



## **Leader Guide – Weekly Gathering**

**Deuteronomy 6:20-25 • February 25, 2007 • by Irene Dunlop**

### **Opening (5 minutes)**

Take time as leaders to welcome people and set a tone of joy and openness in community.

### **Check-in Time (15 minutes)**

Have you noticed spring approaching? What about this season do you look forward to?

### **Centering Worship (10 minutes)**

Light a candle as a reminder of Christ's presence.

Invite the group to use the words: "God, you are able" as a breath prayer. Encourage them to simply pray this phrase as they breathe in and out.

After a few minutes, speak words of welcome to God and invite him to work in and receive praise from the group tonight.

### **Sharing (15 minutes)**

Questions you might use during this time:

- Where have you experienced God this week?
- What stood out to you as you used the exercises this week?
- What exercise or section of Scripture caught your attention and why?
- Ask group members to look back over their journals and share some things that catch their attention.
- Ask group members to look back at the last worship gathering on Sunday. Where did they experience God?
- What did you notice (sense, feel, think, learn) this week as we gathered for worship?
- How did God show up in your life this week?
- How have you been intentional in creating space to listen to Christ this week?
- How have you noticed Christ calling you to "live out love" this week?

### **Group Listening Practice (40 minutes)**

Need: river rocks (5-6 per group member)

Several times in the Old Testament altars were built or a stone was set in worship and remembrance of God's interaction with or help on behalf of individuals or the community of Israelites. First Samuel 7:12 speaks of the setting up of a stone called "Ebenezer" by Samuel in remembrance of God's action on their behalf in the defeat of the Philistines.

Read 1 Samuel 7:12: "Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far has the Lord helped us.'"

Abraham and Jacob built altars to the Lord where God spoke or interacted with them as an act of worship and remembrance. Genesis 35:3 speaks of Jacob's plan to build an altar at Bethel.

Read Genesis 35:3: "Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone."

Tonight we will build an altar together from river rocks. Have a bowl of rocks and invite participants to take several. Ask the group to spend time considering how God has helped them and how they have seen God's help in their faith community and the lives of their friends and family.

After a time of centering and reflection invite participants to share ways God has helped them. Ask them to place a stone in the center of the circle in a pile for each story they share.

When sharing has come to a close, invite the group to pray simple prayers of thanksgiving to God for his work in our lives.

Ask each person to choose a stone to take home as a reminder of this act of naming God's help in our lives.

Close with these words from Mathew 7:24-25: "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against the house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock." (NASB)

### **Closing (5 minutes)**

Remind people to continue to remember the areas in which they have felt drawn to focus during this Lenten season.