



COMMUNITY

Forum Preparation

Set up:

Chairs should be arranged where each participant can hear and see the video as well as the facilitator. Because there will be discussion groups, facilitators may choose to use tables, but tables are not necessary. Participants should be able to move their seats around so that they may speak with one another.

Questions for group discussion should be posted somewhere easily seen by all of the groups. There should be newsprint or a whiteboard for the facilitator to write on.

Needed Materials:

- A way for the facilitator to keep time (a smartphone timer would work nicely)
- Newsprint or a whiteboard and markers
- Audio-visual capabilities, including speakers
- One copy of the *Signs of Life Practice Sheet* per participant

Learning Goals

The learning goals for Community are:

- Connecting the sign of community to personal spirituality or experience
- Understanding how community plays a role in Christian worship and community life
- Learning a new contemplative practice that can help participants connect more deeply to the sign of community

Forum Plan

Collect (5 minutes):

Gather the group's attention, and pray this collect:

Almighty Triune God, we thank you for the gift of community, by which we share life's journey and grow together. May we follow your example of mutual self-giving and love to bless each other with an ever-widening embrace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who dances with you and the Holy Spirit, one God in Trinity of persons now and forever. Amen.

Watch Video (15 minutes):

Read the following prompt:

"As you watch this video, pay attention to the various ways community is explored, and think about how community is present in the life and liturgies of your worshipping community."

Press play and watch the video through to the end.

Reflection Question (5 minutes):

After the video is over, read the following script:

"Take a few moments to think about this prompt: 'When did you experience joy in community?' [Pause] Now turn to a neighbor. You will each have two minutes to share your experience. One of you will start, and the other should listen. At the end of two minutes, I'll ask you to switch. When one person is talking, the other should not interrupt. Please listen to your partner."

Use a timer to give the group one minute to think about the question. At the end of one minute, invite them to

share with their neighbor, reiterating that they will each have only two minutes to answer the question, and that the listener should not interrupt. After two minutes of sharing, invite the other participant to take their turn. At the end of the second two minutes, call the group back to attention.

Discussion Groups (15 minutes):

Read the following script:

“Please gather into groups of four or five. You will take the next 15 minutes to discuss the following three questions:

- Where does community show up in the life and liturgy of your worshiping community? How does community help you tell the Story?*
- Talk about a time in your life you experienced friction in a community. How was it resolved?*
- Loneliness is the absence of true community. Are people lonely in your neighborhoods? How is your worshiping community combating loneliness?*

You will be able to reference the questions here [gesture to where you’ve posted the questions] or on your handout. You may decide to answer all three questions, or spend more time on one or two. This is a conversation. Please be inclusive, and remember that not everyone needs to respond to every question. I’ll remind you when you are halfway through your time.

We will then gather back together so that the groups can share.”

Use a timer to remind participants when seven minutes have passed. When there are two minutes remaining, give participants a two minute warning.

Gathering Conversation (10 minutes):

Ask one person from each small group to share a highlight of their discussion with the larger group. Responses may be gathered on whiteboard or newsprint.

Closing:

Bring attention to the *Signs of Life: Community Practice Sheet*. Read this script:

“Here is a reminder of the daily practice for this Sign of Life. When you spend time with other people this week, be fully present with them, putting away distractions, and ask them to do the same. Remember that Jesus dwells in each of us and is manifest among us in community.”

Pray the collect:

Almighty Triune God, we thank you for the gift of community, by which we share life’s journey and grow together. May we follow your example of mutual self-giving and love to bless each other with an ever-widening embrace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who dances with you and the Holy Spirit, one God in Trinity of persons now and forever. Amen.

Thank participants for participating. The session is over.