

Facilitators Guide: Incarnate God in Cosmos and in Person of Jesus

Guiding Group:

The role of the Facilitator will necessarily include organising the group's access at the session to the resources on screen or in print.

A suggested structure for each Session is:

1. Preparation of the Focus Space
2. Prayer
3. Introduction
4. Content Explored
5. Reflection and Discussion
6. Closing

As this is the final theme in this Segment, groups will have already met for one or more sessions and so will have been introduced to the Focus (Global) and be familiar with [the microsite](#).

Whichever presentation you, the Facilitator, or group first choose to engage with, commence your work with the theme using the **Introduction** by Elizabeth Davis rsm which highlights the richness of the material in last month's theme, introduces the expression 'Deep incarnation' and draws our attention to look anew at the Advent readings and Christmas stories. We are invited into the new thinking about incarnation that is emerging today 'in two interconnected ways: that cosmos itself is the Body of God and that, in the Incarnate One, God becomes Jesus sharing the life condition of the least in creation'. Elizabeth Dowling rsm in her **Theological Imaginings** also extends us an invitation: to 'go into the deep' and expand our awareness of 'deep incarnation'.

There are a number of accessible resources on incarnation in the Good reading section. Those needing further background might begin with the article by Kathleen Coyle ssc which considers the full cosmic significance of the incarnation and the sacramental character of creation.

The two, often intersecting, theme areas of (i) displacement of Persons, and (ii) degradation of Earth that emerged from the Mercy International Reflection Process (MIRP) are addressed by Margaret Mary Alamban rsm, this month's **Grassroots Minister** as she shares her lived experience and the two stories of hope in ministering with the Children at Mother of Hope Center in Tacloban City Philippines while Angela Reed rsm presents the global perspective in her **Mercy Global Action presentation**.

Once again we offer three of many possible approaches to using resources from the theme Incarnate God in Cosmos and in Person of Jesus implementing the suggested structure (nos. 1-6). The approach used will depend on the needs, interests and abilities of the group members. Facilitators may, of course, use their own approach with the resources, or choose elements from these three suggested approaches to create a different approach. At the conclusion of the Session the Facilitator or another group member is encouraged to send on 'what is too good for the group to keep to themselves' to mgpfeedback@mercyinternational.ie

Example Approach One: Theological Imaginings

The Facilitator organises a smart television or a data projector and laptop for the meeting place in order to screen (on a blank wall or screen) the six images from the presentation as it is read aloud and provides copies of the presentation for everyone.

Six members of the group (or three repeated twice each) take turns to read the section of the presentation aloud, each corresponding to one of the six images.

As each image is screened, pause for a minute [a set time] to 'introduce' participants to it and then invite the reader to read aloud the relevant passage.

In small groups of two or three, participants are invited to respond to the following statements, one taken from each of the six areas:

- '...as we embark on the Mercy Global Presence process. We are going deeper into mystery where we may not see everything clearly but it is where we will find life and energy.'
- 'In deep waters, we can literally feel out of our depth. We may not be able to touch the bottom, or even see the bottom.'
- 'Something about 'the deep' is life-giving.'
- '...the journey into 'the deep' is an opportunity for expansion of consciousness.'
- 'As science shows us that our universe is expanding, our 'going into the deep' of space is challenging us to expand our understanding and images of God whose creation is ongoing.'
- 'We are intimately connected to 'the deep'. The elements that make up our bodies were formed in stars'

Each small group is then invited to share with the whole group something they heard that is 'too good to keep to themselves'.

The final paragraph of the presentation is read aloud as summary and response.

The Facilitator reads the Closing prayer of blessing aloud, bringing the session to its conclusion.

Example Approach Two: Distinct Voice

The Facilitator organises a smart television or a data projector and laptop for the meeting place in order to screen (on a blank wall or screen)

The Focus Space is set to reflect the Segment (Global), the theme (Incarnate God in Cosmos and in Person of Jesus) and with elements from nature

Commence the Session with the Call to Prayer from the Reflective Prayer.

It could be helpful for participants if some background information on the land now known as Mercy Woods was shared before the screening. The resources below could also be consulted should there be interest after the screening for participants to learn more about Mercy Woods.

- 'Mercy Woods : A Thirty-Year Vision in the Making':
<https://www.sistersofmercy.org/about-us/news-and-events/mercy-woods-a-30-year-vision-in-the-making/>
- Trail Map: <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/6227afe7/files/uploaded/Mercy-Woods-trail-map.pdf>
- "'Mercy Woods' Protects Valuable Land, Creates Youth Ball fields':
<https://www.ecori.org/smart-growth/2018/6/26/mercy-woods-project-protects-valuable-land-creates-ball-fields>

The text introducing the video is from Song 'Morning' by Carolyn McDade from the album 'We are the Land We Sing' Complete lyrics are available [here](#)

Screen the video

At the conclusion of the video there are seven questions taken from the poem '[Gratitude](#)' by Mary Oliver.

Invite participants to respond to these questions personally, then to share in small groups, then with the whole group something they heard that is 'too good to keep to themselves'.

Close the gathering with the Closing Reflection bringing the session and the Segment to its conclusion with this wondrous blessing.

Example Approach Three: Reflective Prayer

The Facilitator organises a smart television or a data projector and laptop for the meeting place in order to screen (on a blank wall or screen) the Reflective Prayer.

The Focus space would reflect the Segment (Global), the theme (Incarnate God in Cosmos and in Person of Jesus) and could include images or artefacts that represent Advent and Christmas.

Participants are invited to take a minute [a set time] to centre themselves after which the video reflection is introduced and 'The Huron Carol' is played.

One member (or three different voices) from the group reads the Call to Prayer aloud, slowly and prayerfully, with a pause in between to enable participants to absorb and reflect on what they have heard. The first reading invites anticipation of the coming of the Christ child, the second tells of the visit of the Magi, the third names the three gifts the magi sought and we each carry within us: 'the precious gold of life, the sacred fragrance of God, the healing salve of love'.

The three gifts are next expressed in scripture and commentary. Invite a pair of readers, one for the scripture text, one for the commentary, to read these aloud, pausing after each gift to give time for reflection.

After a time of reflection on the third gift, invite participants to share with a neighbour or in a group of two or three (depending on the size of the whole group) their response to the material presented. Each small group is then invited to share with the whole group something they heard that is 'too good to keep to themselves'.

The Facilitator reads the Closing Reflection aloud, bringing the session and the Segment to its conclusion with this wondrous blessing.