



Practices of Releasing

Session 6: Lent Small Group Study Leader Sheet #6 Closing Liturgy

Planning Your Worship

See “Preparing the Space” for the items you need for this liturgy.

There is a participant sheet with the words of this liturgy. You may wish to assign reading parts before you begin so there is a variety of voices.

I suggested chants but choose what your group knows. There are times when you might want to play quiet music.

The Psalm has a sung response. See PsalmsForPraying.com

Preparing the Space

You may wish to create an “altar-table” with a purple cloth, a candle, a large bowl of water, towel, markers or pens, three baskets for stones, nails and coloured ribbons. Participants might be seated in a circle or gathered round a kitchen table.

Welcome and Candle-lighting

Light a candle.

The group may wish to respond with familiar words:

Your light is in our eyes.

Your beauty is in our hearts.

Your goodness is everywhere.

Chant: For God Alone My Soul Waits in Silence #953
Voices United

A Reading from the Psalms: Psalm 31:9-16a

The Gospels record that Jesus prayed the Psalms from the cross. What consolation might Jesus find in these words? What hope or comfort is just for you today?

Planning Your Session

Prepare for Prayer 2 by reviewing a newspaper or collecting online headlines to read.

Please adapt as you need for the realities of time or size or nature of your group.

Be a comfort to me, Beloved, for I am
in distress;
my eyes are dim from weeping,
my soul is deep with grief.
For my life is worn away with sorrow,
and my years with sighing;
My body has weakened and my bones
waste away with misery.

All my fears rise up to mock me,
my neighbors turn away,
My friends dread to see me and
flee from my sickness of soul.
My mind, too, has left me
like one who is dead;
I have become like a broken vessel.
Yes, I hear the voices around me
whispering of my plight –
fears rise up on every side!
Isolation, rejection, fear surround me
and conspire to overwhelm me.

Still, I trust in You, O Beloved,
I repeat, “You are my Life.”
My life is in your hands;
deliver me from the fears which
separate me!
Let your face shine on me;
hold me in your steadfast love!

From *Psalms for Praying* © 2007 Nan C. Merrill
www.PsalmsForPraying.com

Silence for Reflection

Prayer 1: Letting Go, Heartbeat by Heartbeat

A bowl of small stones is passed around the circle. Each one takes a stone to hold in their hand.

The Leader might say something like this:

As we make our way toward the Mystery of Easter, we free ourselves from all that binds or burdens us, all that limits or diminishes us. Feel the weight of it in your hand as you hold your stone. We say these words together.

Meditation on the Words of the Lord's Prayer

Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold of others' guilt.

Forgive our hidden past, the secret shames,
as we consistently forgive what others hide.

Lighten our load of secret debts as
we relieve others of their need to repay.

Erase the inner marks our failures make,
just as we scrub our hearts of others' faults.

Absorb our frustrated hopes and dreams,
as we embrace those of others with emptiness.

Untangle the knots within
so that we can mend our hearts' simple ties to others.

Compost our inner, stolen fruit as we forgive others the
spoils of their trespassing.

Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold of others' guilt.

Douglas Klotz, Meditation on the Aramaic Words of Jesus.

See <http://www.songofhome.com/Klotz.htm>

The Leader might say: You are invited to place your stone in the water, letting go what burdens you and weighs you down. As you place it in the water feel yourself lighter and more free, as you are meant to be.

The stones are placed in a bowl of water.

The Leader continues:

Remember these words from Meister Eckhart,:

“I have spoken at times of a light in the soul, a light that is uncreated and uncreatable, to the extent that we can deny ourselves and turn away from created things, we shall find our

unity and blessing in that little spark of the soul, which neither space nor time touches."

Chant: Don't Be Afraid, #90 More Voices

Prayer 2: Prayers of Concern

Pass round the basket of nails. Participants take three nails (three is symbolic of the nails in the two hands and crossed feet of Jesus.)

The Leader, holding a newspaper says something like this:

This is our news. There are so many piercing stories of injustice, betrayal, fear, violence, and grief.

The Leader might read a few headlines from a newspaper or online news, drawing attention to people, places or situations in the world.

You are invited, in silence or in spoken word, to offer prayers for the people, places or situations of concern that you carry in your heart. As you offer prayer lay your nails down by the candle.

When everyone has shared, these words are prayed together:

Christ has no body now on earth but ours,
no hands but ours,
no feet but ours,
ours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion
is to look out to the earth,
ours are the feet by which he is to go about doing good
and ours are the hands by which he is to bless us now.

St Teresa of Avila

Prayer 3: Blessing Ribbons

The Leader might say something like this.

As we get ready for the Mystery of Easter we prepare blessing ribbons to wave in our processions and to carry with us through Holy Week.

Blessings are experiences, encounters, sightings, and hearings that help us remember our essential goodness. Blessings call out goodness in ourselves, in others, in the world we live in. You know a blessing when it comes because a blessing always

strengthens what is whole, true, beautiful and good. What blessings do you want to hold as we continue our journey into Holy Week? You are invited to write a word or two on your blessing ribbon that help you remember.

Pass out ribbons and markers or pens.

Words of Blessings

You might want to encourage participants to take their blessing ribbons home. They may want to tie them to a tree or hang them on their clotheslines or place them in their Quiet space. These are blessings for the Holy Week journey.

Blessing Chant: Go Now in Peace, #962 Voices United

Closing

You may want to close with a conversation offering feedback on the session. Perhaps you will do this while you share refreshments.

Leaders, I welcome your feedback. You will receive a brief email survey after Easter. Please watch for it. Thank you.

**This liturgy was prepared by Janice MacLean
Lent 2015
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