**MODEL - Format for Compassionate Conversations: Pause and Prayer (75 minutes)**

5 m. Invite the group into silence: We pause . . . we take several deep breaths . . . we let go of the day . . . we let go of distractions

A few minutes of silence

Close silence with a Prayer welcoming God, one another, and setting an intention to be fully present.

5 m. As we open a new Compassionate Conversations group or have new members join, we remind one another of the principles of dialogue. (From Practicing the Sacred Art of Listening by Kay Lindahl)

1. When you are listening, suspend assumptions.
2. When you are speaking, speak for yourself using “I” language.
3. Listen and speak without judgment.
4. Suspend status
5. Honor confidentiality
6. Listen for understanding, not agreement or belief.
7. Ask clarifying or open-ended questions to assist your understanding. (In the essence of time at the retreat, hold until the end if time allows.)
8. Honor silence and time for reflection.
9. One person speaks at a time

Another resource is Parker Palmer’s Circles of Trust Touchstones - [www.courageandrenewal.org\touchstones](http://www.courageandrenewal.org\touchstones)

5 m. We begin with a reading from Kay Lindahl’s book, Practicing the Sacred Art of Listening, a quote, a poem, or other item that has surfaced during the week for pause and reflection.

(Group could have a theme of racism, grief, sexual orientation, etc.)

Pause to let sink in . . .

45 m. We shift into Heart Listening - we begin with our question: **“How is it with your soul?”** or **As we have sat with God, ourselves, and others today, what most wants to be shared from your heart at this time? What is tugging at your heart to be expressed?**

The group intention is to hold space for each person here. Each person is valued as a child of God. Listening is just as valued as speaking. Sharing is not required. This is a safe space. We share one at a time. Silence is welcome.

15 m. Close with a loving-kindness meditation, a group blessing, or guided meditation. (Google for variations of loving-kindness meditations or other closing options specific for your group.)

A short loving-kindness meditation follows:

In thanksgiving for our time together, in our shared, sacred space, and in honoring each other, we’ll close with a short loving kindness meditation. Take a few deep breaths.

With intention for sending well-being to one another . . . .

May you abide in loving kindness

May you be free from suffering

May you receive what you need

May you be at peace

*Repeat slowly 3 times.*

Amen.

Closing Prayer and Go In Peace

Seeking the Spirit Within – 2021 Winter Retreat – Hope in the Wilderness

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