Facilitators Guide: Mercying

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 third 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. 'Each person, who is hearing or reading this reflection, has committed their life to mercying', Sr Elizabeth reminds us, before proceeding to frame her reflection using the words from the prophet Micah, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness (*hesed*), and to walk humbly with your God?" (Mic 6:8). Those coming new to the process will find their appreciation of this introduction enriched by a reading/listening of Elizabeth's introduction to Faith Traditions and Mercy (Theme One, Segment Two, 'Mercy') in which she informs us that 'mercy is the essence of religion', introduces us to the understanding of mercy in the Abrahamic and Eastern faith traditions and invites each participant to deepen her/his contemplation of mercy using five questions:

- How is mercy essential in my life?
- With what words do I imagine mercy?
- What mercy-name for God do I use most often?
- In this past week, how and where have I been mercying?
- During this past week, when did Earth show me mercy?

At the conclusion of her introduction to this theme, Elizabeth invites us into another contemplative activity-'to take time in that place where you and God relate best' and reflect on Jesus' parable in Matthew 25 with its additional dimension of the new work of mercy - 'care for our common home'(Pope Francis).

Example Approach One: Theological Imaginings

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

When face to face meetings are possible again, the Facilitator arranges for each member of the group to receive a copy of the text.

The focus space for this prayer could include a beautiful cloth, a lit candle, flowers or greenery, a bible open at the text of the Good Samaritan, newspaper clippings of articles or headlines about some of the locations Sr Mary names.

Commence the Session with the Invocation from the Reflective Prayer.
Invite the participants to read the article to themselves or perhaps six participants, taking a section each, could share reading the article aloud. If this latter option is chosen, the Facilitator should decide before the Session commences what those sections will be and mark up the copies accordingly.

Pause after each section to enable listeners to reflect on what they have heard and to mark the words or phrases that spoke to them.

There are a number of scriptural references in the article – see paragraphs 5 and 6. The Facilitator could choose a line or two from some/ each of those references and these could be read aloud by a second voice when these paragraphs are read.

Following a period of silent reflection at the end of the reading, 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.

Each small group would then be invited to share with the whole group something they heard that is 'too good to keep to themselves'. If using Zoom, this activity could take place in breakout rooms.
The 'Reflection and Time for Sharing' in the Reflective Prayer offers some suggested questions that could be used with the whole group.

Conclude the Session with the Closing Prayer from the Reflective Prayer.

Example Approach Two: Grassroots Ministry

The Facilitator organises an online meeting room such as Zoom, Skype or Facetime. If using Zoom, the video and script 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 the video on a blank wall or screen.

The focus space for this prayer could include a beautiful cloth, a lit candle, flowers or greenery and the words naming the areas of the Sisters' ministry.

Commence the Session with the Invocation from the Reflective Prayer.

It could be beneficial for the participants if the Facilitator could introduce the Session by giving some context on Peru.

The following authoratitive resources will be helpful in preparing this introduction:
Peru Support Group: See Facts and Key Issues
Human Rights Watch: Peru: Events of 2020

Background
Sisters of Mercy from four Mercy families live and minister in Peru: The Congregation of Sisters of Mercy (Ireland), Institute of Our Lady of Mercy (Great Britain), Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, and Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland. Find out more here

The Congregation of Sisters of Mercy Newfoundland has been ministering in Peru for 60 years, arriving there in November 1961. The Sisters now minister in two areas of the country – in Puerto Eten, Reque and Eten, in the Chiclayo region and in Huarmey, Casma, Ancash. Eight members of the Congregation: Lily Butters Ferrero rsm, Marion Collins rsm, Verna Aucoin rsm, Rosa Silva Cumpa rsm, Mildred Brennan rsm, Alice Mackey rsm, Rosali Vargas Mendoza rsm and Alita Sanchez Sanchez rsm, four of whom are native Peruvians, work with the people, especially people who are poor, in towns and small villages in these two regions of Peru. This article on the Congregation's website provides helpful background information for the video presentation which focusses on the ministries these Sisters are engaged in with the people.

Screen the video.
Follow the screening with quiet time for personal reflection. If possible, provide participants with a copy of the script to aid their reflection.

In small groups – breakout rooms on zoom could be used for this purpose- invite participants to share the words from the script or images they viewed on the video which moved them.

The 'Reflection and Time for Sharing' in the Reflective Prayer offers some suggested questions that could be used with the whole group.

Conclude the Session with the Closing Prayer from the Reflective Prayer.

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 for each member of the group to receive a copy of the prayer text.

The focus space for this prayer could include a beautiful cloth, a lit candle, flowers or greenery and the word 'Mercying' in various languages, reflecting the global circle of Mercy.

The Presenters – Srs Jean Adam and Carolyn McWatters - have structured the Reflective Prayer. Ensure the roles in the Prayer Service of the Facilitator, Leader, Shared Readers – which could be three readers taking a text each- are clear to participants before commencing the Reflective Prayer.

This Reflective Prayer could be used after participants have had time to read, reflect and absorb some of the other presentations in this 'Mercying' theme, bringing this theme to a close. That reading and reflection could be drawn on in the sharing in the 'Reflection and Time for Sharing'.

Conclude the session with the Closing Song.