**DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY**

**MODULE 2**

**SACRED SPACE: COMMUNITY PANEL***A two-week Community Listening Panel guide to honor and engage our Native brothers and sisters.*

**INTRODUCTION**

We’ve included this exercise in this toolkit as a response to what was learned in the making of the *Voices of the People* videos. In *Voices of the People: Identity*, Katrina Ortega suggests one of the ways to dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery is to not simply *talk* about it, but to *know* the stories of our Native brothers and sisters. This exercise invites participants to bless each panel participant through the gift of listening. Prayerful silence will hold each story sacred and, where needed, allow for healing.

In this exercise, you will coordinate a listening panel comprised of Native neighbors in your community. The goal is to create a sacred space in which participants are heard and their stories honored. The community panel will be a guided experience, with a moderator and moments for silence and prayer.

**PROCESS**

**Confirm Panel's Guiding Questions**: Indigenous stories (present & past)

*Questions to consider*:

* What does Native identity mean to you?
* How is your life influenced by your cultural roots today?

**Recruit Participants for the Panel***(for a one-hour block, three participants are suggested)*

Invite those planning the panel to consider reaching out to the following persons in order to conduct a listening panel:

* Do you have Native members of your congregation who would be wiling to share their story?
* What are the indigenous sites/lands in your community? Who might be invited to share the story of those sacred lands?

Look for well-informed people from a variety of backgrounds. For instance, a member of the public involved in Native culture, a Native leader in the non-profit or business sector, an academic who has studied indigenous culture. Create a panel with diversity in age, gender, and ethnicity as well, as a person's personal background can have a significant effect on their perspective.

**Select a Moderator**

Select an additional person who will not be participating in the panel discussion, to serve as a moderator. The moderator's main purpose is to keep the keep the discussion running smoothly, and help out the panelists if they stall. This could be a pastor, deacon, or a non-rostered person with some background in spiritual practice and/or panel discussions. The goal is to select someone who understands the panel’s guiding questions well enough to follow the discussion, and who is skilled in social situations.   
  
**Create the Sacred Space**

Individual chairs without a large table will make the participants appear closer to the audience and encourage audience participation. Arranging the seats in a slight circle, still mostly facing the audience, may help the panelists discuss the topic with each other. Include small tables or stands for holding notes, and provide a glass of water for each participant. Unless the room seats thirty people or fewer, provide at least one microphone for each two participants, and a personal microphone for the moderator.

Consider seating the moderator at either end of the panelists to help them address and guide each panelist efficiently.

**COMMUNITY PANEL EXAMPLE FORMAT***(3 participants, 1-hour session, 9:15 am - 10:15 am)*

9:15 am - 9:24 am: Welcome, Opening Prayer, Introductions, Set the Intention (Moderator)

* **Set the Intention**
  + - Each participant will share their story for 10 minutes each.
    - Timed by the moderator, one minute of silence will precede and follow each panel participant’s story.
    - The silence supports participants in listening to, receiving, and holding each other’s stories.
    - The silence invites space for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of all who participate, guiding reflection and responses.
    - Suggestion: Use a bell to mark the moments for silence.
    - Responses will be reserved until all stories have been heard.
    - The moderator will invite all responders to use “I” statements when reflecting or posing questions.

9:24 am: One-minute silence

9:25 am: Panel Participant #1

9:35 am: One-minute silence

9:36 am: Panel Participant #2

9:46 am: One-minute silence

9:47 am: Panel Participant #3

9:48 am: One-minute silence

9:49 am: Open Reflection (Moderator invites all present to share)

Questions for the Moderator to consider:

* + - What caught your attention in what you heard?
    - What questions do you have for the panel participants?
    - How did what you hear bless or challenge you?

10:15 am: Closing Prayer

**FOLLOW-UP**

As a follow-up time for debriefing and reflection, participants are encouraged to gather the following week for conversation and to view *Voices of the People: Identity*. A conversation guide is available on the RMS website.