

## Opening Prayer

*Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

## Gathering Question

Group members take turns answering the gathering question, designed to help folks get to know each other better in classic ice-breaker fashion. Each one shares briefly before the group takes up the primary conversation for this particular time together.

*What is a book you have read or a movie you have watched more than once and what brought you back to it?*

## Communal Reading: Philippians 3:7–14

*Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

*Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.*

## Sharing and Conversation

Sharing among the group unfolds organically, prompted by conversation starters for each session and guided by generous listening so that all members of the group have opportunity to participate.

*Have you given up something in order to “gain Christ and be found in him”?  
What did you choose to give up and did you ever take it back?*

## Closing Prayer

Each gathering concludes with a time of prayer. Leadership roles are shared on a volunteer basis among group participants.

Adapted from Steven Charleston's *Ladder to the Light: An Indigenous Elder's Meditations on Hope and Courage* (Minneapolis: Broadleaf Books, 2021).

*One: Our spiritual journey is measured not by how many answers we have accumulated but in how many questions we have confronted.*

*All: We are not gods who must know everything, gatekeepers to truth – we are seekers who look for the truth where it may be most difficult to find.*

*One: Our wisdom is not in what we know or believe, but in what we wonder.*

*All: The light beyond the hill calls us to leave the shadows, even if the shadows were our pride and our possession. And so we give ourselves to this joyful journey, pressing on toward the prize of our heavenly calling—to be people who know Christ and the power of his resurrection. Amen.*