

Calling the Circle

The assembly team in the past years has chosen this activity because we wanted the time we would spend with our sisters to be in interacting and connecting with each other in meaningful ways. To structure to introduce sisters to another who they might not know well, and to form bonds. One very effective way to achieve this is the small group sharing model of Calling the Circle.

Here are the guidelines we will follow this week:

1. Move quietly and calmly to your assigned sacred circle area.
Bring only your chairs; please leave booklets and other belongings at the table.
We will softly sing "Come to the Circle" by Kathy Sherman.
(Come to the circle and tell your story. Listen and share the world inside you. Come to the circle. Your friends are waiting to listen and share their stories, too.)
2. Select a volunteer who will be "First Speaker" in the group. This person is not the facilitator or leader, but only the person who has agreed to share first.
3. The first speaker chooses a nature object from the table. This will be the "talking token" for the group for this session. Whoever is talking will hold it, and no one else will speak until the sister passes it on to the person next to her.
4. Each sister shares for three or four minutes, and then passes the "talking token" to the person next to her. That sister may choose to share or not. It is recommended that there be a moment or two of silence while this next sister composes her thoughts. (Since she will have been listening intently to the "First Speaker", she will likely not want to jump right in without reflection.)
5. Sisters do not comment on the sharing of previous speakers. There is no **approval** or disapproval or **advice-giving**. What a sister says stands as it is, and belongs to her.
6. Sharing continues around the circle, as the "talking token" is passed. Sharing for each sister should be limited to five minutes at the most. For each question, the "talking token" may go around the circle several times. Some groups may get to all the questions, some groups may only get to one question.
7. Silence is to be welcomed as we sit in comfortable reflection with one another. To be deeply affected by the thoughts and feelings of each other and to choose what we ourselves want to share with others often causes silence. Relax into it.
8. The group will come to an understanding when their session is coming to an end. This is unique to each group, when they sense a "winding down". The group comes to consensus when it is time to stop.
9. The group chooses a closing ritual. It can be as simple as a song, a hug, or a gentle caress and passing of the "talking token". It might a gesture or shared prayer. Perhaps just looking into the eyes of one another and saying "Thank you."
10. As your group quietly prepares to leave the sacred circle area, be aware of other groups who have not yet finished. Leave the room, and continue to keep the atmosphere calm and reflective.
11. Remember that what is said at circle is a deep sharing of others experience and feelings. Treat these revelations with respect and confidentiality.