

Getting Started

Introductions

- Set up circle and pocket chart.*
- Distribute nametags and chaplain's attendance.*
- Welcome and introductions of Circlekeepers and Sacred Stories.*
- Take attendance and pass out folders to new women.*
- Icebreaker: Name Game or Greet Your Neighbor*

Opening: The Story

Light candle, sing "Listen to the Word," tell story, pray.

Explain the Talking Piece

We'll do different activities to learn this story; sometimes we'll use a talking piece. The talking piece creates a space in which everyone can speak and listen in peace. Each person in the circle gets a chance to speak without being interrupted, and to listen without needing to respond with a comment or question.

When we are using a talking piece, here is how it works:

- 1. The talking piece is passed around the circle from person to person.**
- 2. Only the person holding the talking piece may speak.**
- 3. It's okay to pass the talking piece on without saying anything.**

Check-In Round

Our first talking piece is **wooden heart.**

We will use it for a check-in round; when the talking piece comes to you please...

- 1. Say your name**
- 2. Tell how familiar you are with this story (new, heard before, could tell)**
- 3. Tell how you are feeling today**

I'll go first...

Guidelines

These are the four guidelines for our time together:

- 1. Honor the talking piece—when it is being used, speak only when you are holding it**
- 2. Speak from the heart—tell your truth as you are comfortable to share**
- 3. Listen from the heart—be attentive, with a positive spirit**
- 4. Protect personal privacy—when you leave tell about God, Jesus, Circle, and the story we engaged, but don't tell personal information that is shared here**

Are those guidelines acceptable?... Any others you think we need?... Questions?

When this talking piece comes to you (show**), indicate your acceptance by saying, "I accept these guidelines."**

Start a round for everyone to accept the four guidelines.

Engaging the Story

Read-Around

Read the story one part at a time around the circle, using the talking piece.

I Wonder

Biblical stories invite us to wonder about things.

Because they are such old stories about people who lived in a very different culture, we don't understand some things in the stories.

Some of us haven't heard many biblical stories and have lots of questions about them.

Even if we have heard lots of biblical stories, they still inspire wondering.

So... What questions do you have of this story?

What does it make you wonder about?

Print responses on lined 4x6 index cards.

Pass each card around to the person who had the wondering to place in the circle.

Do a second round for people to address the question or wondering of their choice.

About the Story

Using the talking piece, read "About the Story" one paragraph at a time.

Setting the talking piece down, invite questions and comments.

Narrative Analysis

Explain characteristics common to stories and have group ID them for this story.

Suggest that they circle words in story for each characteristic, and underline verbal threads, color-coding as follows:

- **Setting**—Where? (place); When? (time)
- **Characters**—On stage; Off stage
- **Things/Animals**
- **Plot**—Action; Verbs; What happened?
- **Verbal Threads**—Repeated words/phrases

Act It Out

Using scarves or other simple means to ID characters, ask for volunteers for the characters and a narrator/director who will read or tell the story while it is acted out.

The narrator/director whispers spoken lines to characters if they do not know what to say. As needed, help them figure out spatial aspects of the story (where to stand, etc.) and what "props" they need to stand for important "things" or objects in the story (like the perfumed oil the woman brings).

Winding Up

Check-Out and Comments / Closing

Invite participants to give a word or phrase that describes how they are feeling now, and to share any comments they want to make on the Circle session.