



SESSION C

Sharing Faith in Community

RATIONALE/GOAL:

Faith sharing is an exchange, a personal sharing of one's experience of God. It is telling others how you experience God, how God has been leading you and inviting you. It is sharing some part, past or present, of your life story in the light of your faith.

Faith sharing is not an intellectual discussion, theologizing, a debate, or an attempt to convince anyone of the validity of your views. It is not group therapy or inappropriate self-disclosure.

Faith sharing fosters a faith community, enabling that community to act out of both individual and common life histories. Each person's faith history is different from anyone else's; each community's faith history is unique.

Faith sharing brings us clarity about our history and a deepened awareness of God working in our lives, in others' lives and in the world. Such discussion helps us to understand Jesus' life and message.

Faith sharing evokes faith, hope and love. It fosters the realization that what we share in common is more important than all that separates us. A strong, respectful and loving community life along with a sense of a group's charism, emerge from on-going faith sharing.

GATHERING:

Take a few moments of quiet to gather in God's presence. You might light a candle at this time.

READING: "Come and See"

On the following day as John stood there with two of his disciples, Jesus passed, and John stared hard at him and said, "Look, there is the Lamb of God." Hearing this the two disciples followed Jesus. Jesus turned around, saw them following, and said, "What do you want?" They answered, "Rabbi," -- which means teacher -- "where do you live?" "Come and see," he replied; so they went and saw where he lived and stayed with him the rest of that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

One of the two who became a follower of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother of

Simon Peter. Early the next morning, Andrew met his brother and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" -- which means the Christ -- and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said, "You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas" -- meaning Rock.

John 1:35-42

QUIET REFLECTION:

Take a substantial amount of time (at least ten minutes) in private reflection. You might consider the following questions. General questions will help you reflect on God's recent action in your life, while questions that relate to the reading or prayer will resonate with your personal faith life.

- ◆ How has God been present in my life? How have I responded?
- ◆ Has Jesus asked me recently "What do you want?" or invited me to come and see?
- ◆ How have I accepted that invitation? What have I seen?
- ◆ What name would Jesus give me today?

SHARING:

Reassemble quietly, keeping the prayerful atmosphere. Each person may speak, as the Spirit leads. Speak conversationally, using "I statements." Share what is comfortable for you. If you choose not to share, at some point let the group know so it won't wait for you.

Listen quietly and attentively to others; try not to focus on what you are going to say. Enter into or acknowledge others' sharing. It is not necessary to verbally comment on another's reflections in order to affirm what he or she has said. Your attention is your affirmation. Comment on those things which resonate with your own experience. It is all right to ask clarifying questions. Remember, this is not meant to be a discussion or debate.

Be comfortable with silent pauses. Know and honor that what is shared will be respectfully and confidentially received.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Understanding God, we thank You for speaking to our hearts; help us grow in our ability to hear You. We thank You for stories of love, joy, failure, striving, suffering, and resurrection; help us to recognize the faith stories in others' lives as well as in our own. Nurturing God, we thank You for calling us together as a faith community; help us to sustain each other as we long for Your presence. We pray in the name of Your child, our Savior Jesus. Amen.