

**Kingdom of God Contemplative Bible Study**  
**Presbytery of the Cascades, Presbytery Meeting, November 2011**

**MUTUAL INVITATION**

*This process is taken from the curriculum included in the PCUSA Peacemaking Offering curriculum for Adult Bible Study. The Introduction and Process is quoted from their materials.*

Introduction: “Mutual invitation is a tool that helps include and respect everyone in a group, ensuring that each person who wants to speak has the opportunity to do so. Mutual invitation recognizes that people from different cultural backgrounds have different assumptions, understandings, and communication styles. It further recognizes that the power differentials, real and perceived, that exist within any group can lead to disagreement and conflict.

Process: At each table, the person who will celebrate the next birthday begins by introducing him/herself, answering the following questions:

Name and church

What have you heard about “kingdom of God” parables?

It is a perfectly acceptable answer to say, “I haven’t heard anything”

After sharing, this person will invite another person. The process continues until everyone has a chance to introduce themselves. No one speaks a second time until everyone has a chance to speak. Please refrain from “talk back” or conversation when others are speaking.

**BIBLE STUDY**

Each table of 6 to 8 will have a paper with a parable from Matthew and room for recording responses. Using a *lectio divina* process, read the passage aloud three times. Tables may opt to have a different person read each time, or to have the same person read all three times.

First reading: ask participants to listen for a word or phrase or image that draws their attention. Ask the person who most recently celebrated a birthday to begin by *simply naming* the word, phrase, or image. *Do not expand on it or explain why* it spoke to them.

Second reading: ask participants to listen for what the Spirit has to say to the Church about the kingdom today. The person who spoke last during the first reading will be invited to speak first.

Third reading: ask participants to consider what this parable has to say about congregational vitality and growth (however those are defined!). The person who spoke last during the second reading is invited to speak first. **Please record these responses (only).**

**PRAYER**

Close this time with prayer at the table. Share with each other prayers of celebration and gratitude for your congregations, as well as prayers of concern. Be sensitive that the celebrations not become a competitive exercise.

**PASSAGES**

Matthew 13:24-30 (weeds), 13:31-32 (mustard seed), 13:33 (leaven), 13:44 (treasure), 13:45-46 (pearl), 13:47-50 (net), 4:23 (Jesus’ ministry of proclamation).











