

## Environment and Prayer of Atonement

### Environment

Include objects that represent oppressed cultures, e.g. Indigenous rug or blanket, peace pipe, native beads, medicine bag, maze; African American quilt, ball of cotton, bible, straw broom, corn meal, iron cuffs.



### Purpose

The purpose of this setting is to recognize that we, as settlers and as people who are not indigenous or Africans in the diaspora, occupy native lands and enjoy the benefits derived from the enslavement of Africans for more than 240 years.

This acknowledgement represents a small but essential step towards awareness and reconciliation. It should lead to more questions and consciousness about what we have done to inhabit the land and benefit from the wealth built on the backs of enslaved Africans.

### Opening Statement

As members of **LCWR Region \_\_\_\_**, we gather and prepare for what God has instore for us at this moment, we'd like to take time to honor and remember our

Native brothers and sisters, who are the first people of these lands (**name a tribe local to your area**); and our black sisters and brothers, who worked the land in bondage, stripped of their homeland, language and identity.

We remember and we honor them, thank God for them and ask forgiveness for the times we have failed to acknowledge them and to admit that we are the beneficiaries of their exploitation.

### **Introduction:**

**Mindful of the dominant white culture that permeates religious life, how will I/we manifest respect and inclusion throughout our time together?**

**Who is represented among us? Who is not?**

### **Opening Prayer**

Leader: Creator God, thank you for creating us all in your image and likeness.

Response: We recognize our common humanity as sisters and brothers.

(L) Forgive us, who have immigrated to and settled in this country, so often forgetting that we are guests of the First Nations People and that we enjoy the riches of this nation built on the backs of enslaved Africans.

(R) Please help us to honor and respect the land and all the gifts of earth that sustain us.

(L) May remaining sacred lands be honored and protected and may we share the gifts of earth we enjoy with those who continue to be exploited and violated.

(R) Creator God, hear our prayer.

(L) May we and all who live on this sacred land remember that we are guests.

(R) May those who have been unjustly treated know that they are loved by a good and loving Creator.

(ALL) Creator of every tribe, nation and tongue, forgive us for failing to respect all people; for failing to stand up and speak out in the face of evil; and for our failure to be agents of change and reconciliation.

**Scripture Reference: Acts 17:26-27 (Feel free to select different Scriptures)**

***“...and God made from one human being every nation of humanity to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place that they should seek God....”***

***(3-5 minutes of sitting in silence as music plays softly in the background)***

***Closing Prayer:***

Creator God, as members of **LCWR Region \_\_\_**, we thank you for the gift of our humanity. We honor our brothers and sisters, who have been exploited; who have had their lands stolen, and who were forced to work the land in bondage.

May we always be aware that our blessings as a nation come at a great cost and continues to yield pain and suffering for First Nation peoples and African Americans, who live under the shackles of oppression and injustice.

May we stand in solidarity with them and may we always honor their sacrifice and suffering by protecting the land and all that it provides; recognizing our interdependence with one another and all creation.

United as one human family in Christ, we make this prayer in Jesus' Name.

**AMEN.**

***At the end of the meeting ask the following or similar questions:***

***How did I/we uphold, respect and include everyone throughout our time together?***

***Did everyone feel welcomed to speak and be heard?***