



God's Mission with a World in Continuous Motion
La Misión de Dios con un Mundo en Continuo
Movimiento

May 18-20, 2016 Ponce, Puerto Rico

Small Group Sessions

Group Leader Instructions: (Please read aloud to your group)

- One person should volunteer to lead the group (following the exercises in this booklet.)
- Group members are pre-assigned and will remain in the same group for the conference.
- The group is asked to use the process of mutual invitation whenever you meet together. The leader begins speaking, reading, or sharing. When s/he is finished, s/he invites someone else in the group to take a turn. When that person is finished, they invite someone else, etc., until all have shared. If you are invited, you may: 1) share, 2) pass for now, or 3) pass. If the person invited passes, someone else is invited.
- Please allow people to share within the group without interruption, cross talk, or your own additions to their comments. Once everyone has spoken, additional comments may be made and more discussion may take place.
- Open and close with prayer.
- Thank you for adhering to these guidelines for respectful communication. We pray that your time in your small group will be a blessing!

Small Group 1: Wednesday May 18, 2016, 11:00-11:45 pm

Reflect: The "Mission of God"

In the Book of Common Prayer (p.855), the catechism states, "The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and with each other in Christ." This statement notes the broken relationships between us and God and broken relationships with one another. The mission of the Church is to restore, yet before there was a need for restoration there was creation - and God saw, "it was very good."

Reflect also on the message just delivered by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

After a few minutes for reflection:

- The leader asks, by mutual invitation: What word or phrase of Bishop Curry's talk stood out for you? Share just the word or phrase – no explanation.
- Someone else asks: Considering both the talk and your own experience of participating in God's mission, what particularly strikes you now? Please give some explanation.
- Another person asks: Thinking about all that you have heard, what do you think God might be asking you to be or do? Each shares his or her own thoughts on this.
- Then:

Discuss:

1. How is the mission of God being revealed to you today?
2. What might you ask the Presiding Bishop this afternoon, especially regarding our role in God's mission in a time of "continuous movement"?
3. How can the Presiding Bishop's message inform your theology of mission?

Small Group 2: Thursday May 19, 11:00 am – noon

Reflect: Being People of God Together

"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting our time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

Lila Watson, Indigenous Australian (credited)

"Help us discover our own riches; don't judge us poor because we lack what you have.
Help us discover our chains; don't judge us slaves by the type of shackles you wear. ...
Be patient with our pace; don't judge us lazy simply because we can't follow your tempo.
Be patient with our symbols; don't judge us ignorant because we can't read your signs.
Be with us and proclaim the richness of your life which you can share with us.
Be with us and be open to what we can give.
Be with us as a companion who walks with us - neither behind nor in front - in our search for life and ultimately for God." *Henri Nouwen*

Read: 1 Peter 2:6-10 (NRSV)

- The leader reads the scripture aloud and asks, by mutual invitation: What word or phrase stood out for you in that reading? Everyone shares just the word or phrase.
- Someone else reads it aloud again and asks: Considering your own experience of participating in God's mission, what particularly strikes you in this reading? Please give some explanation.
- Another person reads it aloud and asks: Thinking about all that you have heard, what do you think God might be asking you to be or do in response to this scripture? Each shares his or her own thoughts on this.

"⁶For it stands in scripture: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."⁷To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner,"⁸ and "A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people,^[c] in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

Discuss:

1. Reflecting on the first paragraph of this passage, how do these verses inform us about how we should prepare to engage in God's mission?
2. "We are all called to be living stones, and yet we are all a little different. We are not the perfect cornerstone that Jesus is. We have odd shapes; we do not fit as perfectly alongside one another as we would hope. We have corners that are broken off, we have cracks and chips, and we are weathered by the world. We are different colors, shapes, and sizes, and yet we form one spiritual house, one community. We are all God's people, because we all have Jesus as our cornerstone."
 - Reflecting on the above quote and the reading from 1 Peter, how are we to fulfill our baptismal promises to "... continue in the prayers", to "persevere", to "proclaim the Good News", to "seek and serve Christ in all...", and to "strive for justice and peace".
3. How much of our desire to engage in mission comes from our own needs?

Small Group 3: Friday, May 20, 11:00-noon

Reflect: Do Justice

"It's not a coincidence that in the Scriptures, poverty is mentioned more than 2,100 times. You know, the only time Jesus Christ is judgmental is on the subject of the poor. "As you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."...

"... justice is a higher standard. Six and a half thousand Africans are still dying every day of preventable, treatable disease, for lack of drugs we can buy at any drug store. This is not about charity: This is about Justice and Equality.

"Because there's no way we can look at what's happening in Africa and, if we're honest, conclude that deep down, we would let it happen anywhere else -- if we really accepted that Africans are equal to us....

"It's annoying but justice and equality are mates, aren't they? Justice always wants to hang out with equality. And equality is a **real pain...**" *Bono, Keynote address at the 54th National Prayer Breakfast, 2006*

full speech is available here:

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/bononationalprayerbreakfast.htm>

The

Read: Micah 6:6a, 8 (NRSV)

- The leader reads the Scripture aloud and asks, by mutual invitation: What word or phrase stood out for you in that reading? Everyone shares just the word or phrase – no explanation.
- Someone else reads it aloud again and asks: Considering your own experience of participating in God's mission, what particularly strikes you in this reading? Please give some explanation.
- Another person reads it aloud and asks: Thinking about all that you have heard, what do you think God might be asking you to be or do in response to this scripture? Each shares his or her own thoughts on this.

“⁶ With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high?

⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Discuss:

1. In the context of all we have experienced at this conference, what does it “look like” to
 - a. do justice?
 - b. To love kindness?
 - c. To walk humbly with your God?
2. Who are your models, heroes, or witnesses of this kind of life? This may be someone you have known personally or read about.
3. What will you take with you from the 2016 GEMN conference to help you do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God as you engage in mission?

As we go out into the world:

May we **grow in our desire** to follow Jesus and to share the Good News.

May God bless us with **discomfort** at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with **anger** at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless us with **tears** to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, hunger, and war, so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with enough **foolishness** to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done, to bring justice and kindness to all God’s children and to the poor. *Adapted from a Franciscan Blessing*

* **Note:** Discussion questions are based upon the work of Ms. Elizabeth Boe of the Mission Personnel Office of DFMS (2014) and revised by The Rev. Dr. James Boston.