



# Session 2—Contemplation

## Facilitator's Guide

*The contemplative gaze renders the whole world sacramental. —Elizabeth Johnson*

**Setting the Environment:** In the center of the circle, place a table with a cloth, candle, symbol or piece of sculpture or art for a focal point. Music that is quiet, without words, and not too familiar is also helpful. Have enough chairs, spaced comfortably apart that allow people to sit upright with their feet on the floor and are comfortable for a period of time. Use PowerPoint slide 16.

### 7:00 Opening (10 minutes)

- D** *Welcome everyone. Be sure any new people are introduced. It may be helpful to continue to have name tags.*
- D** *Play music: Ground of All Being. Invite people to join in the opening chant found on All Sessions Handout.*
- D** *Remind people of the goals of the program and ask if there are any questions about them.*

#### Goals

- ⊙ Experience the power of contemplation as a tool for living with awareness and an open heart
- ⊙ Experience the power of communal contemplation as a foundation for building community
- ⊙ Experience the richness of dialogue that is rooted in listening to one another with an open mind and an open heart
- ⊙ Explore the relationship of contemplation and the call to discipleship.

### 7:10 Sharing from our Contemplative Experience (20 minutes)

**Facilitator:** We'll begin by taking time to reflect on our experience of practicing contemplation during the week.

- D** *Break into triads for sharing. The questions for sharing are on the All Sessions Handout and on the PowerPoint slides 17-18*
  - ⊙ How well was I able to make space for either personal or communal contemplation daily?
  - ⊙ What were the challenges?
  - ⊙ How did I experience the fruits of contemplation, e.g., Personally, in my family, at work?
  - ⊙ What insights emerged for me?
  - ⊙ Did I experience a desire for more contemplative time or resistance?

### 7:30 Whole Group Sharing (20 minutes)

- D** *The questions for sharing are on the All Sessions Handout.*
  - ⊙ Is there something from your triad that you would like the whole group to hear?
  - ⊙ What were the common struggles?
  - ⊙ How did the fruits of contemplation manifest for you personally, in family, at work, or in other situations?

### 7:50 Break (15 minutes)

**Facilitator:** We will take a 15 minute break. Please return to the circle quietly.

## 8:05 Communal Contemplation (15 minutes)

- D** *This part of the session will be about 35 minutes. We'll begin with 10 minutes of communal contemplation which is taking time to become quiet in order to become more open to God and aware of self and one another. In a quiet voice, but loud enough for all to hear, say:*

**Facilitator:**

- Let's take a moment of quiet to bring ourselves into this space. *Pause*
- It is helpful to sit up straight with your feet flat on the floor. Be sure to take a comfortable position. *Pause*
- Close your eyes, or use the candle or art piece as a focal point. *Pause*
- Breathe in and breathe out, paying attention to your breathing. *Pause*
- Let your thoughts come and go, don't dwell on them. Just continue to pay attention to your breathing or looking at the focal point.

- D** *With a gentle lowering of the music say, as you are ready come back to this space and become aware of one another.*

## 8:20 Contemplation Follow-up in Large Group (20 minutes)

- D** *Ask the participants to reflect on the questions for Large Group on Communal Contemplation on the All Sessions Handout.*

**Facilitator:**

- ☉ How does personal contemplation differ from communal contemplation for you?
- ☉ Are you experiencing any shifts in yourself as we expand our practice of contemplation?

- D** *Expect some quiet before anyone is ready to speak. If no one seems ready, you may need to share from your experience first.*

## 8:40 Preparation for Session 3 (15 minutes)

- D** *Distribute the Participant Handout for Session 3*

**Facilitator:** Your commitment in preparation for Session 3 is to:

- ☉ Practice personal contemplation for 10-20 minutes daily.
- ☉ Complete the “Five Whys” Exercise in your participant handouts for Session 3 and allow yourself enough contemplative spaciousness to do the reflective exercise. Let me review how the “Five Whys” Exercise works by using an example of one person's challenge with people of faith and climate change.

- D** *PowerPoint slides 19-20*

- My challenge is with people of faith who neglect to inform themselves about climate change.
- As I reflect on this experience I feel angry and frustrated.
- I feel this way because without knowledge there cannot be transformation and the environment is in dire straits.
- My answer makes me feel this way because I deeply care deeply about the environment.
- My answer makes me feel this way because down deep I expect everyone to think as I do,
- My answer makes me feel this way because I think my opinion is the best opinion.
- When I get to this place what do I discover about myself?
- I discover that I think my way is the only way.

- ☉ Make it a priority to complete the “Five Whys” Exercise. Bring your written responses to Session 3.

Next week we will begin with a time of contemplation, and learn and practice some basic listening skills.

## 8:55 Closing Chant (5 minutes)

**Facilitator:** We will close with *Ground of All Being*