

Ritual

Gathered Around the Same Table

Preparation:

- Bring the desks together in the classroom to create one large table.
- Place a candle at the top of the table.
- Set up the PowerPoint slides attached.



Introduction (Display first picture on PowerPoint)

We will begin by lighting the candle – a sign of the presence of the Spirit among us, within us and all around us during our time together.

Speaker 1: In the little house at la Valla in France where the first community of Brothers learned to live, read, write, teach and pray, stands this table that Marcellin built with his own hands so that the young Brothers could share meals, conversation, study and laugh just like a family.

Speaker 2: Today, as we gather around our table together, may we open ourselves to receive the gift of one another. The table at La Valla is a strong symbol of family and service for all people connected with the Marist vision today.

Leader: PowerPoint

- Slide two: This is a painting of the Last Supper by Bohdan Piasecki.
- What do you notice in this image that is different to other images you may have seen depicting the Last Supper? *[Women and children are present]*
 - What do you think the artist is trying to communicate?

- Slide three: This is a painting by Sieger Koeder.
- Describe the people you see in this picture.
 - What kind of stories might they have to tell?
 - Who is at the top of the table? *[Jesus]*
 - How do you know? *[Stigmata on hands / breaking the bread. This is who he shares table with].*
 - What title would you give this painting? Why?

- Slide four: This is a painting by Kurt Welther.
- Again, can you describe what kind of people are around the table?
 - What is the significance of them sharing a meal together?
 - What is the image in the centre of the table?
 - What do you think this is signifying?

Leader: These last two images symbolise the sharing of a meal around a table with people who are considered outcasts in the societies of the time. There are Jews, prostitutes, coloured people, drug addicts, refugees, single mothers... As they gather together around the table to share a meal together, the face of Christ appears among them.

The Marist Way is known for its family spirit and gentle way of being present to each other and all around us. Pause for a moment and consider, who are the people we need to welcome around this table today, to experience the presence of Christ among us?

Invite each student to name who they would like to invite to the table

Reflection

As we sit around the same table, we pray:

Let us make room at the table for all people who are:

Excluded from friendship groups	All: Welcome
Bullied and rejected	All: Welcome
Starved of Food	All: Welcome
Driven from the homes	All: Welcome
Denied religious freedom	All: Welcome
Excluded from economic opportunity	All: Welcome
Unemployed	All: Welcome
Victims of War	All: Welcome
Marginalised by poverty	All: Welcome
Imprisoned	All: Welcome
Subject to oppression	All: Welcome
Targeted by racial and cultural prejudice	All: Welcome
Deprived of education	All: Welcome
Suicidal and in despair	All: Welcome
Grieving the loss of loved ones	All: Welcome

Hymn: *All Are Welcome* (Marty Haugen)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAZC65CwTEA>

Prayers - We Pray as One:

Through the invitation to gather together around the same table, we are challenged to have hearts large enough to offer a place for people to feel at home among us.

All: *We believe there is a place for all in our schools.*

It is around the same table that those most in need at the margins, are recognised and honoured.

All: *We are committed to building a just society and a culture of solidarity.*

It is around the same table where those from all walks of life experience a special hospitality in our schools, feel understood and accepted.

All: *We constantly seek to understand, embrace and celebrate the unique beauty and dignity of each person.*

For it is around the same table where those whose sufferings are great feel they can bear life more easily through kindness, love and support.

All: *Let us give thanks for the strength of support that we can offer together.*

May the openness and listening spirit of Mary be with us, opening our hearts and minds to the people and experiences we encounter each day.

All: *With open hearts, we welcome the spirit of Mary among us.*

Closing Prayer (Pray Together)

Lover of the poor,
defender of the needy,
sanctuary of the rejected:
for those who suffer injustice today,
for men and women who cannot provide food for their families,
and for whole communities who fear today and have no hope for tomorrow,
we offer longings of our hearts in prayer.

In the spirit of Marcellin Champagnat
We seek for them, O God, the gifts that are dear to us:
food for the table,
drink for the soul,
shelter in the night
and open arms to welcome us. Amen

