

A less formal Celebration, primarily but not exclusively for use with 2<sup>nd</sup> generation and other young people and young adults

## One Great Sunday of Sharing 2009 - 2010



### ***“Guest and Host – Hospitality and God”***

#### **1. Setting**

*If there are living members of the original Indigenous clans or tribes for your area, invite them to the gathering and respectfully ask if they would bring a greeting or welcome to country: recognise them as “hosts” and us as “guests”.*

- Informal – in hall or other flexible space
- Spend the whole time around tables with small groups at each one and with food to be shared as part of the whole gathering
- Invite others from the congregation who are not normally part of this group to prepare the food – they are “hosts” for the food, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation are “guests” for the food.
- As part of the invitation – ask the food preparers to be “guests” as part of the worship afterwards – the 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation are “hosts” for the worship.
- Mix people up so that no table group is only made up of folk from one place, cultural or language group. Re-mix the table groups after the meal so that the meal “hosts” are included as “guests” among the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gen “hosts”
- Welcome people and invite them to introduce themselves to the person next to them: name; where they are from; one thing they enjoy about being in Australia; one thing they enjoy about their cultural background. Listen carefully – you will be expected to introduce your conversation partner to the others at the table.
- Repeat this when the groups are re-mixed after the meal so that the first general “guests” are now included.

#### **2. Start with a meal together – see “Setting” notes above**

#### **3. Praise and Worship**

- A time of silence as we remember the Indigenous peoples, original caretakers of this land – if you know the name of the local Indigenous clan or tribe, name them. If there are living members of that tribe or clan, invite them to the gathering and respectfully ask if they would bring a greeting or welcome to country: recognise them as “hosts” and us as “guests”.
- Use the gifts of as many as possible of the different groups who are part of the gathering in leading the singing, offering solo or group songs/music, prayers and praise, dance, drama
- Try to introduce as much cultural and language diversity in this as possible and appropriate: recognising that for many 2<sup>nd</sup> generation young people and young adults English is their first language

#### **4. Teaching / Sharing**

- Introduce the theme ***“Guest and Host – Hospitality and God”*** by inviting the people into a conversation in their small groups.
- Invite each person to reflect quietly for a few minutes about the following questions:
  - What do you do in preparation when you are going to be a guest of someone else?
  - What do you do in preparation when you are hosting someone else [individual, family, group]?

Share your responses with one another using “Mutual Invitation”

- Invite each table group to share key words only from their responses
- Invite each person to reflect quietly for a few minutes about the following questions:
  - In your local church community – How would you describe your participation – guest or hosts?
  - As a community, do you always act as “hosts”, and everyone else is a “guest”? How would you illustrate this – a story?
  - Do we – as individuals and as a Christian community – have a role “out there”, outside the normal church structures and programs, to be available as “guests” to others?
  - At the meeting of the National Reference Committee earlier this year a story was shared from among the Sudanese community in South Australia. A community leader was speaking and ended with this story: *“When you come to my house (in Africa) you are my guest for the first two days. On the third day, I give you a hoe.” He has said to me that the Sudanese have a lot to offer the Uniting Church, which they call their home, and that a pressing need is for the Uniting Church to take up this opportunity.* What might be the “hoe” in your setting that would allow the “guests” to share in the responsibilities that are currently the hosts?

Share your responses with one another using “Mutual Invitation”

- Invite each table group to briefly share their responses: this could be in words, images or a simple drama ...
- Share the story of the Last Supper – the upper room where Jesus was guest, the meal that became Holy Communion where Jesus is host. Note the ways in which Jesus entered into other peoples’ lives by creating opportunity for them to invite him in as their guest. In that relationship of trust note how he creates opportunities for conversation, reflection, and questions, but usually does not answer them. Rather Jesus encourages people to go with him on a journey towards God’s promised goals – the realm or kingdom of Heaven.

## 5. Response

- Invite the table groups to have a brief conversation about this ... including suggestions about how they might enter into the rest of the week more open to the possibility of being “guests”
- Pray together each person finishing the sentence:
  - “Today, I thank God for .....!”
  - “Today I ask God for/to .....!”
 When everyone at the table has prayed – say the Lord’s Prayer together in whatever language of version you are most at home with.
- Conclude with some more music/singing/praise – an offering would be appropriate here, perhaps for youth ministry in your area, or towards the work of Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry at the national Assembly.

## 6. Follow-up

Consider how you might develop some simple networks of prayer and support across cultures using technology as a connecting tool.

Some possibilities for building networks/relationships ... add your own and act on it ...

- Set up an SMS network where small groups of people from different cultural backgrounds commit to pray for one another at a regular time each week and to send a simple SMS message to let each other know that has happened
- Set up an email network where small groups of people from different cultural backgrounds commit to pray for one another at a regular time each week and to send a simple email to let each other know that has happened and what else they would value prayers for.

## 7. Tools for use in the process

### RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- R* = take **RESPONSIBILITY** for what you say and feel without blaming others – “I think...”, “I feel...”
- E* = listen with **EMPATHY**
- S* = be **SENSITIVE** to differences in how people communicate
- P* = **PONDER** on what you hear and feel before you speak or respond
- E* = **EXAMINE** your own assumptions and perceptions
- C* = keep **CONFIDENTIALITY**
- T* = **TRUST** ambiguity and difference because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong but to learn from one another

*From Eric Law: various publications where permission is also given for use – Tony Floyd*

### MUTUAL INVITATION

*Conversations and discussions are not easy for everyone to participate in. In some cultures participation in a conversation is by invitation, not by force of views or personality. For some people regardless of cultural background, putting ones' views in the face of strongly held and confidently voiced opinions is difficult, even painful.*

*“Mutual Invitation” is a tool for participation that is built on equality of voice [mutual] and opportunity [invitation].*

*In order to ensure that everyone who wants to share has opportunity to speak, and that no one is allowed to simply dominate the conversation by speaking often and at length, our conversations will proceed like this:*

- o The leader or designated person will speak first.*
- o After that person has spoken, she or he then invites another person to share – they do not need to be the person sitting next to you!*
- o The person invited to share may not want to speak so they simply say “Pass” – BUT they still have the right and responsibility of inviting someone else to share.*
- o If the person invited does not have anything they want to say now, but they might have something to say later in this process, they can say “Pass for now” and proceed to invite someone else.*
- o It is important that the leader keeps track of this in the process and makes sure an invitation is given later for that person to speak.*
- o No one is allowed to interrupt or speak again until everyone has been invited, and then only by invitation*

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