



## OPENING RITUAL

**Expectation:** All parts of the Ritual are fully memorized

**Purpose:** to usher Attendees into sacred space

**Energy:** warm, caring, calm, peaceful

**Materials:**

1. Three (or four) Incense stations (incense, censer, extra charcoal and incense, matches)
2. Three (or four) Elder stations (two chairs facing one another, large bowl, two white towels)

**Music:** iPod Person turns on “WATC 1 Opening Ritual” at 1:50 pm

- Ensure that volume is appropriate
- Make sure the playlist is on REPEAT

**Lights:** The Light Person

- Lights all the candles before the Opening Ritual begins
- Turns off all lights in the room or sets up mood lighting using floor lamps depending on the Weekend Leaders preference (SAFETY FIRST!)
- Turn **ON** the lights when the Staff in unison says, “...come walk in the light.”

**Inside Set-Up:**

- Same as Opening Context

**The Opening Ritual Guides:** Staff women lead the attendees through the Opening Ritual and set the pace for this ritual, making sure to walk at a rate that allows for privacy at each station but also keeps the ritual moving along.

- Go into where Attendees are waiting and say, *“First woman”* or *“Next woman”* as appropriate.
- Say to the woman, *“Please follow me in silence.”*
- Take her to the Incense Station first and say, *“Please go to this woman.”* Wait about six feet away, past the station, with your back turned to the pair to give them privacy but close enough to hear when she is finished and ready to join you again. The Incense woman will direct her to follow you.
- Make warm eye contact but say nothing and walk on toward the Elder Station. Say, *“Please go to this woman.”* Wait about six feet away, past the station, with your back turned to the pair to give them privacy but close enough to hear when she is finished and ready to join you again. The Elder will direct her to follow you.
- Make warm eye contact but say nothing and walk on toward the Threshold. Say nothing, but open up your stance and your arm, directing the woman to go to the woman at the Threshold. Walk back discreetly but quickly to bring another Attendee through until all women are through the Ritual.
- If a woman tries to engage you in conversation, please gently say, *“Please maintain silence.”*

**The Opening Ritual Incense Intercessor:** Staff women stand with their lit censor in front of them.

- As each woman comes, say,  
*“This incense is a symbolic expression of the prayers of the saints, the women here today, their families, friends, loved ones and people unknown to you, that rise up to God before His throne. These prayers mingle with the very prayers of Jesus and the Holy Spirit who intercede before the Father without end.”*
- Tell the woman you are going to pray for her.
- Invite her to face you with her arms opened to express her open heart, soul, body and spirit. Wave the incense in front of the woman as you pray. (No more than three sentences.)
- When done, direct the woman to follow the Guide who is waiting.

**The Opening Ritual Elders:** Staff women sit at their station with another chair facing them with a bowl of warm water and two white towels.

- As each woman comes, warmly say, *“Welcome. What brings you here this Weekend?”*
- After she responds, ask if you can take her hands in yours. While you hold her hands in one of your hands, cup water in your other hand and sprinkle it over her hands.
- Tell her that this symbolizes the cleansing and refreshing of God’s presence in her life.
- Then pray for her and why she is here. (No more than three sentences.)
- Pat her hands dry.
- When done, direct the woman to follow the Guide who is waiting.

**The Opening Ritual Threshold:** Staff woman waits at an assigned entrance of the meeting room.

- Once the woman gets to you, make warm eye contact with her and say,  
*“Welcome. This Weekend you will be given several opportunities to make discoveries about God and yourself. (Pause) I have a question for you: Are you willing to take the risk to grow this Weekend? (After response) If at any time on the Weekend we sense that you are holding back from risking, do we have your permission to remind you of what you just said? Thank you. I honor that.”*
- Instruct each woman to go inside, find a seat within the inner circle, and maintain silence.  
[Do not open the door for them.]
- If a woman says no, say, *“I honor that. Would you be willing to look at that this Weekend?”*  
If she still says no, then say, *“Whatever you bring here this Weekend is welcome.”*

**Opening Ritual Prayers:** Staff women stand in the four corners of the room, representing the four quadrants and praying in their assigned energy during the arrival of the women.

- **Sovereign:** Blessing the women, praying that they would thrive on the Weekend
- **Lover:** That they would connect to their hearts and God’s love
- **Warrior:** That they would have courage to act and take risks on the Weekend
- **Sage:** That God would break down strongholds in their minds and give clarity of thought to the women

**The Opening Ritual Usher** sits in the outer circle and directs Attendees to sit in the inner circle.

- Only direct if they accidentally sit in the outer circle.
- Warmly direct women to maintain silence if anyone begins to speak.