

“Spirit Sightings” Plenary Session

Materials needed:

Prepared overhead transparencies, copies of the Scripture passage, and newspapers for everyone
(*Italicized words on overhead*)

A. Introduction (5 minutes)

I will lead you now on a one-hour experiential process that will enable you to

- understand the purpose of Spirit Sightings
- imagine the value of Spirit Sightings in your own ministry
- deepen your practice of discerning the presence of Holy Spirit in the events of the day
- experience Scripture as a resource in that process of discernment

B. Warm-up (7 minutes)

The vision that is motivating Spirit Sightings can be summed up in just a few words:

The Spirit is working in the world and in our daily lives. Look for that and celebrate!

Instructions: Take a moment in silence to think of a time in the past few days when you have been aware of the Spirit alive in your own life. I will be asking you to share some part of that with one other person sitting near you.

You have 5 minutes to share with one other person those experiences of the Spirit alive in your own life.

C. Engaging the world through Scripture (example) (7 minutes)

In Spirit Sightings we are looking for sightings of the Spirit anywhere in the world that somehow connect to the Scripture passages from the lectionary for any given Sunday.

The Spirit is working in the world and in our daily lives. Scripture provides us with a frame of faithfulness through which to experience and view the Spirit in these events.

Example:

Since the Seasons of the Spirit prototype was used in February of 2000 there have been two examples of Spirit sightings posted on the Seasons of the Spirit website. They both relate to a passage from Mark. Let us hear that passage: Mark 2:13-22. (Read by another voice)

- Here is the news story that Sandra Rooney found in *Religious News Service*...
- These are the questions that Sandra asked in order to help people make the connection she had made between the story and the Scripture passage...
- This is the prayer that Sandra wrote... (Read by the Scripture voice)
- Here is the story that I found in the *Guardian Weekly*...
- These are the questions that I asked...
- This is the prayer that I wrote... (Read by the Scripture voice)

D. Engaging the world through Scripture (practice) (25 minutes)

Instructions:

1. Listen to the reading of a Scripture passage from the lectionary for next Sunday: Isaiah 65:17-25.
2. There are copies of that passage for everyone. Please pass them around.
3. Using the newspaper you brought with you or the ones provided, find evidence of the Spirit alive in the world in relation to that Scripture passage. In ten minutes or less (I will be monitoring people's progress) you will have an opportunity to share briefly:
 - *an excerpt from the newspaper which you see as a contemporary expression of some aspect of that Scripture passage.*
 - *a question you would ask that would help a person make the connection that you have seen between the Scripture passage and the newspaper situation*
4. Go around the table and hear briefly from each person what they found in their newspaper and their question. Please do not take more than one minute each. ("I found... and this is my question...")

E. Back Home Application (7 minutes)

Instructions:

1. On your own take two minutes to write down one way that you could imagine Spirit Sightings being a resource to you personally or to your place of ministry.
2. Go around the table and hear each of these.
3. Ask one person to collect these and hand them to Cheryl

F. Closing (2 minutes)

The goals of SPIRIT SIGHTINGS are to:

- *create an online community that looks for and celebrates the Spirit's working in the world and in our daily lives*
- *lift up international news stories and current events, linking these to the lectionary passages for each Sunday*
- *enrich Bible study, personal reflection and sermon preparation*