



**MERCY  
GLOBAL  
PRESENCE**

# Facilitators Guide: Presence to Earth

## 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 third Segment, most groups will have already explored the context for *Mercy Global Presence* as “global” (Segment One) and its spirit as “mercy” (Segment Two), and so will be familiar with the process and [the microsite](#).

Whichever presentation you, the Facilitator, or group first choose to engage with, commence your work using the introduction by Elizabeth Davis rsm. Sr Elizabeth commences her presentation by recalling key moments from last month's theme, 'Presence of/with/to God'. She then introduces this second theme with an exploration of presence to Earth in three sources: the **Scriptures** (creation, covenant, care for Earth and God's steadfast love, and Earth's response), **Indigenous Peoples** and, finally, **Recent Voices**. In each of these sources we are introduced to the ideas and reflections of a number of authors which we can later follow up to further deepen our awareness of their thinking and this theme.

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](mailto:mgpfeedback@mercyinternational.ie)

### Example Approach One: Introduction

The Facilitator organises an online meeting room such as Zoom, Skype or Facetime. If using Zoom, the introductory video could be shared using the 'Share screen' function. When face to face meetings are possible again, 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 video and, if thought helpful, provide each participant with a print out of the video script.

The Focus space could be prepared with greenery, plants or flowers and other elements or images that evoke the environment and some of the local lifeforms.

Commence the session by playing the song 'Journey of Love' from the Reflective Prayer. Screen the first part of the video to recall key moments from last month's theme, 'Presence of/with/to God'. Invite participants to share briefly any reflections they have as a result of participating in the session on last month's theme.

Following this recall, begin the exploration of presence to Earth taking in turn each of the three sources Sr Elizabeth addresses: the **Scriptures** (creation, covenant, care for Earth and God's steadfast love, and Earth's response), **Indigenous Peoples** and, finally, **Recent Voices**. Pause at the end of screening each source to allow participants to absorb what they have heard and to jot down brief reactions or responses.

Following the screening of the three sources, after a period of silence and personal reflection, 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. If meeting on Zoom, breakout rooms could be used for this purpose.

After a set time, bring the whole group together and invite each small group to share with the whole group something they heard that is 'too good to keep to themselves'. Bring the session to a close by inviting the group to read the Concluding Prayer aloud, together.

### **Example Approach Two: Artistic Response**

The Facilitator organises an online meeting room such as Zoom, Skype or Facetime. If using Zoom, the text of the poem could be shared using the 'Share screen' function. When face to face meetings are possible again, she/he also arranges for each member of the group to receive a copy of the poem.

Prepare the Focus space with greenery, plants or flowers and other elements or images that evoke the environment and some of the local lifeforms.

The Session commences with this poem as the prayer. Different members of the group reads the stanzas aloud, slowly and prayerfully. For example, one person reads the first two stanzas, another reads stanzas three, four and five, a third person reads stanza six. Then the remaining stanzas, each in the form of 'May we', are read aloud as individuals are moved to express this intention.

At the conclusion of the reading, following a period of silence, participants are 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 in the poem. If meeting on Zoom, breakout rooms could be used for this purpose.

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

The gathering comes to a close with a sharing in the large group of a word or phrase from the text of the poem.

Conclude with the closing prayer from the Reflective Prayer.

### **Example Approach Three: Grassroots Ministry**

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

Prepare the Focus space with greenery, plants or flowers and other elements or images that evoke the environment and some of the local lifeforms.

When face to face meetings are possible again, consider gathering outside, weather permitting, or in a room where there is a view of a garden or other natural environment. Provide group members with a copy of the presentation.

Commence the session by playing the song 'Journey of Love' from the Reflective Prayer.

The text of the reflective presentation could be read aloud by one person, with another voice reading the poems by Mary Oliver.

The steps outlined below could be followed at the appropriate places during the reading or at the end of the entire passage.

The following questions that Michael considered as he faced lockdown could be used as the basis for group discussion. The tense of these should be adapted to reflect the stage of lockdown group members are in:

- What new things have I been able to do?
- What new opportunities do I have, given a shift in my responsibilities and how I worked and lived?
- What new ways have I found to use the precious gift of time?
- How have I been challenged by these new circumstances and how have I responded?

Further on, Michael reflects on the impact of spending time in the presence of Earth with fewer distractions from people noises and other interruptions. He invites us to think about how Earth has been present to us, and we to Earth, and how we can have more mutually beneficial experiences with "Earth".

Invite group members to reflect on this and then to share with one or two others in the group. If meeting on Zoom, breakout rooms could be used for this purpose. Each small group is then invited to share with the whole group something they heard that is 'too good to keep to themselves'.

Conclude with the closing prayer from the Reflective Prayer.