



Leader Guide – Weekly Gathering

Experiencing God Through Creation • April 15, 2007 • by Steve Fawver

Need for this week: video "Creation," DVD player/TV, natural objects, "Creation Photos," bookmarks, Psalm 104:1-24

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)

Where is one of your favorite outdoor places in the world?

Centering Worship (10 minutes)

Play the video "Creation" by Patrick Lawrence and encourage people to allow this to be a way to celebrate and pray as a group. The words are a bit small, so you may want to be ready to read these as they come on the screen.

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)

Setting: You may want to gather some "natural objects," such as flowers, seashells, or beautiful rocks, to have around or at the center of the group.

Questions to get you started:

What are some of the fun things you like to do outdoors?
Are you more of a warm weather or cold weather person?

Read or have someone read Psalm 104:1-24.

Take a few moments of silence to sit with these images.

Now place the "Creation Photos" one at a time in the middle of the group. (FYI, Gary Fawver and Kathy Watson provided these photos.) Lay them out on the floor or on the table. Encourage people to take one of these photos.

Now invite people to take 5-7 minutes to sit with God as they look at the photo and as you re-read Psalm 104:1-24. Read this psalm and leave 5-7 minutes of silence.

Invite people to share what they have noticed in the photo. What caught their attention? What things can we see/learn/become aware of through creation? How is God speaking to you?

Now close the time by handing out the bookmarks: "Listen to this, _____; stop and consider God's wonders" (Job 37:14).

Option 1: Partner with another person. Take a moment to pray for each other and give the bookmark as a way of blessing and reminder. The partner may want to simply write the name of the other person in the blank, or, in addition, write a prayer of blessing on the back.

Option #2: Have people fill in their name on this and then take a moment to pray that this will happen.

Now close by inviting the group to speak prayers of thanks to God for the beauty of his creation.

Closing (5 minutes)

Make sure you have decided a plan for "coming to a close" with your group and that people in your group know this plan.