

## Building Community



**Opening Song:** *All Are Welcome*, Marty Haugen

**Refrain:** All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

**Reading:** *Experiencing Community and Friendship* from **Loretto Life** (attached)

**Response:** Community Building Blocks

(Pass basket of blocks and markers...Each person takes two blocks.)

**1. Who are you?**

At Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, the heavens open and a voice from the clouds says: "This is my child—the one whom I love." The Constitutions of the Loretto Community state that "the greatest asset of the community is the life of every member." *On one side of a block, put yourself—write your name, draw a symbol that speaks of your identity, or draw a picture of yourself.*

**2. Where are your roots on earth?**

Scientists now know that all people share a common DNA trace from our earliest ancestors. The cosmologist Thomas Berry takes us to an even more distant common origin and reminds us that we are made of stardust. *On another side of a block, draw your image of your origin.*

**3. Where are your roots in the human family?**

*Draw your family of origin or write their names on the side of a block.*

**4. Who are your friends?**

Poets and cosmologists say that when a butterfly in Japan flaps its wings, the resulting ripples are felt around the world. We are intrinsically connected to one another. Who are your friends? Who cares about you? For whom do you care? *Put those relationships and people on your blocks in some way.*

**5. What gives you joy?**

*On another side of a block, draw or name the things that give you great joy or leave you in awe.*

**6. Who challenges you?**

*Draw or name someone who has challenged you to become stronger, wiser, more your real self.*

**7. Who is God for you?**

*What do you believe? Symbolize your faith in some way.*

**8. Where do you find spiritual nourishment?**

Church? Nature? Music? Friends? Yoga???? *Place it on a block.*

**9. What are your hopes and dreams?**

The prophet Habakkuk speaks of visions and says that if we write the vision clearly, then surely it will come. *Draw or write your dream.*

**Reflection:** Look at what you have created: these bits of reflections of yourself. Beautiful. Broken. Strong. Fragile. Loved and loving. Giving and receiving. Hear God say, "You are the one I love. In you my favor rests."

Our lives as human persons belong not to ourselves, but to all of creation, to the earth family, to the human family. We are created into the service of life—into community and community.

About thirty years ago Jean Vanier started the first L'Arche community, a community formed around person with mental disabilities. Like the flapping of the butterfly's wings that rippled around the world, L'Arche communities exist around the world. In reflecting on community, Vanier says that Jesus never calls us alone. Whenever the Spirit of God is active in calling people together, a community emerges.

We are invited to bring ourselves—the selves we have represented on the sides of these blocks—to be used to build community, to build the city of God, the reign of God in our world.

*Use your blocks to build a community.*  
What do you see?

**Closing song:** *City of God*, Dan Schutte

**Refrain:** Let us build the city of God.  
May our tears be turned into dancing!  
For the Lord, our light and our love,  
Has turned the night into day!



*(adapted from Loretto Life and a ritual by Sue Rogers)*

***Aren't we lucky to have  
one another?***

--Maureen McCormack

# EXPERIENCING COMMUNITY AND FRIENDSHIP

## *A Short Description*

The Loretto Community aspires to be a group of friends. Known in the beginning as "Friends of Mary," we place a high premium on equal and reciprocal relationships with members of the community as well as with others so that we can know in fact as well as in spirit the meaning of loving one another. We recognize that we all need each other; that we receive from others, whoever they are, as much as we give. We share a vision of community in which productive, life-giving relationships can flourish, calling forth from one another ever new capacities for loving in an unselfish manner.

People join Loretto because some close relationship with another Loretto person has revealed the mutually sustaining values of the community and its members: a desire to make the world a better place for all its inhabitants, intellectual stimulation, warmth, hospitality, laughter, opportunities for growth and holiness.

Together we can accomplish what we could never do singly. We hope that corporately and individually we can put whatever gifts and energies we possess at the service of one another and of that part of the human family with whom we are in contact. We are emboldened by one another's courage, strengthened by one another's commitment to justice, heartened by others' good humor.