

# **WISDOM CIRCLE MODEL**

***Adapted from Wisdom Circles: A Guide to Self-Discovery and Community Building in Small Groups***

***by Charles Garfield, Cindy Spring & Sedonia Cahill  
(New York: Hyperion, 1998)***

Basic guidelines:

- A group can range from 3 – 12 women and be effective.
- Only one person may speak at a time – use a “talking stick” (e.g. any implement that can be passed around from woman to woman) to signify whose turn it is to speak. While the person with the talking stick speaks, the others practice active listening.
- This is not the place for feedback, problem solving, etc.
- The leadership moves each time the group meets and the leader chooses the topic for reflection.
- Allow approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours per group meeting.

## **PERSONAL SHARING – *CLEARING***

This is an opportunity for participants to share with one another those things in their life which they have brought into the circle that might prevent them from being fully present (e.g., concerns, worries, family situations, etc.). Allow approximately 3 minutes per person.

## **LIGHTING OUR CANDLES – *GIVING THANKS OR VALUE SHARING***

After everyone has had a chance to clear their thoughts, each person in turn lights a candle and either offers up a thanksgiving in her life or shares a value she would either like to bring to the group over the course of the meeting or receive from the group. The leader for the circle decides whether this is a time of thanksgiving or value sharing.

## **MEDITATIONS**

The leader chooses a meditation or reading which relates to the topic for the circle. The meditation can be read as a litany, by the leader, silently or as a group.

## **REFLECTION**

The leader for the circle chooses the topic for reflection. It can be something which is present in her life in that moment (fear, love, health) something from the news (war, unemployment, housing crises, etc.) or anything of her choosing. Passing the talking stick, each person shares (or may choose to just listen) on the topic chosen.

## **INSIGHTS – *CANDLE EXTINGUISHING***

After everyone has shared, each in turn extinguishes their candle and shares either a gift or an insight they have received from being present and hearing the reflections of the group.

## **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

These can be writings or sayings which are printed for everyone to read, personal thoughts by the circle leader or a prayer for the group to pray together.