



## **Meeting Three: Second Week of Lent**

We give suggestions for each week's group meeting, but it is up to you to organise how you feel best.

Feel free to move things around, omit or add things; you must feel comfortable with your meeting. Begin with tea and biscuits while people gather and are welcomed.

You might like to set the scene with a centrepiece, maybe a candle and cloth of Lenten colours.

### Suggested Outline of Meeting

**Welcome:** We suggest beginning with tea and biscuits while people gather.

**Opening Prayer** – Take a couple of minutes of quiet prayer to ask God to be with you during the meeting. Pray that God might speak to the heart of each person in the group.

**Sharing** - Ask each individual to go over their prayer times this week; give them a moment to consult their journal.

You might ask them:

How did you find praying the Scripture or the other meditation?

Did time seem to drag, or did it go quickly?

Did anything surprise you?

Did any of the Scripture passages or other meditations have any special meaning for you?

How did you feel over the week?

What is God saying to you?

**Teaching:** if some members of the group are not really familiar with Imaginative Contemplation then we suggest this week offer them a led contemplation in the group.

This is a way of entering into the Scriptures, particularly the Gospels.

Use a story from scripture that allows you to be part of the action, such as today's story of John the Baptist.

As in dreams, you might find interesting and unexpected things come up.

See the method laid out on page 11 of the **Journey into Freedom** book.

Explain that this prayer is the interaction between Scripture and the imagination and life of the person who praying. This is not the recreation of history. Everyone will imagine the story differently. That's OK. The Holy Spirit can inspire each individual in their prayer to receive what they need to feel and hear. Imaginative Contemplation is a place to meet the God of surprises.

### **Review of Prayer**

When you have finished look back over the prayer.

It is good to model the review in the questions you ask the group after the prayer in the group.

### **Imaginative Contemplation – Group Workshop**

Lead the group through an imaginative contemplation.

Before you start, prepare a story from the Gospel that you would like to use. In the example below we shall assume that it is the reading given for day 13, John the Baptist by the river Jordan.

**Stilling:** Begin with one of the stilling exercises you did the week before last.

**Awareness of God:** Become aware you are in the presence of God. Dedicate this time to God.

**Seek Guidance:** Ask God to guide your imagination at this time of prayer.

**Desires:** Be in touch with what gift or grace you want to ask God for at this moment. Ask God for your deepest desires.

Suggest that the grace to ask for today might be to "Know Christ more clearly, Love Christ more dearly, Follow Christ more nearly."

**Listen to the Story:** Familiarise the group with the story. *Have someone in the group read the whole passage slowly.*

#### **Set the scene.**

What is the Wilderness of Judea like? What sort of day is it, sunny, overcast, hot or cold?

*Give the group plenty of time between your setting the scene questions to imagine for themselves.*

*Remember, people find it difficult to imagine when you are talking.*

Choose one of the characters in the story, and see the action from that person's point of view.

You could be a Pharisee or Sadducee, one of John's disciples, a curious bystander, or John the Baptist himself.

Be aware of the people in the wilderness.

Are they talking or quiet, relaxed or tense?

What are people talking about?

What do you imagine is happening?

When John makes his criticism how do you react?

- **Talk to John the Baptist, or Jesus** in your own words. Imagine him speaking back to you.  
Do you want to ask him for anything?
- **Prayer:** Finish with a formal prayer everyone knows like the Lord's Prayer/Our Father.

**Take a Break:** After a short break it would be good for those who wish to share something of this prayer with the group.

You might ask people to begin with whether they were able to get into the imaginative contemplation.

You may also ask the group whether anything surprised them. You could also ask what God is saying to them or it how do they feel now. If you get some good responses from the group, you might suggest that these are the sorts of things they could note in their journals after each prayer session.

**4. Looking Forward** – Make sure the time and venue etc. of the next meeting is clear.

**5. Thank everyone for coming.**