

**Mission of the Consultation: To bring together and build collaborative relationships in order to transform and advance the Episcopal Church’s ability to embrace its educational mission more deeply.**

## **GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUP FACILITATORS AND SCRIBES**

Much of the work of this consultation will be done in small group sessions responding to a text, challenge or question posed by our event facilitator, Dr. Parker Palmer. Each group will include a diversity of education/formation workers to encourage fresh dialogue and explore new possibilities for collaboration. Each group will meet five times (most sessions will run for 1 hour and 45 minutes). And each of the approximately thirty small groups will have a trained facilitator and a scribe.

### **The Facilitator’s Role:**

To help create and facilitate circles of trust for the diverse education and formation workers participating in this consultation -- circles where everyone feels safe to speak his or her truth because they know that others are listening with the intent to understand.

### **The Scribe’s Role:**

To listen deeply as a participant observer and to help the group summarize and record key learnings at the end of each meeting.

### **Typical Small Group Meeting Process:**

1. The facilitator should extend welcome, invite brief self-introductions at the first gathering, and remind the group that making this circle a safe place for persons of different perspectives/experiences to speak their truth is a shared responsibility. Everyone is invited and welcome to speak but no one should be put on the spot; this is not a “share or die” event!
2. Each time the group meets, the facilitator should remind people that the purpose of these circles is dialogue, not debate, so participants should be attentive to each other’s needs and vulnerabilities. People are invited to speak from “the center of one’s self to the center of the circle” (rather than addressing another person’s point in a way meant to challenge or correct it) and to help others do the same by being respectful listeners.
3. When disagreements arise, it is important to remember that we are here not to change each other’s minds, but to understand more deeply the rich diversity of experiences and viewpoints that comprise our community. If we want to address ourselves to something another person has said, we are encouraged to do so with an open, honest question, one that will help “hear” that person “into speech” and will help us understand more deeply what that person is saying and why.
4. To get the dialogue off to a clear start, the facilitator needs to repeat and clarify the text, challenge or question posed by Parker Palmer in his remarks preceding a particular small group gathering, checking in with the group to make sure that everyone understands the focus.

*Small Group Facilitators & Scribes – Roles & Responsibilities*  
*“Wrestling with the Big Questions”*

5. About 20 minutes before the end of the meeting, the facilitator will pose the following questions to the group: (a) What have you heard or learned that you find especially important in relation to the mission of this consultation? (b) What practical implications does what you've heard or learned have in relation to the mission of this consultation?

6. In the final 5-10 minutes, the group's responses to these questions will be summarized aloud by the group's scribe, in order to check out with the group the accuracy of his/her summary.

For a fuller discussion of the group process and facilitation we will use during this consultation please review chapters 4-5 in *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life* by Parker J. Palmer (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2004).