



LENT 2024

# Encounter

A Lenten Guide for  
Small Group Reflection

ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE

# Encounter

## Meeting Christ and One Another

*A Five-Week Small Group Reflection  
for the Archdiocese of Seattle*

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**WHAT:** Five 60-90 minute small group sessions of prayer and reflection, focused on several of the Scripture readings for the Lenten Sundays in Year B

**WHEN:** The first five weeks of Lent 2024

**WHY:** Jesus invites each person into relationship with him. This Lent, as our local Church prepares to implement Partners in the Gospel, we reflect on the Word of God and pray that our hearts may be open to encounter Jesus in all the ways he comes to us: in word, in sacrament, and in all his people.

**WHO:** The simple format will require a facilitator, and 6-8 participants for each group. (Given the focus on sharing and listening, larger groups could be challenging.)

**HOW:** The sessions can be held in the parish, or in homes.

### FORMAT FOR EACH SESSION / FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

#### **OPENING PRAYER AND SCRIPTURE** (about 5-10 minutes)

- Sign of the Cross
- Opening Song (if desired/possible)
- Opening Prayer (adapted from the *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar*)
- The designated Scripture passage is read slowly, by the facilitator or one of the participants. A few moments of silence follow.

#### **FIRST ROUND OF SHARING** (about 20 minutes)

- The facilitator shares the reflection question for the first round of sharing. Then, for 1-2 minutes, each person in the group shares *once* in response to the prompt and the Scripture. After each person shares, there is a moment for quiet reflection before the next person shares. *There is no back-and-forth or dialogue at this point.*
- After everyone has shared, the facilitator invites all to reflect in silence for about 1 minute.
- After everyone has shared, the facilitator invites each person to share briefly one thing that struck them in the first round of listening. It could be something they heard or something that occurred to them as they listened. Each person shares once.

#### **SECOND ROUND OF SHARING** (about 20 minutes)

- The facilitator shares the *second* question for reflection. (In some cases, there are two options—choose just **one**.) Again, for 1-2 minutes, each person in the group shares

*once* in response to the prompt and the Scripture. After each person shares, there is a moment for quiet reflection. There is no back-and-forth or dialogue in this round.

**THIRD ROUND OF SHARING** (about 15 minutes)

- After the second round of sharing has concluded, the facilitator invites a conversation about what was heard in this gathering. What challenged you? What will stay with you? For you, where did you sense the Holy Spirit moving in our gathering?

**CONCLUDING PRAYER** (about 10 minutes)

- The facilitator opens the space up for prayer and offers petitions, then invites EACH person to lift up ONE intention they'd like others to pray for with them.
- The intercessions are closed with the Lord's Prayer and the closing prayer for the week.
- If desired at in-person gatherings, close by sharing a gesture of peace.



# WEEK I - KINGDOM

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## OPENING PRAYER

- Sign of the Cross
- Song (if desired/possible)
- All pray the Opening Prayer

O God,  
you established the Holy Church  
upon the foundation of the Apostles  
with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.  
Grant that the people gathered in your name  
may revere you, love you, follow you  
and grow into the temple of your glory.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## READING

Mark 1:12-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days,  
tempted by Satan.  
He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

After John had been arrested,  
Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God:  
"This is the time of fulfillment.  
The kingdom of God is at hand.  
Repent, and believe in the gospel."

The Gospel of the Lord.

## ROUND ONE REFLECTION QUESTION

- How do the words of the Gospel comfort or challenge you at this moment in your life?
- "The kingdom of God is at hand." Can you think of a time where you experienced God's kingdom breaking into your life?

## ROUND TWO REFLECTION QUESTION

- How does our parish, how does the Church, "proclaim the gospel of God?"

## CONCLUDING PRAYER

Leader: Gathered together in Christ, let us offer our prayers.

For this local Church, and for our parish, that we may proclaim the kingdom in all we do. We pray to the Lord.

For all of us, that during these holy days of Lent, we may recognize the kingdom of God is in our midst. We pray to the Lord.

For what else do we pray this Lent?

*After each has offered one intention, the leader continues:*

With longing for the coming of the kingdom,  
let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer for Week I

Lord our God,  
open our ears this Lent  
that we may truly hear the words of your Son,  
addressed to each of us and to our community:  
*"This is the time of fulfillment;  
The kingdom of God is among us.  
Repent, and believe in the Gospel."  
We pray through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

Sign of the Cross

## WEEK II - WORD

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### OPENING PRAYER

- Sign of the Cross
- Song (if desired/possible)
- All pray the Opening Prayer

O God,  
you established the Holy Church  
upon the foundation of the Apostles  
with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.  
Grant that the people gathered in your name  
may revere you, love you, follow you  
and grow into the temple of your glory.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### READING

Mark 9:2-8

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them.

Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus.

Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified.

Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."

Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

### ROUND ONE REFLECTION QUESTION

- How do the words of the Gospel comfort or challenge you at this moment in your life?
- "Listen to him." Can you think of a time when you have experienced the power of the words of Jesus in your own life?

### ROUND TWO REFLECTION QUESTION

- How do we "listen to him" in our parish community? How are we, like the disciples, being called to listen to Jesus even more closely?

### CONCLUDING PRAYER

Leader: To Jesus Christ, transfigured in glory, sacrificed on the cross for us, let us pray.

For this local Church, and for our parish, that we listen to Jesus, and live by his word. We pray to the Lord.

For all of us, that during these holy days of Lent, we may come to know Jesus better, in his suffering humanity and in his glorious divinity. We pray to the Lord.

For what else do we pray this Lent?

*After each has offered one intention, the leader continues:*

Jesus has taught us to call God Father, and so we dare to pray:

Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer for Week II

Ever-faithful God,  
open our eyes to recognize Christ  
in all the ways he comes to us.  
May we listen to his words  
and learn to live by them.  
We pray through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Sign of the Cross

## WEEK III - SACRIFICE

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### OPENING PRAYER

- Sign of the Cross
- Song (if desired/possible)
- All pray the Opening Prayer

O God,  
you established the Holy Church  
upon the foundation of the Apostles  
with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.  
Grant that the people gathered in your name  
may revere you, love you, follow you  
and grow into the temple of your glory.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### READING

I Corinthians 1:22-25

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters:  
Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom,  
but we proclaim Christ crucified,  
a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,  
but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike,  
Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.  
For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom,  
and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

The word of the Lord.

### ROUND ONE REFLECTION QUESTION

- How do the words of the Scripture comfort or challenge you at this moment in your life?
- "We proclaim Christ crucified." How have you encountered *Christ crucified* in your life?

### ROUND TWO REFLECTION QUESTION

- What would it mean for our parish community, for our Church, to embrace more fully the power and wisdom of the cross, the self-sacrificing love of Jesus?

### CONCLUDING PRAYER

Leader: To Christ, who offered himself on the cross for us, let us pray.

For the Church, that we may never fail to proclaim Christ crucified. We pray to the Lord.



For all of us, that during these holy days of Lent, we may know the power in the weakness of Christ. We pray to the Lord.

For what else do we pray this Lent?

*After each has offered one intention, the leader continues:*

We pattern our prayer on the prayer of Christ, and say:

Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer for Week III

Holy and immortal God,  
the folly of the cross is wiser than our human wisdom,  
and the weakness of the crucified One  
is stronger than any human strength.  
This Lent, may we learn from Jesus  
how to lay down our lives for others.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Sign of the Cross

## WEEK IV - COMMUNITY

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### OPENING PRAYER

- Sign of the Cross
- Song (if desired/possible)
- All pray the Opening Prayer

O God,  
you established the Holy Church  
upon the foundation of the Apostles  
with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.  
Grant that the people gathered in your name  
may revere you, love you, follow you  
and grow into the temple of your glory.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### READING

John 3:14-17

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to Nicodemus:  
"Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,  
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,  
so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."  
For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him might not perish  
but might have eternal life.  
For God did not send his Son into the world  
to condemn the world,  
but that the world might be saved through him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

### ROUND ONE REFLECTION QUESTION

- "God so loved the world." These are some of the most famous words in all the Scriptures. How do they comfort you? How do they challenge you?

### ROUND TWO REFLECTION QUESTION

- How do we experience God's love in our community?

### CONCLUDING PRAYER

Leader: To God, who so loves the world, let us pray.

For the Church, that all who are preparing for baptism at Easter may know God's love for them. We pray to the Lord.

For all of us, that during these holy days of Lent, we may be renewed in what it means to be a community loved by God. We pray to the Lord.

For what else do we pray this Lent?

*After each has offered one intention, the leader continues:*

Let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer for Week IV

God of love,  
you loved the world you made so much  
that you sent your only Son  
to be our savior and redeemer.  
May we learn to love the world as you do,  
and look on others not as strangers or enemies,  
but as your beloved children,  
our sisters and brothers in the human community.  
Through Christ our Lord.

Sign of the Cross

## WEEK V - GROWTH

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### OPENING PRAYER

- Sign of the Cross
- Song (if desired/possible)
- All pray the Opening Prayer

O God,  
you established the Holy Church  
upon the foundation of the Apostles  
with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.  
Grant that the people gathered in your name  
may revere you, love you, follow you  
and grow into the temple of your glory.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### READING

John 12:23-26

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me."

The Gospel of the Lord.

### ROUND ONE REFLECTION QUESTION

- How do the words of the Gospel comfort or challenge you at this moment in your life?
- When have you seen God bring life out of death, in your own life or in your family?

### ROUND TWO REFLECTION QUESTION

- What needs to die in our lives, in our community, in our Church, in order for us to serve Christ more fully and more effectively?

### CONCLUDING PRAYER

Leader: To God, who calls us to new life, let us pray.

For the Church, that we may give compelling witness to Christ, raised from the dead. We pray to the Lord.

For all of us, that during the coming Holy Week, we may keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, crucified, died, and risen for the salvation of all. We pray to the Lord.

For what else do we pray this Lent?

*After each has offered one intention, the leader continues:*

Let us make our prayers and praise complete by offering the Lord's Prayer:

Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer for Week V

God of life, you bring forth light out of darkness,  
hope out of despair, life out of death.  
Bring forth new life in each of us,  
in our parish community,  
and in our local Church.  
May we let go of what needs to die in us,  
and embrace the risen life of your Son, Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Sign of the Cross

