

OPENING LITURGY - LETTING GO

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OBJECTIVE // To begin the THINKfast with a reflection from Scripture and an awareness that God's call has brought us together this day to see, reflect and prepare to act in loving solidarity.

TIME // 1 hour

MATERIALS //

- 4 candles
- Small table, set up with 4 candles & matches
- Individual scripture reading and the following prayer for each reader
- Slips of blank pieces of paper and pens (one per participant)
- A copy of 'Prayer on Fasting and Feasting' for each participant
- Instrumental music
- On the table, a large steel bowl (with a little water) and a pottery bowl to hold pieces of paper brought up by the participants

PREPARATION //

- Ask 4 volunteers to be readers and provide them with a copy of their reading and the order.
- Ask each volunteer to light a candle at the table in the centre before doing their reading.
- Prepare pieces of paper ahead of time and give each participant a piece and a pen as they enter the prayer space and ask them to write their name on it. Tell the participants to keep their papers and pens until they are asked for them later in the liturgy.
- Play instrumental music quietly. You can use gentle music and low lighting to develop a reflective mood.
- Once participants have arrived into the prayer space, begin...

LEADER // "We are here together for many reasons. Let us take a moment to centre ourselves and remind ourselves why we are here – to fast and to reflect, to learn and to enjoy our time with each other, to have fun and to commit ourselves to building a new world."

READER 1 // *Light candle. A reading from*

Isaiah 43: 1-2; 4-8

Quiet moment of reflection on the reading (1 minute)

READER 1 // "You have called us, O Lord, and we are here, in this space made holy by our desire to have You in our midst, guiding us with Your light and love through this THINKfast."



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LEADER // Ask the participants to picture the things they have given up to be here for this THINKfast, and to think of the one thing (homework, job, friend, conflict) that they are really aware of and need to let go of so that they can be fully present to this experience. Invite participants to write down, on their slip of paper, the thing they are letting go of while they are on THINKfast. Quiet moment of contemplation for each participant to contemplate what they are giving up. (2 min)

LEADER // Invite each participant to say his/her name, one by one, and then place their paper into the bowl. If permitted: have each participant place their slip of paper into the candle flame to be burned and placed/dropped into the steel bowl with water, ensuring embers from paper are completely contained in the bowl. This symbolizes each participant's offering to God.

LEADER // Say after everyone has placed their slips of paper into bowl.
"Jesus invites us to let go of anything that stands between us and our relationship with Him."

READER 2 // Light candle. A reading from Galatians 5:13-14 and Matthew 25:31-40

Quiet moment of reflection on the reading (1 minute)

READER 2 // "We are here in solidarity with our sisters and brothers across the globe, especially with those who hunger and thirst for food and drink and for justice and peace."

LEADER // Invite participants to join in solidarity, in spirit and in prayer, with brothers and sisters across the globe by standing up and holding hands to pray together the "Our Father", beginning with a sign of the cross.

LEADER // Ask participants to reflect on the line in the prayer '...Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...' and ask (rhetorically) "Whose will be done?" Invite participants to think of this while listening to the next reading from Mark.

READER 3 // Light candle. A reading from Mark 10:17-22



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*Quiet moment of reflection on the reading
(1 minute)*

READER 3 // "We are here to listen and to learn, to reflect and to pray, to share and to shape a new way of seeing God's Creation, and new ways of responding to the needs of all God's children, the global human family."

LEADER // *Invite participants to place themselves in the shoes of the man who ran up to Jesus in the reading from Mark. Encourage participants to imagine what they would do if they were this man and heard Jesus' words - "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."*

LEADER // "Jesus has asked us to follow Him and invites us to be His hands and feet, in solidarity with the poor, for His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. As the body of Christ in the world, we are not alone, because God the Father, Jesus the son and the Holy Spirit three in one, are with us, just as with the prophets and people of old."

Reader 4 // *Light candle. A reading from Isaiah 44: 1-5*

*Quiet moment of reflection on the reading
(1 minute)*

READER 4 // "You have blessed us with life and health and the gifts of your Creation. Your generous love calls us to be generous in turn, with our time, our talents and gifts, and our loving compassion for a world in need of healing."

LEADER // "Let us commit ourselves, in prayer, to our THINKfast weekend. Christ has come to bring peace anchored in justice and genuine love, to offer us renewed vision of transformed peoples and communities."



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ALL //
"Prayer on Fasting and Feasting"

Fast from judging others; feast on the Christ dwelling in them.
Fast from emphasis on difference; feast on the unity of life.
Fast from apparent darkness; feast on the reality of light.
Fast from thoughts of illness; feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute; feast on phrases that purify.
Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude.
Fast from anger; feast on patience.
Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism

Fast from worry; feast on divine order.
Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation.
Fast from negatives; feast on affirmatives.
Fast from unrelenting pressure; feast on unceasing prayers.

Fast from hostility; feast on non-resistance.
Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion for others.
Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal truth.

Fast from discouragement; feast on hope.
Fast from facts that depress; feast on verities that uplift.
Fast from laziness; feast on enthusiasm.
Fast from suspicion; feast on truth.

Fast from thoughts that weaken; feast on promises that inspire.
Fast from shadows of sorrow; feast on the sunlight of serenity.
Fast from idle gossip; feast on purposeful silence.
Fast from problems that overwhelm; feast on prayer that sustains life.
For "Your Father who sees the good you do in secret will reward you."

(Matthew 6:4)



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