

AT THE MEETING

OPENING PRAYER

We begin, as usual, with a short time of stillness, putting ourselves in the presence of God and asking for grace that everything that happens in our mind, heart and imagination may be directed purely to the praise and service of God. *Some communities use the CLC opening prayer, or some other formal prayer, to conclude this brief time of stillness. Others use a minute or two of suitable music.*

GRACE We ask to realise that Jesus calls each of us uniquely, with all our weaknesses and fears.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 5: 1-11. (Ask someone to read this aloud.)

SILENCE

Ten minutes silent prayer remembering my life and prayer since the last meeting. How have I found the prayer this last fortnight? What events in my life and prayer do I wish to share with my community?

SHARING AND LISTENING

- Remember that this is a listening, not a discussion, group.
- Include a second round if there is time.
- It's good to conclude this time of reflection with a short time of silence, praying for each other, and with a formal prayer, such as the *Glory Be* or the *Lord's Prayer*.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER, if wanted.

PRACTICALITIES: This is an opportunity for any reports, eg from members who have attended a CLC event, for questions, for discussion about any concerns, for news about any work or mission in which members might be involved, or for any business the group might need to sort out.

REVIEW OF THE MEETING

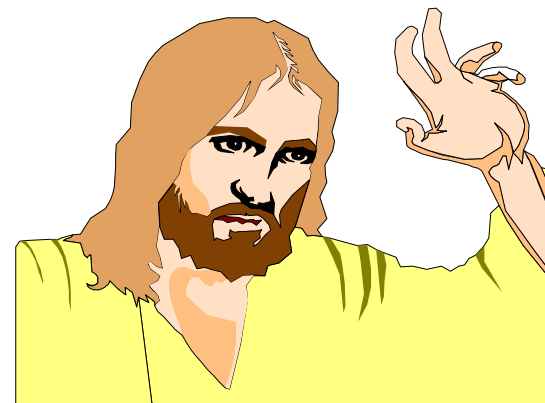
What was good for me in this meeting?
What was not so good? What would I have liked to be different?
What do I want to take away with me?

CLOSING PRAYER (Many communities use the CLC closing prayer.)



MEETING PLANS FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

MEETING JESUS FACE TO FACE



**TOWARDS
MEETING ELEVEN**

PERSONAL PRAYER BEFORE THE MEETING

A reminder of the suggested stages of prayer...

PREPARATORY PRAYER Begin as the previous leaflets suggested.

ASKING FOR WHAT I WANT I ask for the grace to realise that Jesus calls each of us uniquely, with all our weaknesses and fears.

MATERIAL FOR PRAYER

* Try starting the week with **Lk 5: 1-11** (see opposite). Stay with it in the following prayer period(s), remembering what the previous leaflet said about **repetition**.

* When you are ready, move, in turn, to John 4: 1-42 and Matthew 9: 9-13. Don't worry at all if you spend all your prayer times on just one or two passages.

REMEMBER It is good to spend some time talking directly with the Lord and to make a review of prayer afterwards.

[Please refer to the back page of the Introductory leaflet to the second set of meetings 8-14 for further helpful passages for imaginative contemplation.]

HINTS FOR USING OUR IMAGINATION IN PRAYER

* Our imaginations enable us to meet Jesus just as his friends and relations did two thousand years ago. Time and space are not barriers to the risen Lord.

* *We all have imaginations, though they differ. How do you remember past events? Remember something now. What is vivid? Notice how you can be present to it all, though not all of it may be clear. Imagination in prayer is just like that, too.*

* God can be very active in us through images and symbols produced in our imagination. God uses them to heal, enlighten, forgive, energise, or direct us.

* It is good to identify with the people who met Jesus, to meet him as they did.



* We can often profit by **letting the imagination go**. But we can control it when we need to. We can exercise a sort of discernment about what is happening.

* When praying this way, it is good to hear what is said, and also to hear *how* it is said, and to **sense** the accompanying facial expression (often we can't see it, but we know what it is). We try to identify with how the gospel characters are feeling. Understanding their fears, hopes, desires, and worries makes the event real to us. We don't just think about the Gospel story; we experience it, at least to some degree.

* In all prayer, our main work is in preparation, and in moving in and out of prayer; the prayer itself can be left to God. One way of moving into imaginative contemplation is with these guiding points:

The first is **CONTEXT**. Where did this incident take place? What sort of scenery was it in and how much attention do you need to pay to it? (Knowing that sometimes the Jews of Jesus' day ate while lying on couches, with their heads to the table, helps to understand Luke 7: 31-50.) What sort of people are in the story? (In the account of the Samaritan woman in John 4, it helps to know a little about how Jews and Samaritans regarded each other; elsewhere that tax-collectors, also known

as publicans, were regarded as traitors to both religion and country.)

The second is **PEOPLE**. Who are they? Where are they in relation to each other? What are they feeling?

The third is **IDENTIFYING** with someone in the scene. Enter this event by imagining yourself as one of the participants, so that what happens, happens to you; what is said, is said to you.

AN IMAGINATIVE CONTEMPLATION

THE CALL OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

* Read Luke 5: 1-11.

Consider the **CONTEXT** of the incident. Peter, Andrew, James, and John are all professional fishermen, who regularly fish the lake and know its ways. Apparently they have already met Jesus and believe in him as the Messiah (John 1: 35-42).

The **context** includes where this takes place. What scenery does your imagination need? The text suggests the blue waters of a lake, a slope rising from the lakeside, boats, nets, and a crowd. Is it sunny and warm? Is there a smell of fish? What else?

* Read Luke 5: 1-11 a second time.

Now put the **PEOPLE** in the scene. Jesus is trying to address the crowd, but they are too close to him. Focus on individuals in the crowd. Why are they there? What are their hopes and fears? Turn to the fishermen, Simon, Andrew (not named), James and John, on the shore cleaning their nets. Are they worried that they have caught no fish? Are they listening to Jesus? What is their reaction to him?

Remember: how you see it doesn't need to be *historically accurate*, as long as it helps you to relate to Jesus: 'This is how it would be for me, if I were one of them!'

* Read Luke 5: 1-11 a third time.

Put yourself in the scene. Who do you **IDENTIFY** with? One of the fishermen? One of the crowd? Jesus himself — what was going on for him? It is good to be someone in the scene who will enable you to observe and listen to Jesus, to get to know him and respond to him. The less you are just a spectator the better; the ideal is for the incident to happen to you. You can identify with one person in one prayer period and with someone else next time; or even switch roles in the middle.

Are you ready to let the scene unroll, or do you need to read the passage again? It is good to read it until you drift into it quite naturally.

It is important to close your prayer by spending time with Jesus, opening your heart to him, especially about all that has happened to you through being with him in the gospel event.

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