

## Facilitator Preparation Trinity Church, New York

3 hrs.

### Purpose:

To prepare approximately 35 facilitators to guide theological reflection groups for five sessions of group work in support of the 36th Trinity Institute on the subject of "The Anatomy of Reconciliation".

### Goals:

- Introduce each facilitator to the design for the five sessions
- Provide facilitators an opportunity to find their work locations and make sure they are ready and comfortable
- Brief the facilitators on the purpose and flow of the conference as well as the purpose of the small groups for theological reflection
- Explain the process known as "mutual invitation."
- Help each facilitator think through her/his work in this conference so that each one may feel ready to perform the tasks of leading the small group experiences.

### Application:

1. Plenary session,
  - Opening Prayer and Introductions of Staff (5)
  - Organize in groups of 7 or 8 and as each group to do the following:
    1. Introduce yourselves and ask someone to take notes.
    2. Share what you hope to contribute to and what you hope to take away from this conference. (20)
    3. Read over the guidelines for small your small groups and make notes of any questions or comments.(5)
      - In plenary, ask each group to offer questions or comments that they wish addressed by the staff (15)
2. Break. This is an opportunity for each person to locate where they will be meeting with their small groups. Each group will have a number and a location in which to meet. (30)
3. Plenary: Go over the schedule for the conference and the work of the small groups. (15)
4. Small groups. Use the process of "mutual invitation" to offer everyone in your group an opportunity to offer a one word/phrase response to the challenges of this conference. First provide five minutes to quietly pray/meditate or make notes in your journal. (25)
5. Plenary: An opportunity to answer questions and make final preparations. Individual questions may be referred to the Johnna Camp and Edward de Bary who will remain at \_\_\_\_ while the groups are in session to be available for consultation.

## Guidelines For 2006 Theological Reflection Groups

Trinity Institute, 36th National Theological Conference

January 30—February 1, 2006

We offer these suggestions to provide a safe and welcoming group in which you may explore the issues of faith and theology that emerge from the symposium on the Anatomy of Reconciliation. Your group may wish to modify these suggestions in the light of its particular needs, experience and circumstances.

Create a group where everyone counts:

- Share your thoughts, feelings, experiences, and questions as openly as seems appropriate
- Speak briefly and to the point so that others may have an equal opportunity to offer their contributions
- Be free to remain silent and do not press others to speak if they are not willing or ready to do so
- Listen to others to understand their points of view and know them better as well as to clarify your own positions. Avoid trying to convince others that you are right

Speak for yourself, not others. Some examples of “do’s” and “don’t’s” are:

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| a. <i>I think that...</i>                | <i>(not Christians believe...)</i>    |
| b. <i>I feel, glad, sad, mad, scared</i> | <i>(not Most people feel that...)</i> |
| c. <i>I wish that...</i>                 | <i>(not Everyone wants...)</i>        |
| d. <i>I notice that...</i>               | <i>(not It is obvious that...)</i>    |
| e. <i>My practice is...</i>              | <i>(not All civilized people...)</i>  |

Maintain confidences

- Keep to yourself who said what or reveal personal details contributed by others
- Feel free to share the topics that were discussed and their impact on you

\*Adapted from John M. de Beer, “Guidelines for Connect Groups. 10/1/05

## Theological Reflection Groups Trinity Institute, 36th National Theological Conference

### Session I: Getting Started

8:15 p.m., Monday, January 30, 2006

#### Purpose:

This session is to develop a theological reflection group in which participants will be able to explore what they encounter during the course of the Trinity Institute presentations. It will last about 45 minutes.

#### Goals:

- Get to know others with whom you will be speaking.
- Name some of the interests that brought you to the conference.
- Express your hopes for this year's Trinity Institute.
- Develop the guidelines for working together in this group.

#### Application:

1. Your group number and the place it will meet is on your name tag.
2. The small groups will meet in conjunction with each of the four presentations and will provide a place and opportunity to raise questions as well discuss and explore the topics our speakers present. Facilitators for your group will help to lead the discussions.
3. A suggestion to the facilitator for how to proceed with this session:
  - a. Gather the group and offer the following prayer provided by Bishop Curry. (2)\*
  - b. Invite participants to introduce themselves by stating their names and where they are from. Ask each person to offer a response to Bishop Curry's opening sermon using a single word or phrase. (12)
  - c. Offer each other an opportunity to respond to the following:  
— "In my experience, 'reconciliation' is...."  
In no more than one or two sentences, what does this year's theme evoke for you? Allow individuals five minutes to make notes in their journals, or engage in silent prayer and meditation. (5)
  - e. Offer time individuals an opportunity to share their responses using "mutual invitation as a way to proceed.\*\* (20)
  - f. Before closing, go over the schedule for the conference. (5)

\* The numbers in parentheses indicate how much time should be devoted to each activity.

\*\*"Mutual Invitation: The facilitator initiates the discussion and then invites someone to go next. That person next invites someone else to continue. Of course anyone is free to pass and simply offer the opportunity to speak to someone else.

## Theological Reflection Groups Trinity Institute, 36th National Theological Conference

### Session II: James Alison

10:45 a.m - Noon, Tuesday, January 31, 2006

#### Purpose:

To engage the information presented by James Alison through a process of small group theological reflection that invites ongoing personal and corporate transformation.

#### Goals:

- To deepen our understanding of the anatomy of reconciliation.
- To open our hearts and minds to the inner work of reconciliation to which we are called.
- To explore our calling as agents of God's reconciling work.

#### Application:

1. Offer the prayer with the prayer offered by James Allison. (5)
2. Take five minutes to enter your thoughts into your journal or pray/reflect on the insights into the anatomy of reconciliation offered by Alison. Try to distill your theological reflection into one word or phrase that you can offer to the group. (5)
3. Share the responses and, together, work to identify the theological threads or themes that emerged from the one-word/phrase responses. (10)
4. Identify where these themes intersect with your personal lives. It will be helpful to provide examples. (25)
5. In light of this reflection, respond to the question: "What can I affirm about God's call to the work of reconciliation?" (25)
6. Ask someone to offer a closing prayer or close with a moment of silence. (5)

## Theological Reflection Groups Trinity Institute, 36th National Theological Conference

### Session III: Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons

4:00 - 5:15 p.m., Tuesday, January 31, 2006

#### Purpose:

To engage the presentation made by Gwendolyn Zohara Simmons

#### Goals:

- Identify important items of interest.
- Examine the ecumenical possibilities she raises.
- Connect her talk with our lives.
- Explore how we can live this out.

#### Application:

1. Offer the prayer prepared by Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons. (5)
2. As a means of getting on board, offer one word or phrase in response to Simmons' presentation. (10)
3. Take five minutes for personal prayer/meditation or to write in your journal concerning the following: (5)
  - To what brokenness is Simmons speaking?
  - From her perspective, what does reconciliation look like?
  - Respond to the following: "Having heard Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, I am called to..."
4. Take time to share and talk about your responses. What new questions does this raise for you? (50)
5. Offer a prayer or a moment of silence. (5)

## Theological Reflection Groups Trinity Institute, 36th National Theological Conference

### Session IV: Miroslav Volf

10:45 a.m. - Noon, Wednesday, February 1, 2006

#### Purpose:

To engage the information presented by Miroslav Volf through a process of theological reflection that invites personal and corporate transformation.

#### Goals:

- To deepen our understanding of the anatomy of reconciliation.
- To open our hearts and minds to the inner work of reconciliation to which we are called.
- To explore our calling as agents of God's reconciling work.

#### Application:

1. Take ten minutes to pray/reflect or to write in your journal on the presentation that Miroslav Volf made. Distill your thoughts about the presentation to one word/phrase. Identify areas of reconciliation in your life. (10)
2. Share the prayer that was prepared by Volf. (5)
3. Share your responses to the talk. (10)
4. As a group, take time to respond to some of the following: (50)
  - What brokenness did Volf address?
  - What approach to reconciliation does he offer?
  - What do you see in a new way that will make a difference after you leave this conference?
  - What questions arise for you as you engage this discussion?
5. Closing prayer or a moment of silence. (5)

## Theological Reflection Groups Trinity Institute, 36th National Theological Conference

### Session V: Sr. Helen Prejean & Closure of our Work

4:00 - 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 1, 2006

#### Purpose:

To bring our work to a fruitful conclusion.

#### Goals:

- Provide an opportunity to reflect on Sr. Helen Prejean's presentation.
- Identify some of the insights that have occurred to you during this conference.
- Explore the implications of what we/you have learned.
- Bring closure to our time together.\*

#### Application:

1. Begin with the prayer provided by Sr. Prejean. (5)
2. In your journals or in a quiet time of prayer/mediation, respond to the following for about five minutes: (5)  
What are your thoughts now on the topic of the anatomy of reconciliation?  
What did Sr. Prejean add to your understanding?
3. Share in dyads (groups of two) about her presentation as well as some of what you have gleaned from this conference. Some questions to consider may be: (20)  
What has this year's annual conference meant to you and what have you learned?  
What commitments does this lead you to consider?
4. You may wish to share some of your findings in the total group and then take time to offer appreciation to your fellow sojourners in this small group.
5. We suggest a closing prayer or time of silence before going to the reception

\*Evaluations of the 36th Trinity Institute National Theological conference will be sent to you via e-mail or US mail if we do not have an e-mail address for you.