Journey into Compassion
A Study Series
Session I

Theme: Staying open to receive God’s desires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assemble</th>
<th>Participants handouts placed on seats</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flip chart and markers</td>
<td>Worship page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name tags</td>
<td>Session Reading Schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowering tea and glass teapot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small drinking cups (3 oz.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worship cloth for table</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candle, placed on center table</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bible, placed on center table</td>
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<tr>
<td>(readings marked)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross, placed on center table</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chime (Singing Bowl or Bell)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Books for participants</td>
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<td>Computer for playing music</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda Item</th>
<th>Suggested Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Opening Worship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greeting and Introductions</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity 1: Create Group Covenant</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity 2: Discussion of Compassion</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sending Prayer</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
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Gathering Time

Before session begins make reading assignments.

Play quiet reflective music to indicate the start of the session.

Light the candle, take your seat and ring the chime, after a moment turn down the music.

Opening Worship:

Facilitator: Let us say together.......  

All: We are gathered “in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”

As one facilitator reads the following words, the other facilitator brings in the teapot with the flowering tea bulb in it and a container of hot water.

Facilitator: We are like parched land or seeds in the winter soil and are waiting to be awakened. As we open our hearts let us give the Christ within permission to blossom.  

Pour Water As we pour this water let us remember the water of our Baptism to initiate our journey together.

Reader 1: Let us come to these sessions with open hands ready to receive.

All: Open Hands

Reader 2: Let us come to these sessions with open minds ready to hear God’s desire.

All: Open Hands, Open Minds

Reader 3: Let us come to these sessions with open hearts ready to heal our broken world.

All: Open Hands, Open Minds, Open Hearts

Reader 4: I Corinthians 13: 1-3

Reader 5: Micah 6:6-8
Facilitator: And now let us offer our petitions to God for this journey we are beginning together. Particularly during the earlier sessions when there is a chance to offer petitions, it may be helpful for the facilitators to start with their own petitions.
Welcome and Introductions

Greetings and introduction of the study series
- Six sessions
- Social time prior so we are ready to share and can start on time (if possible for your group)
- Time and dates we will meet
- Distribute books *Compassion*
- Discuss Handout “Session Reading Schedule”

Discuss and stress the importance of good time management
- Limited time
- Everyone needs an opportunity to contribute
- Importance of sacred listening

Group introductions (30 to 60 seconds per person depending on size of the group. No longer than 5 mins total.)
- Name
- Answer one of the following: (write options on flip chart)
  - I am here to....
  - I hope to .....  
  - My goal for the next five weeks is ....

Activity I

**Create Group Covenant**  Write contributions on flip chart. Display during all sessions. (see suggestions in the Facilitator’s Notes)

Activity II

**Discussion:**
“What is compassion?”
“Where is it easy to be compassionate? 
“Where is it difficult to be compassionate?”
(Record responses on flip chart and save for comparison at the last session)

Conclusion

- Questions and answers
- Give next week’s assignment (Read the Introduction and Chapter One)
- Refer to second page of handout and discuss weekly response questions.
(Suggestion: Make a poster of these five questions to post at all sessions.)
Sending Prayer

Facilitator: Let us offer our concerns and encouragements to each other, as we leave this space to continue our journey....

All: Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to thee, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly thine, utterly dedicated unto thee; and then use us, we pray thee, as thou wilt, and always to thy glory and the welfare of thy people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (from the BCP)

Facilitator: The Dalai Lama said “All major religious traditions carry basically the same message, that is love, compassion and forgiveness. The important thing is they should be part of our daily lives.” Pass out cups and pour tea. Let us share this tea as a symbol of our willingness to receive the transforming power of Christ’s love. As we drink together let us acknowledge that we cannot even imagine the blossoming that God intends for us.

All Drink together

All:

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive; it is pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

All: Let us go then with Open hands, Open minds, Open hearts.

Facilitator: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord with compassion. Let us share the peace as we prepare to continue our journey.

Everyone share God’s Peace