



Reaching Out to Do Good

We all have different gifts (talents, skills) that need to be shared with others to be truly actualized. What gifts can you share through volunteer activities, while still balancing the demands of home and family?

GATHERING and OPENING PRAYER

The leader thanks all for coming, and everyone introduces themselves. Communal prayer moves group members out of their busy lives and toward the subject matter of the meeting.

Radiating Christ - A Prayer of St. John Henry Newman

Dear Jesus, help me to spread Your fragrance wherever I go.

Flood my soul with Your spirit and life.

Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly,
that my life may only be a radiance of Yours.

Shine through me, and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with
may feel Your presence in my soul.

Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus!

Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as You shine,
so to shine as to be a light to others.

The light, O Jesus, will be all from You; none of it will be mine.

It will be you, shining on others through me.

Let me thus praise You the way You love best, by shining on those around me.

Let me preach You without preaching, not by words but by my example,
by the catching force of the sympathetic influence of what I do,
the evident fullness of the love my heart bears to You.

Amen.

REPORT ON ACTIONS

During a typical CFM meeting, group members share about the actions they decided upon at the previous meeting.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

Reflection on God's Word moves members to focus on the upcoming inquiry from a Christian perspective.

"Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith; if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one is over others, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness."

- Romans 12:6-8 (NABRE)

"Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

- Matthew 25:37-40 (NABRE)

- What advantages do you see in people having gifts that differ? How might these differences cause conflicts among people?
- What could make it difficult to recognize Christ in another person who is seeking help?

SOCIAL INQUIRY

The Observe, Judge, Act Method of social inquiry structures the CFM meeting and, ultimately, the way of life for CFM members. Each CFM meeting includes short readings on the subject matter of the meeting.

In an address during a Year of Volunteering, Pope Benedict XVI said that Christian volunteer efforts should not merely be "an expression of good will" but should be "based on a personal experience of Christ. He was the first to serve humanity, he freely gave his life for the good of all. That gift was not based on our merits." He also highlighted the Catholic roots of volunteering found in Christianity's "concern for safeguarding, without discrimination, the dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God."

Getting children involved in volunteering can be challenging, but it can be done, says communications educator and volunteering expert, Jane Cravens. "Volunteering together, as a family or as a group with children, sounds great: having time together doing a positive activity and living the value of giving back to the community in some way. ...But the reality is that volunteering opportunities for families and groups with young children are the

hardest types of volunteering to find.” Cravens recommends that families and groups put together their own charitable activities that they can do mostly in their own homes.

Create the Good, an online project of AARP, offers ideas that a family or group, particularly including grandparents and elders, can adapt for serving in the community: “Volunteering together could be just what the doctor ordered for hectic family lives. It’s like hitting the pause button: You’re together and engaging with others, feeling energized—and everyone’s focused on the same goal of doing good.”

From your personal experience, **OBSERVE:**

The importance of the observe portion of the meeting cannot be over-emphasized. Members should look ahead and come prepared. The observe portion is researching and reporting only. Facts and information are gathered from news sources, your own personal experience and that of others.

1. Describe an experience about reaching out to others when the demands of your own family made you question your ability to do so.
2. Where do you see families reaching out today? Tell about one example. What do you notice about the families who reach out often to others?
3. A “random act of kindness” may be defined as a selfless act performed by kind people to either help or cheer someone up, for no reason other than to make people happier. Give some examples of “random acts of kindness” you have witnessed.
4. Where can families get involved and serve in your parish or community? What limitations/regulations discourage family service?

In light of Christ’s teachings, **JUDGE:**

For CFMers, to judge is to compare how things are with how things should be, in accord with Gospel values. It is not assessing people, but rather circumstances. To make such a comparison requires objective observation as well as a sincere effort to understand the teachings of Jesus.

1. How might efforts to serve others get in the way of family life? How can we do service for others (not family relations) when we have commitments at home?
2. Why should we reach out to others beyond our families? What unexpected good could come from it?
3. What positive impact could service to others have on the faith development of the family members? What can children learn about love when we help other people?
4. What is the difference to your family's spirituality between giving money to a cause and getting personally involved?

From what has been discussed, **ACT:**

Based on the discussion, members choose an action to bring about positive change. Actions can be as an individual, family, or group. Actions listed here are suggestions only. The best actions come from the group as a result of the discussion. Group members occasionally choosing the same act increases unity and impact.

1. Research service opportunities for your family or CFM group. Contact and offer to volunteer.
2. Do a random act of kindness.
3. Come up with your own service project that involves your whole family or group. Share about the experience in CFM's monthly newsletter, *ACT*, by writing to office@cfm.org. Include a digital photo!

AT HOME/DISCUSS AS A FAMILY

Simple questions are provided at the end of each social inquiry meeting to facilitate carrying the conversation into the home with children and other family members.

1. Have a family meeting to find service projects that interest your children.
2. Research volunteer opportunities at your parish, school, or community. Schedule an action your family can do together.
3. Do a random act of kindness for someone in your neighborhood.

CLOSING PRAYER

A closing prayer is supplied for each meeting. This is also a good time to offer prayers for the intentions of the group.

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;

To be loved, as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.
Amen.

And let us pray the Prayer for the Christian Family Movement:

Holy Trinity, you are a family. We believe you wish our families to reflect your heavenly community. Jesus has called us to family ministry and asked his heavenly Father not to take us from the world, but to deliver us from evil. And so, we pray for the Christian Family Movement, that present members may grow in grace and that new families may join us. Through good example and prayer, may our homes become that which you desire them to be: true domestic churches, temples of your glory, and schools of humanity, ushering in the reign of God. Amen.



NEXT STEPS

Hopefully, in this meeting you have seen how discussing a topic through the lens of family can help you grow faith and friendship. We invite you and your friends to join CFM and continue the journey together. Please contact our National Office to receive guidance on the next steps in starting your action group and to register as members of the Christian Family Movement.

CFM NATIONAL OFFICE

Lauri Przybysz, D.Min., Executive Director
Email: director@cfm.org
Phone: 800-581-9824



WORKS CITED

Scripture quotations are from *New American Bible*, revised edition (NABRE), Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C., 2010.

Cravens, Jayne, "Family Volunteer - Volunteering by Families with Children"
<http://www.coyotecomunications.com/stuff/family.shtml>.

Create the Good (related to AARP), "Family Volunteering,"
[http://www.createthegood.org/articles/familyvolunteering.](http://www.createthegood.org/articles/familyvolunteering)

Pope Benedict XVI, "Address to Volunteers Marking the European Union's Year of Volunteering at the Vatican," *Catholic News Agency*, Nov. 11, 2011,
[https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/christian-volunteering-more-than-an-act-of-good-will-pope-says.](https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/christian-volunteering-more-than-an-act-of-good-will-pope-says)

St. John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801-1890), "Radiating Christ," shared on Catholic Prayers website, [http://lordcalls.com/dailyprayer/radiating-christ-prayer-by-cardinal-newman.](http://lordcalls.com/dailyprayer/radiating-christ-prayer-by-cardinal-newman)

