

Facilitators Guide: Compassionate Heart

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 second theme of the fourth and final Segment, most groups will have already explored the context for *Mercy Global Presence* as "global" (Segment One), its spirit as "mercy" (Segment Two), and its experience as "presence" (Segment Three) so will be familiar with the process and [the microsite](#). For those coming new to the process, or wishing to revisit earlier themes, these Segments will remain available on the microsite.

Whichever presentation you, the Facilitator, or group first choose to engage with, commence your work using the introduction by Elizabeth Davis rsm. 'We find our inspiration and our invitation to a compassionate heart in the words of the first creation story', Sr Elizabeth tells us. 'And the single most dominant image of God in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New Testament is that of the Compassionate One'.

Once again, we offer three of many possible approaches to using resources from this theme, implementing the suggested structure (nos. 1-6). The approach used will depend on the needs, interests, abilities and situations of the group members. **At this present time, groups that are able to meet are using video conferencing. Our suggested approaches take account of this and of face-to-face-meetings becoming possible again in the future.**

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 an online meeting room such as Zoom, Skype or Facetime. If using Zoom, the presentation could be shared using the 'Share screen' function.

When face to face meetings are possible again, the Facilitator arranges for a smart television, or a data projector and laptop for the meeting place in order to screen (on a blank wall or screen) the Videos included in this presentation.

The focus space for this prayer could include words or images evoked by this story. This presentation recounts a true story of heartbreak and grace, of experiencing the unthinkable and finding strength and the ability to forgive.

There are a number of ways to begin this session - with a reading of the extract from 'Stabat Mater Dolorosa', with a playing of it, such as [Patrick Dwyer's version](#), or with the 'Heart of Love' prayer from the Reflective Prayer.

The playing of Benedictus leads into the recounting of how the tragedy unfolded on what was an ordinary Summer's evening.

It is recommended that the group follow through the story as it is presented.

At the end of the account (p5), pause for a period of silent reflection, then invite participants to share their reactions to the story.

Participants might consider:

- How were Leila and Danny able to cope with their family tragedy?
- Do Leila and Danny have any special qualities that got them through?
- What can we learn for our own lives from their experience and their response?

At the conclusion of the re-telling of the family tragedy, Sr Carmel quotes Pope Francis from *Misericordia Vultus* and explains why she has chosen to share this story.

Invite participants to respond to this reflection.

Complete the session with the Reading from Corinthians. If appropriate, participants could read this passage together as a prayer of personal affirmation.

Example Two: Grassroots Ministry

The Facilitator organises an online meeting room such as Zoom, Skype or Facetime. If using Zoom, the scripts of the videos could be shared using the 'Share screen' function.

When face to face meetings are possible again, the Facilitator arranges for a smart television, or a data projector and laptop for the meeting place in order to screen (on a blank wall or screen) the video or videos of the women to be considered in this session.

The focus space for this prayer could include words or images linked to education.

The three women in this presentation are models for considering the lives of women who have come before us, whose actions have helped pave the way for us and contributed to our achievements.

Screen one of the videos. In small groups, discuss the contribution this person has made to the life of All Hallows' School and to the presenter.

Following the sharing, invite participants to spend time in quiet reflection on a person in their life whose efforts have enabled them to get to develop into the person they are today. Allow a significant amount of time for this reflection.

The song 'Standing on the Shoulders' by Joyce Rouse (aka Earth Mama) [available here](#) could be played at this time.

When the group reconvenes, invite anyone who wishes to share who their giant/s are to share something of that person's life and gift to the participant.

Example Approach Three: Reflective Prayer

The Facilitator organises an online meeting room such as Zoom, Skype or Facetime. If using Zoom, the text of the prayer could be shared using the 'Share screen' function.

When face to face meetings are possible again, the Facilitator arranges for a smart television, or a data projector and laptop for the meeting place in order to screen (on a blank wall or screen) the Video 'You, the Christ'. She/he also arranges for each member of the group to receive a copy of the prayer text.

The focus space for this prayer could include words or images evoking the need for a compassionate heart or displaying a compassionate response to the 'cry of Earth and cry of the poor'.

The Context of the Reflective Prayer – 'Can you Hear the Heartbeat?' – has been provided by the presenter and should be shared with the participants, either read aloud or paraphrased.

Invite a member of the group to read aloud the Reflection. Following the reading, another voice reads aloud the two questions:

How do you hear a heartbeat? How do we hear God's heartbeat?

Take time between each question for the participants to ponder them.

Following a period of silent reflection, participants could be invited 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. If using Zoom, this activity could take place in breakout rooms.

Upon return to the large group, each small group would then invited to share with the whole group something they heard that is 'too good to keep to themselves'.

In response to the sharing, pray 'The Heart of Eternal Love' prayer. Invite 7 named participants to each read a stanza, or invite any participant to read a stanza as moved to do so. One way to introduce the prayer that highlights the various aspects of the heart would be for the Facilitator to name each stanza e.g. 'Heart of Gladness', then pause and a reader then reads the entire stanza.

Screen the video 'You, the Christ'. Conclude the session with the Closing Prayer and blessing