

## Communities of Learning

As your congregation is discerning its role in early childhood development and/or as your team is beginning its work, we recommend taking together the Communities of Learning session for Children. The session is part of Episcopal Relief & Development's [Communities of Learning curriculum](#). Intended for small group gatherings, online or in person, the objective is to help participants grow in awareness of, and desire to serve, the populations and priorities aligned with the mission of Episcopal Relief & Development. As a faith formation curriculum, it offers group support and asks participants to be open to where God may be leading in the work of advocating for the wellness of all children, near and far. As part of the session, you might invite your Diocesan Episcopal Relief & Development representative to make a presentation. You might also include a local leader from Head Start or a neighboring preschool.

The session for Children includes a PowerPoint or PDF with notes for the leader or presenter. You can decide which works best for your group. A [facilitator's guide](#) provides formation objectives, learning goals, community agreements, preparation tips and additional resources.

### Presenter Notes

These presenter notes correlate to the Episcopal Relief & Development [PDF](#) or [PowerPoint](#) presentation.

#### SLIDE 1 – TITLE SLIDE

#### SLIDE 2 – INTRODUCTION

**Leader:** Read or paraphrase introduction.

#### SLIDE 3 – PRAYER

**Leader:** Invite participants to join in the prayer.

#### SLIDE 4 – GROUP RULE OF LIFE

**Leader:** Explain that there are three ways in which the learning community will commit to a Rule of Life during the sessions. In other words, the sacred context of each session is understood to include prayer and meditation, together and at home.

#### SLIDE 5 – PRIORITIES FOR CHILDREN

**Leader:** This session begins with a description of our topic. Read aloud or invite a reader.

#### SLIDE 6 – OPENING PRAYER - YOUTH SESSION

**Leader:** In this Ritual of Dedication, invite online participants to light a candle, take some deep breaths and pray the opening prayer aloud, together. Let us pray...

## SLIDE 7 – OPENING PRAYER - ADULT SESSION

**Leader:** In this Ritual of Dedication, invite online participants to light a candle, take some deep breaths and pray the opening prayer aloud, together. Let us pray...

## SLIDE 8 – INTRODUCTIONS

**Leader:** Invite each participant to share their name and a word for what is on their heart today. (*Zoom group: If the group is 10+, you might invite participants to write this in the chat instead.*)

## SLIDE 9 – SCRIPTURE READING

**Leader:** Read the Scripture aloud.

## SLIDE 10 – GUIDED MEDITATION

**Leader:** I invite you, now, to check that you are in a comfortable position, loosening and softening your body as needed. (*Zoom group: invite group to turn off cameras, if they wish.*)

You may close your eyes or soften your gaze, whichever feels more comfortable for you...Begin to settle yourself by noticing and putting aside any concerns, unfinished plans or tensions from this day...as we take the turn inward, putting ourselves in the presence of God...

You may take a few long deep, cleansing breaths, tuning in to the movement of your breath collecting your attention...

Breathing in the breath of Spirit, breathing out compassion and care.

Breathing in the breath of the Spirit, breathing out welcome and generosity.

When you notice thoughts or emotions arising, simply take note and then return your attention, very gently, to your breathing...there is no need to push thoughts or feelings away. Instead, maintain a posture of welcome to your own interior movements.

Continue attending to the breath as you join, in the silence of your heart, in these prayers for the healing of the world:

May we be in loving service to all.  
May we be tenacious in humility and deeper understanding.  
May we promote the dignity of every human being.  
May we understand ourselves to be part of the natural world.  
May all children be encouraged to grow and flourish.  
May all women be encouraged to grow and flourish.  
May we reverence God in all of God's creation.  
May all people find relief from struggle and pain.

May our compassion and hope radiate to all forms of life.  
And may our faithful witness be for the healing of the world.

Continue breathing, imagining that with each exhale, you are widening your circle of concern, to include the whole world, from those closest to you to those furthest away.

When you are ready, set an intention for how you would participate in today's session...and slowly return your awareness to this community gathered.

### **SLIDE 11 – LEARNING TOGETHER**

**Leader:** In this session, we are exploring how Episcopal Relief & Development helps communities nurture healthy children under age six and why the first 1,000 days of a child's life are so important to their overall development.

### **SLIDE 12 – THE LESSON**

**Leader:** Read aloud.

### **SLIDES 13-14 – PROTECTING HEALTH AND PREVENTING DISEASE**

**Leader:** Read or invite someone to read the description.

### **SLIDE 15 – EMPOWERING PARENTS**

**Leader:** Read or invite someone to read the description.

### **SLIDE 16 – PROTECTING PARENTS**

**Leader:** Read or invite someone to read the description.

### **SLIDE 17 – INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO**

**Leader:** Let's take a look at how these priorities play out in community. Video is less than three minutes.

### **SLIDE 18 – USING MUTUAL INVITATION FOR SHARING**

To ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak, we will proceed in the following way:

- The leader or a designated person will share first. After that person has spoken, he or she then invites another to share. After the next person has spoken, that person is given the privilege to invite another to share.
- If you are not ready to share yet, say, "I pass for now," and we will invite you to share later on. If you don't want to say anything at all, simply say, "I pass," and proceed to invite another to share. We will do this until everyone has been invited.

The Mutual Invitation Process is used as a catalyst to encourage all who wish to share to do so. As group members become more accustomed to using this tool, they make connections with everyone in the session because they invite each speaker by name. When Mutual Invitation is used, it encourages deep and holy listening to one another because there is no conversation until everyone has spoken once.

### **SLIDE 19 – QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION - YOUTH**

**Leader:** Offer your response first and then select the next participant to share (i.e., mutual invitation.)

### **SLIDE 20 – QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION - ADULT**

**Leader:** Offer your response first and then select the next participant to share (i.e., mutual invitation.)

### **SLIDE 21 – GROUP REFLECTION/BRAINSTORM**

**Leader:** Invite the group to brainstorm ideas for ongoing learning and action (popcorn style.)

### **SLIDE 22 – PRAY**

**Leader:** Remind the group of their commitment to ongoing prayer (Rule of Life.)

### **SLIDE 23 – CLOSING PRAYER**

**Leader:** Invite participants to pray together.

### **SLIDE 24 – AT HOME**

**Leader:** Encourage participants to discover additional online resources in their favorite learning modalities.

Ted Talk: (<https://bit.ly/3Pgy5tC>)

Art: (<https://bit.ly/3yLiGMb>)

Poetry: (<https://bit.ly/3kx3w8k>)

### **SLIDE 25 – EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT**

**Leader:** Thank you for your participation and support of this important work.