



## **MODULE 3 FACILITATOR’S GUIDE: Living Beyond Stereotypes**

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## MODULE GOALS

- To help participants recognize the function and influence of stereotyping individuals, groups and worldviews.
- To practice an intentionality that challenges this bias in our lives and ministry to others and ourselves.

## WELCOME AND BRIEF CHECK-IN (5 MINUTES)

## CENTERING PRAYER (15 MINUTES)

*Facilitator signals the beginning of prayer using a song, chime, or quiet invitation. When all are settled, read the following instructions.*

- Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.
- Sit comfortably and with your eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.
- When you become aware of thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.
- When I signal the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with your eyes closed for a couple of minutes as I read from our maxims and from scripture.

*Facilitator signals the end of silence using a song, chime, or a quiet invitation. After a few beats of silence, read the following:*

**Maxim 16:** In everything and everywhere, have only God, God's will and glory before your eyes, and make no account of anything else.

**Maxim 44:** Never do anything which contradicts the pursuit of holiness.

**Scripture:** Luke 6:37-42

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

And he told them a parable, “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit?

No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher.

Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own?

How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,’ when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother’s eye.”

### SHARING THE STATE OF THE HEART (20-30 MINUTES)

*Enter into a quiet, contemplative sitting position to reflect on these questions; then briefly share what has been given to you during this time of reflection.*

- How has God been revealed to you since our last gathering?
- How has that changed you?

*Facilitator brings Sharing the State of the Heart to closure, honoring what has been shared. Then facilitator plays video for Module 3.*

### VIDEO FOR MODULE 3 (20 MINUTES)

### INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION (10 MINUTES)

#### **Items needed:**

- 5-8 index cards per participant
- Marker or pen for each participant

*Facilitator reads the following:*

Take five minutes to list your top five to eight personal values, writing each value on a separate index card. Number the values in order of their importance or priority to you; number one being the most important value that you would not compromise and number eight being a value that is desired but perhaps in certain situations could be compromised.

During this time, there will be no discussion. Please do not share your values with others in the group at this time.

## STEREOTYPES (45 MINUTES)

### **Items needed:**

- Large newsprint or flipchart paper
- Markers
- Painter's tape

*Facilitator helps the large group brainstorm traits of the following identities. Encourage them to be free-flowing and unfiltered. Remind them that traits, labels, and values shouted during a brainstorm do not necessarily reflect the person sharing. This is a time for all stereotypes to be expressed without judgment.*

### Identities:

- Priest/male religious
- Women Religious
- Laity
- Conservative
- Liberal
- Hillbilly

*Facilitator asks the group to compare the following groupings to one another:*

### Group 1:

- Priest/ Male Religious
- Women Religious
- Laity

### Group 2:

- Conservative
- Liberal

*For each grouping, Facilitator asks:*

- What traits were shared by this group (both positive and negative)?

- For which group was it easier to list stereotypical traits/values? Why?
- Were the traits listed mostly positive or negative?
- For which group was it most difficult to list traits/values/beliefs?
- In your experience when have you known someone who defied these stereotypes? Did that person also exhibit some of them? How did knowing this person change you?

Now consider the “Hillbilly” identity specifically:

- Was this label more freeing or more difficult? Why?
- Does anyone in the group know someone or identify herself as “Hillbilly”?
- Why do you think this was included in the exercise?
- Are there some labels/identities that are socially accepted to stereotype? Why?

*After this discussion, the facilitator reads the following:*

“Hillbilly” is an often derogatory slang used for people from rural areas like Appalachia and the Ozarks. The term is actually derived from Scots Gaelic and means “hill friend” or “friend from the hills”. During the Land Clearances of Scotland and the famines in Ireland in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, many Scottish and Irish immigrants settled in these regions because the landscape reminded them of home and offered opportunity away from more hostile British settlements. The geographic isolation, lack of industrial resources, and common ethnic heritage made these groups very insular with a distinct dialect and culture. Linguistic scholars in the 1960s and 70s studied Ozark and Appalachian culture and dialect and have found it was a living dialect most closely related to Elizabethan English. Beliefs, practices, music and folklore were closely associated with this time/region of Scotland and the Ulster Scots of Ireland.

Context, relationship and a willingness to understand are important elements in knowing how we form and perpetuate stereotypes. A willingness to know more behind the history, practices or beliefs of given groups allow us to appreciate the complexity of being human and in right relationship in the world today.

*Facilitator asks the group to reflect on this process. Where they playful in the process or what it difficult? Why?*

*Facilitator brings the group back from the discussion with a few moments of silence.*

RETURNING TO OUR VALUES (30-45 MINUTES)

**Items needed:**

- Participants' value notecards from first activity
- Additional notecards for each group

*Facilitator reads the following instructions, pausing to allow the groups to complete each step as appropriate.*

Break into groups of three to four people. Each group should find a place where they can have quiet conversation. Each group has a problem to solve.

In your small group take two minutes to quickly brainstorm and choose one problem for the group to solve. This can be personal, communal, church or social. Once you have chosen a problem to solve, write it on a card or piece of paper and place that card in the center of your table or group.

Spend five minutes noting three or four key players/stakeholders involved with your chosen problem and a few important facts about the case and possible causes.

From the first exercise, pull out each of your value cards and lay them on the table. Compare your cards, and see which values you share and which are specific to you. Only leave the values that are *shared* on the table. Notice if your personal highest or second highest personal value does *not* make it to the shared group values.

Using your *shared* group values as a guide, start to brainstorm possible solutions to your chosen problem. As you assess possible solutions or interventions, weigh them against those shared values.

Try to agree on one intervention or solution to the proposed problem.

After your small group discussion, each group will be asked to briefly share their problem and solution.

*Facilitator uses a song, reading or chime to call participants back to the group. During a few moments of silence, ask participants to individually reflect on their experience using these questions as guides:*

- Did everyone in your group have the same values?
- Did you share your highest value with other group members?

- How might *not* having your highest value shared impact your ability to listen to other perspectives?
- Did you feel your ideas were valued and heard?
- Was the group able to come to an agreement on what the underlying causes of your chosen problem were?
- How did stereotyping of key players/stakeholders inform your intervention?
- Was the group able to come to an agreement for an intervention?
- What got in the way? What allowed you to succeed?

*Facilitator invites the small groups to share their chosen problems and speak to any of these questions that resonate with them.*

*Facilitator closes the discussion and invites the group to re-center with silence.*

#### GUIDED DISCUSSION FROM THE READINGS (45 – 60 MINUTES)

From the silence, speak only if you feel called to respond to any of the excerpts and queries below. This is not a time for conversation, but for a deeper sharing of understandings revealed. Once someone has shared, allow for space, then others can continue to speak if prompted by the Spirit. After all have shared, if there is time and the group feels compelled, more discussion may be desired.

*Facilitator reads the following:*

- Maxim 16 reminds us that in everything and everywhere, we should have only God, God's will, and glory before our eyes and make no account of anything else. Maxim 44 challenges us to never do anything that contradicts the pursuit of holiness.

Are there circumstances when I lose sight of God's will and glory, giving myself permission to stereotype and not look beneath the surface? How does this awareness change me?

- Walter Brueggemann challenges us when he writes,

*“We also are children of the royal consciousness. All of us, in one way or another, have deep commitments to it. So the first question is: How can we have enough freedom to imagine and articulate a real historical newness in our situation? That is not to ask, as Israel’s prophets ever asked, if this freedom is realistic or politically practical or economically viable. To begin with such questions is to concede everything to the royal consciousness even before we begin. We need to ask not whether it is realistic or practical or viable but whether it is imaginable.”*

How do we invite all into this imagining, where we honor human failings of stereotyping, conflict and assumptions, but we are not held captive by them? Am I willing to surrender preconceived ideas about how others might imagine God’s kingdom?

- Pope Francis writes,

*“Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy. Christ, who told us to forgive one another “seventy times seven” (Mt 18:22) has given us his example: he has forgiven us seventy times seven. Time and time again he bears us on his shoulders. No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unfailing love. With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew. Let us not flee from the resurrection of Jesus, let us never give up, come what will. May nothing inspire more than his life, which impels us onwards!”*

How do I respond when I believe my or another’s dignity has been stripped? How do I do this in a way that is testament to my values and the charism of the community?

How do I learn to practice forgiveness for self and others to live into God’s unfailing love?

#### GATHERING THE GRACES (5-10 MINUTES)

Reflect on the following questions:

- What have I heard?
- What am I learning?
- What difference will it make for me tomorrow and the day after that and beyond?
- What difference does it make for us as the community of St. Joseph?

Each participant may share ONE brief awareness/learning from today's process.

Take a few minutes to record in your journal:

- What awareness has the group gained during this time?
- What wisdom needs to be recorded and carried into the next session?

## CLOSING PRAYER

*Facilitator invites everyone to reflect silently for a moment on what they have experienced during this time together. Choose a group member to read the following.*

Reader:           God of all merciful love,  
                      You see us as you created us in your image.  
                      May we try to see others without judgment and bias,  
                      Remembering to remove the blinders we use that keeps us  
                      from truly seeing Christ in the face of others different from ourselves.  
                      Give us open eyes, hearts and minds in order to be able to always serve the Dear  
                      Neighbor without distinction.  
                      We ask this in Jesus' name.

All:                Amen.