

SESSION 2

SEEK, NAME, CELEBRATE

Introduction

Welcome to Session 2 of *Embracing Evangelism*. In this session, we explore the importance of Seek, Name, and Celebrate for the practice of evangelism. First, let us open with prayer. *Offer your own prayer here, or use one of the following:*

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. Amen.

Creator God, thank you for this opportunity to come together to explore what it means to Seek, Name, and Celebrate your goodness in our lives and the lives of those around us. As we begin, help us to open our hearts and minds to what you would have us learn, as a group and as individuals. Help us to connect to your Spirit and to follow wherever you may lead. Amen.

Begin the Video

Watch video from start to 18:37. Note these highlights for yourself:

As Episcopalians, we promise in our Baptismal Covenant “to seek and serve Christ in all persons.” That is a bold statement of faith! We say that we will actively listen for God’s presence in others – and we dare to believe God is moving in every person.

One of the keywords we need to remember as we explore evangelism is *Incarnation*. This term, from the Latin *carnis* (“flesh”) literally means “enfleshment.” It is based on John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh and lived among us.” So, Incarnation is the doctrine that Jesus was fully human and fully divine, the Son of God “in the flesh.”

If we look at the world through the lens of Incarnation, we can see how God is still showing up “in the flesh” everywhere. The world is shot through with holiness and the lively presence of God. We get to see the Holy Spirit moving and going before us into all places, already at work. We can see where the light of God is already present, especially in the people around us, since we are all made in God’s image.

It is in conversation that we listen for and speak of God’s good news. In conversation, we show who WE are and receive who OTHERS are. We hear and speak truth with one another and get a glimpse of how God is stirring in our lives.

Seeking is a humble practice that requires deep listening and watching – a holy curiosity. We ask, “How is God present and at work in this person’s life, this person’s story?”

Naming is when we put into words what we see of God moving in others’ lives and in our own lives. Words do matter! Offered in humility, they can be a gift when we name how we see God in what brings joy, gives hope, and delivers freedom – in others’ lives and in our own.

Celebrating Jesus' loving presence is deep, authentic, and soulful. To celebrate means to honor, to mark, and to hold up something worth noticing – to bless and give praise. When we seek and find Christ, we find ourselves encouraged, grateful, and delighted, like the widow who finds her lost coin and goes out saying, “Rejoice with me!” (Luke 15:8-10).

- *If your group is doing the Exploratory Exercise: Watch until 18:37, which is the end of the explanation of the Exploratory Exercise. Pause the video and lead your group in the exercise and the post-exercise discussion.*
- *If your group is not doing the Exploratory Exercise: Continue watching the video to witness the masterclass group as they try out the exercise.*

Exploratory Exercise: Welcome to the Feast

Let's try an exercise about seeking, naming, and celebrating: Welcome to the Feast.

During a time of quiet meditation, ask participants to take a minute to settle in. Then, ask them to do the following:

Recall a truly memorable meal. It could be a holiday or just a stirring moment. A meal that you can feel and taste still in your memory, that fills you with warmth as you remember it all – the tastes, the people, or the surroundings. Take a minute to think back to this meal that really stands out in your memory.

Offer the following prompts with at least 7-10 seconds between each, like a guided meditation.

- *What was the food? What really stood out in the meal – flavors, textures, aromas?*
- *Where were you? What was the setting? What was that place like?*
- *Who was there? Were you alone or with others? What were your interactions like?*
- *Were you the cook? If so, what was it like to prepare and plate it?*
- *What was going on in your own life, just before, during, or after the meal?*
- *Was there something important about the timing of this meal?*

One-to-One StorySharing

Ask participants the following: Have you gathered the details, feelings, and thoughts around your experience with this meal? We will engage once again in One-to-One StorySharing. Each person has the chance to serve as an attentive listener and authentic storyteller.

1. *Turn and find one partner. Make pairs, so everyone gets the chance to listen and to share. (Facilitator: If you see several trios, invite one person to hold up a hand and look around to find someone else who is in a trio and needs a partner to make a pair.)*
2. *Sit or stand so that you and your partner are looking at each other face to face.*
3. *One person will be Partner A and one will be Partner B.*
4. *Partner A will go first and will have 90 seconds to share. When 90 seconds have passed, you will hear a signal. This is the time to switch, so Partner B will share.*
5. *When it is your turn to speak, offer your authentic story, using details and emotions.*
6. *When it is your turn to listen, create the space to welcome the story of the other as a real blessing.*
7. *As each story ends, you who are the listener get to name and celebrate what you have heard that is joyful, beautiful, holy.*
8. *When you both have taken a turn, thank each other for the gift of sharing.*

Brief Discussion

Pose the following questions to the group:

- How did it feel for you to recall and share your story?
- How did it feel to receive someone else's story?
- How did this exercise engage you in *seeking*?
- How did it engage you in *naming*?
- How did it engage you in *celebrating*?

Let's resume the video and see how the *Embracing Evangelism* participants did.

Resume the Video

Watch from 24:13 to 38:11. At that point, pause the video for discussion.

Discussion & Reflection Questions

Use the following reflection questions to guide your discussion. Depending on time, you might choose one or two on which to focus. Encourage participants to reflect on the remaining questions later themselves.

- Where do you see God at work in your life?
- Where would you like to develop better "seeking" skills (in your neighborhood, in your relationships, at work, etc.)?
- What keeps you from talking about and naming your faith and relationship with God?
- When have you celebrated a "God moment" with others? How did that celebration grow your own faith?
- Can you recall a moment when you really saw God alive around you? Write about it.

Finish the Video

Review the Try It Out section of the Participant Guide (see guide for more detailed instructions). Encourage participants to do the following before the next session:

- Actively notice God's loving and lively presence around you.
- Keep a list of those "sightings" on your cell phone, or journal about them.
- Write about any of the times you saw God really alive in your life, past or present.

Close with Prayer

In your own words, thank God for being present in each person's life and in the stories shared, and for Jesus who is Emmanuel – "God with us." Pray for God to help us become tuned in to God's presence and to seek signs of Jesus Christ in every person's life and in our own lives.