community. In preparation let's sing from *Community of Christ Sings* (select one):

CCS 515, "In These Moments We Remember"

CCS 516, "Coming Together for Wine and for Bread"

CCS 521, "Let Us Break Bread Together"

CCS 525, "Small Is the Table"

CCS 528, "Eat This Bread"

Thoughts for Children

Materials: container of dried beans

Invite the children to help you with this exercise.

Explain that the dried beans are important. People cook beans to eat. The beans also can be sold for income, or planted to grow more beans.

Instruct the children to divide their group into two. Give each person in the first half a large handful of beans. Then instruct them to give each person in the second half one bean each.

Ask the children who has more blessings: the people with all the beans, or the people with one bean. Listen to the children and affirm their answers.

Ask the people in the first group how they feel about having plenty.

Ask the people with one bean how it feels to have only one each.

Instruct the children to take away all the beans from the people with handfuls and give them to the people who had only one bean.

Ask the first group how it feels suddenly to have no beans.

Ask the second group to share how it feels to have plenty of beans.

Ask the children if there is a way all the people could share in the blessing of having enough beans? As the children share, suggest that one way might be to ask the people who have plenty to share with those who do not have enough.

In closing, say: Living in a community of deeply devoted disciples means we learn to care for one another and to be aware of those around us who are hungry, sad, or lonely. In the coming week, let's plan to be more aware of the needs of others and seek to bring blessing into their lives.