

# Climate and Spirit Group

## Guidelines for Spiritual Conversations

### Purpose

The group format offers members the opportunity to reflect, pray, share and listen to each other on how the Spirit is calling us to be and act as human creatures, in relationship with God and nature, in the context of rapid human-caused climate and environmental change.

**Members:** A maximum of 8 members will give an opportunity for each to speak and be heard.

**Confidentiality:** What is shared in a group stays in the group.

**Before the group meeting:** At the beginning of the workshop, some material will be offered to share, take to prayer and reflect upon. The offered material may not be the most significant way that God speaks to me during the workshop and so may not feature much or at all in what I bring to the meeting.

**Facilitator:** Each group will have a facilitator who leads the group through the structure outlined below. The facilitator puts a feather down on the table, and each member begins sharing by picking up the feather, then speaking. On-line participants can raise a hand on screen, to indicate that they wish to speak next. If not all have shared in a round, the facilitator will allow a reasonable silence and then move the meeting to the next activity.

### Meeting structure (approximately 1 hour)

Activity	Timing guideline
Preparation: silence or a stillness or breathing exercise	5 min
Round 1 sharing: how has God been working with me	±3 min per participant
Silence to reflect on what I have heard and how it has touched me, what stays with me and how I might like to respond	3 min
Round 2 sharing: something of how God spoke to me through what others were saying. How do I desire to respond? What am I asking God for?	±3 min per participant
Intercessory prayer: a chance for participants to express prayer requests silently or out loud.	5 min

Close the group conversation by saying an **Our Father** together.

### Sharing

When I listen:

- I offer respectful, attentive and contemplative listening, staying open and present to others with honour, without judgement, assumptions or interpretation.
- Not listening for how I can help; but to appreciate what the person is experiencing and contributing.
- Times of silence are appropriate; they give a chance to listen for deeper meaning and the movements of the Spirit. A short pause between speakers gives a chance to assimilate what has been heard.

When I talk:

- Use “I”; do not use “we” or “you”; I talk from my own perspective.
- Speak briefly and clearly, try to stay within the 3 minute guideline.
- I am not required to share in a round and only to share what I feel comfortable to share.

### **Round 1 sharing**

Each member of the group has a chance to speak, sharing the fruits of their personal prayer and reflection, and their response to the material shared in the workshop. The other members actively listen, without comment or reply.

### **Round 2 sharing**

Each member of the group has a chance to respond to what has been shared in Round 1. What struck me, how did I feel God might be speaking to me, how do I wish to respond? How might the Spirit be moving in my cares and concerns, in this time?

**Intercessory prayers** could conclude with a formula such as:

Lord, hear us. *Response:* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

or ... We pray to the Lord. *Response:* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

These guidelines were composed from experience of Christian Life Community (CLC/CVX) and Sacred Circles, on the Sacred Journey course run by Mercy Center, and from various experiences of spiritual accompaniment and spiritual conversation with and by Jesuits.

### **Facilitators**

Geoff te Braake SJ  
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September 2024