



So What?

Small-Group Facilitator Preparation Materials

Continuing the Conversation

As you finish **via media** and think about how to apply it to your life and relationships, consider answering the following questions in your small groups. Don't feel put on the spot by these questions, but tackle them with honesty, relying on your community to help you answer them.

- If someone asks you what you believe about God, what is your answer?
- Why do you go to church?
- How do you keep your faith in a Good God when there is so much evil and death in the world?
- Why do YOU take the Eucharist?
- What has been your most memorable experience of the Eucharist?
- Have you ever had an experience where your politics and your spirituality clashed? How did you resolve it?
- Have you ever had an experience of being ashamed of your Christianity? Or a time when you haven't admitted being a Christian? What was that about? How did it feel?
- How are you able to get along with people in your church with whom you disagree on matters of politics or theology?
- What has been one of your most joyful moments in church?
- Are you the same person at church as you are when you are at home? At work? With friends?

Small-Group Activity Suggestions (Eight-hour Session only)

1) *Group Walk*

Prepare a short, guided walk around your neighborhood – visit a local park, or area of interest. Keep it simple.

Suggested Goals for a Walk

- Note ways that your congregation could be more active or be more present in your neighborhood.
- Note the number of schools or retirement homes, or other social service institutions. What are you doing to reach them?
- What other churches are close to you? How could you work with them to get the Gospel message out to more people?

2) *Preparing for Equality in the Kingdom of God*

Adapted from an article by Lawrence, S. M. (1998). Unveiling positions of privilege: A hands-on approach to understanding racism. Teaching of Psychology, 198-200.

For more information, visit www.understandingprejudice.org.

Goal

To create social inequities within an exercise and to explore the psychological aspects of privilege.

Preparation

Prepare one packet of materials for every 4-5 people in the group to make a mobile. At least half the packets should contain an elaborate assortment of materials, and the rest should contain only a few basic materials. For example, an elaborate packet might include three wooden dowels, two wire coat hangers, a spool of thread, 10 sheets of colored construction paper, felt tip markers, ribbon, streamers, pom-poms, glitter, glue, and tape. In contrast, the basic packet might include one wooden dowel, one wire coat hanger, a spool of thread, and two pieces of construction paper.

Activity

1. Explain that in this session, the group will be exploring aspects of multiculturalism that are not always recognized or appreciated, and that to do this, you want to conduct a hands-on exercise.
2. Divide the large group into its small groups and seat each group at a separate table or work area.
3. Ask each group to spend 15 minutes coming up with a definition of *multiculturalism*. Tell them that each group should work separately without talking to other groups.
4. While people are discussing multiculturalism, place a packet of materials for making a mobile on each table.

5. After 15 minutes are up, ask each group to make a mobile that represents their definition using only the materials provided in the packet.

Discussion

Once the mobiles are constructed, announce that you would like the groups to present their mobiles to the class. Then ask one of the groups with elaborate materials to present its mobile, and follow this group with a group that was given only basic materials to work with. After all are finished, discuss what it felt like to present the same projects with different resource pools.

3) *The Beatitudes as a Rule of Life in the Kingdom of God*

Many scholars have differing opinions on the Beatitudes. Some see them as a comfort to those who are following Jesus. Others see them as a call to justice and reconciliation. Still others see The Beatitudes as a radical upheaval of the status quo. Consider this alternate reading of the Beatitudes:

Congratulations, you poor!
 God's domain belongs to you.
 Congratulations, you hungry!
 You will have a feast.
 Congratulations, you who weep now!
 You will laugh.
 Damn you rich!
 You already have your consolations.
 Damn you who are well-fed now!
 You will know hunger.
 Damn you who laugh now!
 You will learn to weep and grieve.
 Damn you when everybody speaks well of you!
 Recall that their ancestors treated the other prophets the same way.

Write your own version of the Beatitudes as a statement of Gospel Justice.

4) *Prayers of the People*

While there are Prayers of the People provided as a suggestion for the closing liturgy you will experience today, one of the small groups might want to write their own. Open a Book of Common Prayer to page 383 and look at the format for the Prayers of the People. Use that format, to write your own prayers.

5) *Other ideas?*

Use your own ideas to create a great small-group activity and let us hear about it.