

## **Holy Communion: Appreciative Inquiry**

### A Group Approach to Deeper Listening

#### *A. Set up and arranging for a group:*

- You will need cards or half sheets of paper and pens/pencils for each one in the group.
- You may want to arrange for food or snack to be part of this experience, especially if this is on a Sunday morning after worship and people may be hungry for “more” food.
- Choose a place that is suitable for sharing and free from distraction. Remember that the worship space may work well, as the symbols and furnishings may evoke thoughts and feelings.

#### *B. Set the stage:*

1. Share with the group that their participation is a way of enriching one another and the whole congregation by listening to stories, feelings, and questions related to the Lord’s Supper that we seldom, if ever, have the opportunity to share.
2. You might mention that United Methodists now have an official teaching paper on Holy Communion, titled “This Holy Mystery.” However, this time together is not about the paper or its contents. This conversation may be the prelude to study, but that is not the purpose of this time of sharing.
3. Thank the group for being willing to give their time and to each other and you to hear how people in the church experience the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper and to identify their questions and concerns.

#### *C. Set ground rules suggesting the following:*

1. Everyone speak once before anyone speaks a second time
2. Speak in “I” terms—“I feel....I think...I wish...I need”
3. Speak one at a time
4. Be aware of what should be kept in the group.

#### *D. Talking points—spend time working with questions such as these. Invite the group to:*

1. **“Share a time when Holy Communion was especially meaningful and what made it meaningful for you.”** (This is warm up, but listen carefully for some deeper issues.)
2. **“Share what you understand as the importance of Holy Communion.”**
3. **“What practices and traditions help to make Holy Communion more or less important for you?”**
4. **“If you were dealing with an expert on Holy Communion, what would be the first question you would ask?”**  
(You may want to invite each person to write down his or her question on a card or piece of paper first, but be sensitive to the people in the group. If “writing” seems to be a secondary or less comfortable means of expressing themselves, simply invite them to “think” about what question they would like to ask.) Invite each to share his or her question(s). If you do not ask people to write down their questions, be sure to write them down yourself.
5. **“What questions do you think others in your congregation would like to ask about Holy Communion if they had the opportunity?”** (This question gives people the opportunity to ask questions they may be uncomfortable voicing as their own as well as allowing them to express questions and concerns they have heard from others in their context.)
6. **“What, for you, would help Communion to be a richer experience of God’s grace?”**

Adapted from a tool used by the Holy Communion Study Committee in its work of preparing “This Holy Mystery.”

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