



Leader Guide — Weekly Gathering

Romans 8:6-11; Ezekiel 37:1-14 • March 25, 2007 • by Steve Fawver

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)

Invite people to be silent for a few moments, then read the following prayer taken from Jurgen Moltmann's book *The Source of Life*:

God, creator of heaven and earth,
it is time for you to come,
for our time is running out and our world is passing away.
You gave us life in peace, one with another,
and we have ruined it in mutual conflict.
You made your creation in harmony and equilibrium.
We want progress and are destroying ourselves.
Come, creator of all things, renew the face of the earth.

Come, Lord Jesus,
our brother on our way.
You came to seek that which was lost.
You have come to us and have found us.
Take us with you on your way.
We hope for your kingdom as we hope for peace.
Come, Lord Jesus, come soon.

Come, Spirit of life,
flood us with your light,
interpenetrate us with your love.
Awaken our powers through your energies
and in your presence let us be wholly there.
Come, Holy Spirit.

God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, triune God,
unite with yourself your torn and divided world,
and let us all be one in you,
one with your whole creation,
which praises and glorifies you and in you is happy.

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)

Lectio Divina using Romans 8:12-17: Feel free to use the following from NLT or another version if that seems better for your group.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.” For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

Explain to the group that you will be doing Lectio Divina as a group. “We will be using a section of Scripture to listen together to Christ. I will be reading this passage more than one time and as I do this I will invite you to pay attention to different things during each reading. There will be a short time for you to be quiet, and then I will invite you to share out of the silence. Let’s try to not ‘respond’ to other people’s sharing, but to simply listen and be open to Christ continuing to speak to each of us.” They may want to have their journal close by if they feel the need to write during this time of prayer.

Invite people to be silent for a few moments.

Now tell the group that you will read the passage through two times and simply invite them to listen for a word or phrase that catches their attention as you read. “Notice what word or phrase stands out as I read this passage.”

Read the passage two times through.

Leave 2-3 minutes of silence.

Now invite people to simply share the word or phrase that caught their attention. They don’t need to comment on this but are free to just share the word or phrase. It is okay if they share the same word someone else says.

Leave a moment for sharing.

Now tell the group that you will be reading the passage again. Encourage them to simply notice any image, picture, emotion, or phrase that arises in response to this passage.

Read the passage again.

Leave 4-5 minutes of silence.

Now invite the people to simply share any image, picture, emotion, or phrase that they noticed. “Feel free to simply share what you noticed without feeling like you have to analyze it or figure out what it means.”

Leave a moment for sharing.

Now tell the group that you will read the passage one more time. Encourage them to simply notice what Christ seems to be speaking to them in response to this passage.

Read the passage again.

Leave 5-7 minutes of silence.

Invite people to share what they are hearing from Christ? Share together.

Take a few moments to speak a prayer of thanksgiving to God for meeting the group through this passage of Scripture.

Closing (5 minutes)

Make sure to discuss the plan for next week and the use of the Lent prayer stations that will be set up in Barclay A & B. What are our plans for next week as a group?

Encourage people to be intentional this week to continue to wrestle with what they believe—study Scripture, read, talk to people, and do what it takes to continue to grow in their faith.