

**Lydia's SAMPLE Easter Story Sharing Party**  
Public Safety Memorial Park  
Saturday, April 16, 2022

Noon	Welcome & Introductions (15 min.)
12:15 PM	Blessing & Picnic Lunch (30 min.)
12:45 PM	Relationship Building - Ice Breaker (15 min.)
1:00 PM	Story Sharing Cards (40 min.)
1:40 PM	Thank you and invitation to keep looking for stories to share! (5 min.)
1:45 PM	<i>(Optional)</i> Share Easter season traditions (5 min.)
1:50 PM	Farewell

- This is for a two-hour gathering; you could adjust it to do it in 90 minutes, if you shortened the time for sharing something to eat, e.g. dessert and coffee, etc.
- This agenda's timing is based on 8 people attending (including you)

<p><b>30 minutes - 24 hours in advance</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Follow-up Reminder Phone Calls Day Before</b></p> <p><i>Remember to invite twice as many people who say "yes" as you want to have actually attend. Things come up last minute. Be gracious with folks and yourself.</i></p> <p><i>It's harder to have the story sharing with just 3-4 four people; there's more energy when there are 6-8 people together, so work ahead of time to have at least 10 people say "yes" to coming.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Prepare the Ice Breaker Question and Your Answer (Best done the day before)</b></p> <p><i>Pick a theme for your evening such as HOPE, or LOVE, or HEALING. Think fo one good memory or experience of that. For this handout, we will use HOPE as an example them. What is the first memory you have of HOPE? Reflect on your own answer to the question. Go ahead and know what you will use an answer during the icebreaker. Keep in mind that your shared response will set the tone for others. Also be sure you can quickly explain why it is a good memory of HOPE.</i></p> <p><i>Remember, we don't have an agenda other than to value the stories of all people and to provide hospitality so that we can all remember that hope is all around us.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place...."</i> - Henri Nouwen</p>
<b>DAY OF THE EVENT</b>	
<p><b>15 minutes Noon-12:15 PM</b></p>	<p><b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b></p>
<p>1) Begin with welcoming people – you can either tell them that your church invited you to host this party as a way to celebrate the season or Easter ) or that it was just something you wanted to do. Briefly but authentically share why. Offer it yourself or ask someone in the group to offer a prayer and/or blessing for the meal...or just do a “covert” blessing by saying you’re grateful for them coming!</p> <p>2) Next have everyone briefly introduce themselves.</p> <p><i>The purpose of this gathering is to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. People are busy and bad news gets a lot of press; it's good to gives folks an occasion to stop and remember that there's a lot of good news around us and in our lives.</i></li> <li><i>2. There are a lot of folks who <u>aren't in church</u> that are amazing people who know a lot about love and our church needs and wants to hear their stories.</i></li> <li><i>3. Build and deepen relationships among those of us who are here and continue to seek, name, and celebrate hope in the stories of all people.</i></li> </ol>	
<p><b>30 minutes 12:15 – 12:45 PM</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Picnic Lunch</b></p> <p>Jesus was famous for eating with people. But it doesn't matter where or what it is! Meet and eat or have something to drink at a restaurant or coffee shop where people choose and pay for their own, or in your home where it's a potluck, or in a common space like the neighborhood park or library. It's totally up to you and where you think your guests will be most comfortable.</p>

<b>15 minutes</b> <b>12:45 – 1:00 PM</b>	<b>Ice Breaker</b> 1 minute to think, 1 minute for each person to share
<p><b>[NOTE for Facilitator: Tips for asking Ice Breaker Question</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Display your pre-selected theme somewhere on the table.</li> <li>2) Explain that you want everyone to think of a time they experienced (insert theme) HOPE.</li> <li>3) Give the group about 1 minute to think about their response</li> <li>4) Explain each person will have one minute to share their memory.</li> <li>5) Host goes first.</li> <li>6) Call on each person to give a one-minute answer. You may have to interrupt to keep things moving if someone starts to take more than one minute.</li> </ol> <p><b>Be prepared to ask people how they are personally affected by this good memory of .... and why specifically that experience is important to them if the answer is general. We want to warm people up to tell stories about their lives.]</b></p> <p><i>To get to know each other, take a moment to think about a good memory you have of (insert your selected theme, in this case HOPE)...</i></p> <p><i>Each person is going to have about 1 minute to share their answer. I'm going to give you about 1 minute to think and then I am going to share my story first. After my story we will go around the table and each person will have 1 minute. Our timekeeper is going to make sure that we stay to one minute, and our recorder is going to write a few notes. If you go over your minute I may need to cut you off to make sure that we have time for everyone. Okay?</i></p> <p>[pause for 1 minute]</p> <p><i>I will go ahead and go first. "One of the first things that I remember about HOPE (or your theme) ..... is..."</i></p> <p><b>[NOTE for Facilitator: You should think of your story in advance. It should be something specific. <u>The kind of story you tell will set the tone for the rest of the stories.</u>]</b></p> <p><b>Transition statement:</b></p> <p><i>We have heard some great stories and we'd like to hear more, but we will need to move on now in order to make sure that we get through the entire agenda.</i></p>	
<b>40 minutes</b> <b>1:00 – 1:40 PM</b>	<b>Story Sharing Cards</b> Take 1 minute to think/write down; each person has 1 minute to share
<p><i>We are here because ....</i></p> <p><i>Episcopal churches in the Gulf Coast are hosting gatherings throughout this season of Easter, time to especially recognize hope, faith, and renewed life around us. People have experienced a lot the past two years. Love has grown, changes for challenged us, and faith has deepened. People want to share these stories. As Brene Brown says, "We are hard wired for story." And it's true. We are hard wired to understand our world and make sense of our experiences through story. Our hearts long to share those stories because we become more whole when we share our faith and love with one another.</i></p>	

*We have a few ground rules:*

1. *Listen with respect to all.*
2. *We are not looking for ideas or solutions. We want to hear and celebrate people's stories of hope and love...*
3. *As facilitator, I am going to give everyone a minute to respond to the discussion question. When your minute is up, I will call time (or the timekeeper will) and move onto the next person. There will be about five minutes for general discussion after everyone has responded. If I don't keep us on time then we could all be here a long time.*
4. *Finally, we want to make sure that what we share in this discussion is treated with respect. We will be sharing some of the stories we've heard so we can spread good news about positive things but we'll keep them anonymous and we all have to agree not to gossip about the stories we share.*

*Can everyone agree to these ground rules?*

*Okay think about the question for one minute... I will go ahead and share first.*

[pause for 1 minute]

*Use the Story Sharing cards or just be informal about it.*

**[NOTE for Facilitator:** You should think of your story in advance. It should be something specific. The kind of story you tell will set the tone for the rest of the stories. It's also good to ask someone else in advance to be willing to go second/next]

**5 minutes  
1:40 – 1:45 PM**

**Thank you and invitation to keep looking for stories to share!**

*Okay, now we have a few more minutes to have some open discussion.*

**NOTE for Facilitator:** This time, *do not* go around the circle. Just see if anyone has anything that they want to share. You may need to still ask people to limit their comments to 1 minute and cut people off if a lot of people want to talk.

Tips for discussion:

- Observe areas of commonality and ask why do you think that?
- Ask if the group sees any threads. What ties us together?

**After 5 minutes [or less if you need to get back on time]:**

*I'm sorry to have to cut discussion off, but we will need to move on now. If you feel like this wasn't enough time, please to stay afterwards to do so. But it's important to be respectful of everyone's time so we save that for later.*

**10 minutes  
1:45 – 1:55 p.m.**

**Share Easter season traditions**

Let folks know any of you and/or your churches traditions for the Easter or upcoming seasons and your hopes for moving forward in celebrating love. If they haven't watched the Royal Wedding sermon you might encourage them to do that, or to share other resources, like TED talks, that the find helpful to remember the power of love.

Invite each person give 1 word evaluation of the gathering:

*I want to thank everyone for being here today. I am really excited to be a part of this and I am glad that you have been part of it too.*

*I'd like to give everyone a chance to quickly evaluate this gathering. If we could just go around the circle and, if you would, just say one word about what you thought about this time together. I'll start, my one word is\_\_\_\_\_.*

**1 minute  
1:55– 1:56 PM**

**Closing and Adjourn**

*If anyone wants to stay and talk some more feel free to. Thanks again for coming!*