

GUIDELINES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION FACILITATORS

The following guidelines are provided to assist you in the task of facilitating a group discussion

Set out the seats in a circle, so that everyone can see all the other faces.

1. Explain the process to the group, making the following points:
 - ,/ It is important that only one person speaks at a time, so we can all hear what others are saying, and the ideas can be recorded;
 - ,/ Explain the purpose of the session is to contribute your ideas that will enable us to learn from each other, and seek to hear the voice of the Spirit as we discern meanings
 - ,/ Explain that there are some guiding questions that will be used in these discussions - these are set out in the booklet under discussion
2. Appoint a reporter.
3. Take any questions for clarification.
4. Invite each person to share their responses and learnings from their reading of the study booklet
5. Move to the provided questions in turn.
6. Invite any other ideas people have or comments they want to make.
7. Share ideas about what actions could be taken related to the issues raised in the booklet.
8. Thank all participants for their time and contributions.
9. Ensure people that they will receive a copy of the record made of the meeting as soon as possible
10. Close with a prayer or shared prayertime.
11. Share a cuppa, if that is appropriate.

NOTES FOR THE FOUR DISCUSSION SESSIONS, after a trial with members of my congregation who are committed to building relationships with First Peoples.

A maximum of 12 persons in a group allows for the maximum air time for everyone. I found that all being seated around a large table with our booklets allowed people to feel free to make notes as the discussion progressed. Sessions of approximately 1 ½ hours to be adequate, depending on the enthusiasm of the group for sharing their views. A group who know each other well might want longer than a group of mixed denominations).

Introduction

Beginning with an acknowledgement of Country and a prayer for wisdom, insight, discernment and the Spirit's presence. (Symbolised by a lighted candle in the middle of the group. }

- ,/ Suggest that each person in turn shares their expectations of these discussions.
- ,/ Suggest that the group deal with each section of this page in turn, and allow, given that all have pre-read the text, for questions for clarification first. Details about the work of the Dialogue Group can be found on their website.
- ,/ Follow the same process for Introduction to the Resource. A question like, "What connects with you?" to encourage more sharing.

Section one

It helps to allow about 10 minutes to share people's responses to the text on page 7.

Some comments one group made were:

- ,/ Noted the emphasis on feelings in this approach, which was appreciated.
- ,/ "Our culture created the wilderness"

- ./ Add to the second list "Our waterways despoiled, reshaped with disregard for the land and oceans"
- ./ Destruction of indigenous heritage and sacred sites.

These comments could also come in answer to question 1

After about 20 minutes discussing the questions, the group could appreciate sharing in the prayer.

Section Two

In this section, after sharing responses to the section before the italics, the trial group wanted to read aloud together the Uluru Statement from the Heart".

The group shared responses to the statement, then to each of the pages before moving on to the discussion questions. Again, we all prayed the prayer together.

Section Three

One approach would be to ask people to work in about 4 groups of 2 people (4 pairs) each taking one section of these pages, sharing their responses and deciding what they would share with the total group.

Then move back into the total group to hear from each pair of their responses to that section, and any questions it has raised for them.

In the total group, then discuss together the page 16 text and the questions. Closing prayer as usual.

Section Four

This section can be taken each page at a time, with people sharing their responses. The major focus is on what action is the next appropriate one or ones for the group to take, as well as what individuals will do. People will know of books, internet resources, and individuals who could be added to useful resources (perhaps even shared as an item in the congregation newsletter). The denominational resource people could be contacted for further resourcing. The trial group had been involved in training from the past in using the SEE, JUDGE, ACT process and noted especially the importance of point 3. Using theological reflection, and of the importance of beginning with "experience" with those who are most affected by the particular injustice, to discern what it feels like to be standing in solidarity with them, "one of the least of these".

In planning action they felt that they should be guided by the approach of engaging in mission "**with, among and by**" the particular group, and of not falling into the trap of thinking you know what is best for them or acting on their behalf as "rescuer"!

The group emphasised the need to discover "What can our First Nations **Peoples** tell us?" and of Acknowledging Country (not land, as the former includes oceans). Welcome to Country is reserved for a member of the local First Nation to offer to a group and for us to acknowledge that welcome from First Peoples (plural). Eg the Kurna Peoples or Nation.

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