

Together on the borders: A worship experience

Leader's guide

This service, based on Isaiah 43:1-7, was created for a group of pastors visiting the U.S.-Mexico border in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. It can be used by any group wanting to reflect on border crossings, in their own lives or in the experiences of refugees and those seeking asylum, and on God's call to stand with those who have been marginalized.

The ecumenical service invites participants to explore the questions and challenges we experience when we encounter or cross boundaries. What kinds of boundaries and borders have we faced? How does it feel to be held back from something or someone we love? Who or what is given freedom to cross? What can Christians do in the face of restrictive and unjust boundaries? How do we support those for whom boundaries and borders are oppressive and painful?

Isaiah 43:1-7 reminds Israel of God's restoration and protection as God gathers God's people from the four corners of the world. How is God present on the borders of our lives? In what ways does Christian hope reside on the borders?

Before you begin:

- ◆ Where possible, arrange a circle of chairs for the worship group and place a small table in the center. Set the table with a lighted candle and other elements that represent the kinds of borders on which you hope to reflect (such as a cross, a small weaving, a family photo, a passport, a lock or a key, a small piece of fencing).
- ◆ Assign six readers for the call to worship.
- ◆ Assign someone to accompany the hymns or to start them a cappella.
- ◆ Assign readers for the scripture and the closing blessing or plan to read those yourself.