



# WATER

## Small Group Facilitator Guide

### Set up:

- Ensure that all technology is in place and ready to view the video. If your church does not have adequate WiFi, this may mean that the facilitator will need to download the video before arriving for the session. Facilitators will also need to ensure that everyone will be able to hear and see the video as it is being played. Facilitators may wish to turn on closed captioning.
- Create a welcoming space to have a conversation.
- Place a table in the center or near the conversation space to create an “altarscape” of items that will help set the tone and keep the conversation focused on each Sign of Life.

### What you need:

- Video viewing capabilities
- Small Group Facilitator Guide for the facilitator
- Signs of Life Practice Sheet and worship handouts for each participant
- A table for the altarscape
- Specific items to create altarscape. For water, you will need a pitcher full of water, and a bowl.

## Learning Outcomes

- For participants to be able to link water to liturgy, their own life, and experience of God.
- For participants to gain a better awareness of the presence of the holy in everyday life.
- For participants to deepen relationships through spiritual conversation.

### Small Group Session for Water

#### Gathering Prayer/Setting the Altarscape: (5 minutes)

Gather participants into the conversation circle. Invite a few moments of stillness, and then pray this collect:

*Ever-creating Spirit, who brooded over the waters of chaos and brought forth all life from them: We thank you for the wondrous gift of water through which we die with Christ and are raised by you to the new life of grace; and we pray that we may ever be faithful stewards of this gift and make it available, clean and pure, to all living beings, that in so doing the springs of living water promised by Christ Jesus may well up in every human heart; through Jesus our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Father, one God, now and for ever. Amen*

After the prayer, the facilitator or worship leader should stand up, go to the table or altar and pour the water into the bowl. Pour the water aggressively so that the sign of water can be experienced. Sit together in silence for a few moments with this scene as your focal point.

#### Check-In (15 minutes):

Orient participants to the rhythm of this session. Let them know that you will do check-in, watch the video, have a conversation, and then close with worship.

Invite participants to answer the following question:

*Last week we discussed light. How did you notice the presence of light this week?*

Facilitators may wish to practice mutual invitation (see Small Group Facilitator Guide, above) or they may wish

to simply go around in the circle. Participants who pass should be invited to share after the other participants have shared.

**Watch Video (15 minutes):**

Before you start the video, read this script:

*“As you watch this video, pay attention to the various ways water is explored, and think about how water is present in the life and liturgies of your worshiping community.”*

Play video to the end. Invite the group to come back together for conversation.

**Small Group Conversation (40 minutes):**

Open the small group conversation with the following question:

*“Where is water present in the life and liturgies of your own worshiping community? How are these symbols and practices similar or dissimilar to what you heard and saw in the video?”*

After the opening question has been discussed, choose any of the following questions to discuss with your small group. The facilitator should use their best judgment to select the questions that they believe will elicit meaningful conversation for your context. The small group may spend the entire time on one question, or do several. How many questions the group moves through is less important than fruitful conversation for the group.

- How has water inspired you? How has water been a part of your spiritual journey?
- At the wedding at Cana, Jesus turns water into wine. Brother James said, “God uses ordinary things like water, and turns it into really fabulous wine. And I just think if God can do that with water, what can he do with me?” How have you seen God turn the ordinary into the extraordinary?
- In the wilderness, the people of Israel learn to rely on God for the water they need to survive. How has God sustained you in times of drought?
- Br. Keith reflects on the spiritual journey: “There are moments on the journey that are profoundly baptismal but we don’t name in that way, those moments where you come to a juncture, and you can absolutely say: “Something about me has now died. And I am now different, and from this moment I’m moving forward into a direction that is completely unknown. But at my core I am still a beloved child of God.” Have you experienced a moment like that? What died, and how did you experience new life?

When there are about five minutes left for conversation, ask the following question:

*“What do you understand differently about water because of this conversation?”*

**Wrap Up/Weekly Practice (5 minutes):**

Remind the participants of the weekly practice. Distribute the Signs of Life Practice Sheet for Water. Reiterate the instructions from the video:

*“This week, when you wash your hands, notice the water. Really feel the water as it moves over your hands.”*

This is also the time when the facilitator should remind participants of housekeeping details for the next session.

**Worship (10 minutes):**

Pass out the worship handouts to each participant. The facilitator may wish to lead worship, or may invite another participant to lead worship. Groups may wish to use the altarscape as a focal point during their worship time.

After worship, the small group session has ended.



# WATER

## Small Group Worship

**Leader prays the collect:** Ever-creating Spirit, who brooded over the waters of chaos and brought forth all life from them: We thank you for the wondrous gift of water through which we die with Christ and are raised by you to the new life of grace; and we pray that we may ever be faithful stewards of this gift and make it available, clean and pure, to all living beings, that in so doing the springs of living water promised by Christ Jesus may well up in every human heart; through Jesus our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Father, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### First Song of Isaiah

Read antiphonally by half verse.

Surely, it is God who saves me; \*

**I will trust in him and not be afraid.**

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, \*

**and he will be my Savior.**

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing \*

**from the springs of salvation.**

And on that day you shall say, \*

**Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;**

Make his deeds known among the peoples; \*

**see that they remember that his Name is exalted.**

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, \*

**and this is known in all the world.**

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, \*

**for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \***

**as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

**Leader:** Without silence, words have no meaning. Listen to this poem about water.

*[Here we suggest reading from "Like the Water," by Wendell Berry.]*

In the silence that follows, let God flow over you. *[Silence for two minutes]*

### Prayers of the Gathered Community:

**Leader:** We pray for ourselves, and those who need to surrender something to God. Pray for those who need God's help, either silently or aloud.

We give God thanks for the waters of our baptism and how God has formed us. Give thanks silently or aloud.

O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Now let us pray the words that Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your Name,**

**your kingdom come,**

**your will be done,**

**on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those**

**who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial,**

**and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,**

**and the glory are yours,**

**now and for ever. Amen.**

**Leader:** Let us bless the Lord.

**People:** **Thanks be to God.**

**Leader:** Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. **Amen.**



**This week we invite you to reflect on the sign of Water**

**Question:**

What keeps you afloat?

**Scripture:**

Happy are those  
who do not follow the advice of the wicked,  
or take the path that sinners tread,  
or sit in the seat of scoffers;  
but their delight is in the law of the Lord,  
and on his law they meditate day and night.  
They are like trees  
planted by streams of water,  
which yield their fruit in its season,  
and their leaves do not wither.  
In all that they do, they prosper.

*Psalm 1:1-3*

**Collect:**

Ever-creating Spirit, who brooded over the waters of chaos and brought forth all life from them: We thank you for the wondrous gift of water through which we die with Christ and are raised by you to the new life of grace; and we pray that we may ever be faithful stewards of this gift and make it available, clean and pure, to all living beings, that in so doing the springs of living water promised by Christ Jesus may well up in every human heart; through Jesus our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Father, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**Practice:**

As you wash your hands, take time to feel the water and to remember your baptism.



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