

**Additional Ideas for Leaders Week 4**  
**Theme: Practice Community**  
by Reverend Emily Meyer, Director of *The Ministry Lab*

**An intergenerational suggestion:**

- Start with this week's [Contemplative Practice](#).
- Ask folks to draw out the image they created in their mind.
- Invite people to share a story that goes along with their drawings.
- Stories might be about particular people or elements. You might encourage these stories to include why that person/element was included in that particular part of the practice. I.e., "I pictured my mom with the thumb because she is the foundation of our whole family, because..."
- Encourage stories that draw the lines between different elements or characters: let the stories help the tellers explore how the different parts of their community are knit together.
- You might encourage participants to create an image of the church's community: not just members of the congregation, but the broader community that surrounds the church. For many people, this will be different from their personal community/the neighborhood in which they live.
- Shared stories following a practice based on the congregation's community might include how the congregation is or might become a more integrated member and/or a stronger servant leader in your particular context.

This week's Bible story is Luke's account of the calling of the disciples ([Luke 5:1-11](#)).

**Discussion questions might include:**

- Who is missing from Luke's story? Which members of community would have also traveled with Jesus who are absent from this (and most other) accounts?
- *Children might draw a picture of Jesus, the fishing disciples, and the women and children omitted in Luke's story.*
- What is implied by the fishnet breaking? Where have we seen this scenario in our lives of fishing for people? Where have our nets come back empty?
- *Invite children to share stories of times and places where they have invited others to participate, join in, or be a part of the family/congregation/community. How did extending this invitation feel for them? You might wonder together why invitation to community is so difficult for teens and adults.*
- How does this story shape our understanding of "success" (in both life and ministry)? Is this social norm of abundance and over-achievement a healthy or sustainable expectation? How can we read this story to counteract that narrative?
- Children might lead a discussion on when "success" or welcome has looked very small - like one person at a time. You might also wonder together how innovations in community life might draw people into community. What inhibitions currently exist? What lights can be lit to draw others? [*This is a very difficult conversation, but perhaps with children*]

*leading it can feel less judgmental and threatening and more like a game of hide and seek: what's "hiding" from the adult's vision that youth or children can clearly see would make the church community a safer, more life-giving place for more people?]*

- For inspiration in this discussion, consider reading Rev. Dr. Cameron Trimble's Gifts from the People of Gander from 03.03.21.

**Additional resources:**

- MNIPL's two March initiatives might be relevant and helpful for leaders as community engagement opportunities.
- Richard Rohr's reflections, including commentary from Brian McLaren and Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis on Jesus and Bias and Overcoming Contact Bias may be useful for leaders to share with other leaders in discussions of welcome and hospitality and with youth and adults in discussions about community, in general.