

# Embracing the Mission

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES FOR FACILITATING THE MEETINGS!

Access the Program Leader Guide for this book at  
[www.cfm.org/leader\\_guides](http://www.cfm.org/leader_guides)



A Program Guide for the  
Christian Family Movement

## Embracing the Mission Program Leader Guide



The *Program Leader Guide* is akin to a “teacher’s edition manual,” meant to help prepare leaders to facilitate the meetings by giving them extra supplemental resources or ideas the author had while writing the chapter that might enrich the meeting.

**Access the Leader Guide for Individual Chapters at [www.cfm.org/leader\\_guides](http://www.cfm.org/leader_guides)**

### **Some Features might include:**

- Explains why the Scripture passage was chosen and provides a short summary/paraphrase of reading and includes historical background, and theological definitions, as needed
- Suggests possible responses to the Reflection, Observe, and Judge questions, to promote conversation.
- Paraphrases the Social Inquiry material for the leader, provides relevant background information, current statistics, and definitions of words, if necessary.
- Points out possible ways the conversation can get off track and provide ways to get back to the theme of the meeting.
- Adds additional reference material that may be used/brought up to facilitate discussion.

### **Checklist for leaders:**

- Review chapter before meeting. Refer to leader guide for help.
- Contact members beforehand with date & time of meeting(s).
- Challenge your members to make a commitment to CFM and to attend all meetings.
- Follow up by phone or email when members miss.
- Familiarize yourself with [www.cfm.org](http://www.cfm.org) and encourage your members to do so also. Help everyone to create an account.
- Get to know group members. Stay in touch outside the meeting.
- Have fun!

**CFM National Office: 800-581-9824 - [office@cfm.org](mailto:office@cfm.org)**



# ONE

*Corresponds to Page 11 in Participant's Book*

## **Called to Be Disciples:**

*Living, Professing and Bearing Witness of Our Faith*

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (“UCCB”) officially defines ‘disciples’ as those who “make a conscious, firm decision, carried out in action, to be followers of Jesus Christ no matter the cost to themselves.” (*Stewardship: A Disciples’ Response-Tenth Anniversary Edition November, 2002*)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (“CCC”) further states “[that] Jesus associated His disciples with His own life, revealed the mystery of the Kingdom and gave them a share in His mission, His joy, and His sufferings. (CCC – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 767,787)

### **GATHER**

Begin by welcoming members to the group and encouraging open dialogue. Remember to set ground rules for the group and be ready to re-direct tangential discussion when dialogue strays off topic. It is also a good idea to time discussions to ensure your group time is used efficiently. Many successful groups do not allow participants to re-fill drinks or snacks during group discussion. Be sure your group space is free and clear from any distractions like background noise.

### **OPENING PRAYER**

Many groups pray the ‘Opening Prayer’ together. This is a great way to foster unity within the group and build group cohesion. In

other situations, especially when the host couple rotates, the host may lead the “Opening Prayer”.

Jesus, our Teacher:

You inspired your Apostles and the first generation of your church with your words, your acts of mercy, and your love for the poor.

The Apostles continued your teaching and your good works, accompanied by the Holy Spirit.

May we, in this generation, live your Gospel of love and mercy by doing what you taught us to do and by teaching what you taught us to teach.

May we be remembered as your disciples. Amen.

## **REPORT ON ACTIONS**

*Take time to report on how you engaged in action recently. It is encouraging to hear what others are doing and prompts us to put our faith into practice more intentionally.*

*Remember to keep group discussion focused and be cognizant of time.*

## **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION**

A reading from the holy gospel according to John (14: 6-12).

“Jesus said to Thomas, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’ Phillip said to him, ‘Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Phillip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?’ Amen, Amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.”

1. What was Philip, the Apostle, looking for when he said, “Master, show us the Father”?

The scripture also continues “...and that will be enough for us.” Phillip (and likely the other apostles) did not realize that he was in the presence of God. Perhaps Phillip was hoping to experience some dazzling phenomenon complete with awe and fear as described in the Old Testament.

2. What did Jesus mean by stating, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father”?

Jesus explicitly states “The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in Me is doing His works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me...” (John 14:10-11). Jesus is impressing upon the apostles the sacred truth that He is the manifestation of God the Father here on Earth. Also, it is by his works that one can come to know the Father.

## **SOCIAL INQUIRY**

By definition, a disciple is a follower, one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another. A Christian disciple is a person who accepts and assists in the spreading of the good news of Jesus Christ

Jesus tells us how discipleship must look in our lives. In the Sermon on the Mount, (Matthew 5: 1-10), Jesus gives us the Beatitudes, which call us to exhibit virtues of humility, mercy, purity of heart, peacemaking, suffering persecution for justice sake, and joy.

When we look at Jesus for a model in the Gospels, we see that his ministry begins with baptism, proceeds despite temptation and opposition, and culminates in suffering and death, with vindication an unseen hope requiring faith. He is the vine, we are the branches.

We need to stay connected to Christ in order to be true disciples. Our mission for Christ requires a new attitude toward material

things and calls for a new lifestyle that puts allegiance to Jesus first.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church: “The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it: ‘All however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the Cross, amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks.’ Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salvation: ‘So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.’” (CCC, 1816)

From your personal experience, **OBSERVE:**

Members should "Get the facts." At this stage of the meeting, members should refrain from expressing their opinions about facts. They should try to simply report, like any good objective newspaper reporter. The knowledge and experience of group members are valuable, but the group must go beyond its own members to gather facts from the larger world and report them objectively. One can editorialize later. (From the CFM Website)

1. Which discipleship actions (or “Acts”) of your parish or CFM group in the past year inspired others to action or discipleship? Why did they work (or why not)?
  - It may be helpful to ask group members to provide concrete examples of how these actions “worked” to inspire others.
  - Perhaps a group member will share their experience performing a service-based action. Encourage them to identify whether or not the action inspired others to join in or initiate a similar act on their own.
  - Encourage members to avoid ‘judging’ the action by any other means and apply the success of the action on whether or not others were motivated to participate or initiate similar subsequent actions.

2. Name some contemporary figures whose actions reflect Jesus’s model of compassion and practice. What is their “style” of discipleship?

There are obviously numerous examples of Christian disciples. Use this question to help identify those figures who exemplify Jesus’ model of compassion and practice.

It may be helpful to consider how Jesus demonstrated compassion for others by referencing the following scriptural passages:

Matthew 8:3: Jesus stretched out His hand [to a leper], touched him and said, “I will do it. Be made clean.” His leprosy was cleansed immediately.

Mark 6:34: When [Jesus] disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

Luke 19:41-42: As [Jesus] drew near, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If this day you only knew what makes for peace-but now it is hidden from your eyes.

“Styles” of discipleship or practice may include or considered to be:

- Either personal or public
- May be comprised of daily prayer/worship, almsgiving, fasting, witnessing to others, ministering to others; bringing up others in faith.

3. What are the ways each of the sacraments strengthens us as disciples?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines a sacrament as an efficacious (abstract) sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted by the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism: Is the sacrament of initiation into the Church and the baptized person is forgiven of original sin and all sins committed up to the date of baptism. CCC par. 1213- 1284.

Penance and Reconciliation: The liturgical celebration of God’s forgiveness of our sins. CCC par 1422-1498.

Eucharist/Holy Communion: The reception of the Body and Blood of Christ—our fellowship and union with Jesus and other baptized Christians in the Church. CCC par.1322-1419

Confirmation: Completes the grace of Baptism by a special outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which seal or “confirm” the baptized in union with Christ and equip them for active participation in the worship and apostolic life of the Church. CCC 1285-1321

Matrimony: A covenant or partnership of life between a man and a woman ordered to the well-being of the spouses and the procreation and upbringing of children. CCC par. 1601-1666

Holy Orders: The sacrament y by which the mission entrusted by Christ to His Apostles continues to be exercised in the Church. This sacrament has three (3) districting degrees or “orders”: deacon, priest, and bishop. CCC1536-1600

Anointing of the Sick: This sacrament includes a special grace of healing and comfort to the Christian who is suffering the infirmities of serious illness or old age together with the forgiving of the person’s sins. CCC par. 1499-1535

Note if you do not have a Catechism it is available online from the US Catholic Conference of Bishops at <http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/files/assets/basic-html/page-I.html>

In the light of Christ’s teaching, **JUDGE**:

For CFMers, to judge is not to find another person sinful or holy; it is rather the comparison of how things are with how things should be, in accord with Gospel values. To make such a comparison requires objective observation of how things are, as well as a sincere effort to determine the teaching of Jesus. (from the CFM website)

1. What is the understanding of discipleship in your parish and local community?

The “understanding” that is called into question can also relate to how members perceive or interpret their own understanding of Christian discipleship.

For example, perhaps someone’s ‘understanding’ of discipleship is merely taking their family to church on ‘special’ holidays. Maybe others have more of a ‘service-based’ perspective.

2. Why is God calling you to practice and promote discipleship? What is your personal discipleship mission? Is it the same for everyone? How, why, or why not?

Scripture Reference: [Matthew 28:18-20](#): The Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Encourage group members to personalize Jesus’ command in the above referenced scripture passage.

Many continue to discern God’s calling throughout their lives. Some may notice that the call changes over time. Finding out what your ‘personal discipleship mission’ is can be a very effective way to put your discipleship call into regular practice.

It is through our acts of service to others that enable us to demonstrate God's love. We personify God's love to others when we answer God's call.

3. Are there members in your local community that you would consider disciples? What are the signs of their discipleship? Consider how these individuals put their calling into practice. Do these individuals strive to change culture and are they examples of God's love?

The "signs" of their discipleship can be further explained by their demonstrations of love and compassion to others.

Based on what has been discussed, **ACT:**

Ideally ACTs (actions) are inspired and identified through your group's discussion. The list below contains some additional ideas that may be appropriate. Consider a recurring 'action' that can be an ongoing experience for your group that lasts throughout the season/year.

1. Organize a social evening for friends in your local community or parish featuring a video or reading from the life of a modern day "disciple". Talk about it over refreshments- does that "disciple" inspire you or others into ACTION?
2. Design a poster or an article for the parish bulletin that would help people recognize their good deeds as works of a disciple of Jesus.
3. Prepare a sticky note that reads, "Look, a Disciple." Place it on your home mirror for two weeks.
4. Specifically contact someone you see as a disciple in your community and tell them; that their actions inspire you to be a better disciple.

## **TAKE CFM HOME**

How can you apply/incorporate the group's discussion to your family? Remember, we are called to make disciples and be a domestic church for our children.

1. Encourage family members to be observant about how God is working in their day and around them.
2. Every Sunday share with one another one thing you saw God do that week.

## **LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT MEETING**

*Take a look at the Observes for the next meeting to see what needs to be done in preparation*

1. Phone or email host if you cannot attend.
2. Look ahead at the Observe questions for the next meeting.
3. Who could you invite to join our group?

*If children have come to the meeting with their parents, gather them to join you in the closing prayer.*

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

We thank you, Lord, for bringing us together as a group of aspiring disciples of Jesus Christ, and for having this CFM group as our classroom and classmates. You have helped us to realize that we are one with you and with each other. Give us the grace of hearing your voice and allowing your inspiration to move us to act, knowing that we are your disciples in this time and in this place.

And let us pray the Prayer for the Christian Family Movement (p. 80 or inside back cover of the Participants' book).

## **WORKS CITED**

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Rome, 1995, no. 1816.  
<http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/files/assets/basic-html/page-I.html>



## TWO

*Corresponds to Page 16 in Participant's Book*

# **Forming Our Families to Be Disciples**

*Following our call to be the Domestic Church*

**Synopsis:** In the Catholic vision of the family, Christian marriage forms the foundation of the Domestic Church, a sacramental reflection of God's love and a school of prayer, forgiveness, and charity. This chapter explores how ordinary families, who struggle with the stresses of daily life together, can realize this calling, empowered by the grace of God.

**Objective:** Group members will recognize God's grace at work in their family relationships and learn ways to live a fruitful family spirituality.

### **GATHER**

Introduce the theme of the vocation of Christian families to be a true expression of the Church in their home.

Ideas: Ask the members to bring with them a religious article that they already display in their home and give a short time to tell others about it; Ask members to share the prayer that they use in their family before meals or at bedtime; Ask members to bring a decoration that their family likes to use on Christmas or Easter

## **OPENING PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, we gather in love and friendship to explore the family's identity and mission. Help us to observe wisely, to judge prayerfully and to take action that will lead to positive change. We pray that our time together will be fruitful and that our CFM connection will provide support and friendship for us to embrace our mission with our families, marriages, relationships and communities. Amen.

## **REPORT ON ACTIONS**

*Look back into the last chapter and re-read the actions together. Point out the action the group talked about most or was picked to do. Ask who has anything to report.*

*Take time to report on how you engaged in action as a result of the last meeting. It is encouraging to hear what others are doing and prompts us to put our faith into practice more intentionally.*

## **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION**

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark (4: 1-9).

**Summary:** Jesus preached to a large crowd that gathered around him about how the Word of God can take root and flourish when the people are prepared to receive it. This passage, which speaks of the spreading of the gospel to create a fruitful harvest for God, is usually seen as referring to building the Church.

This Scripture was chosen to help members reflect on how their family can be a field in which disciples grow up and become the Church.

**Background:** The sower in the parable is Jesus, and the seed is the word of God (both Jesus's spoken word and today the Bible). The

**hard ground** represents someone with a hardened heart full of sin that hears the word of God but does not accept it. Satan is able to keep this person from growing at all. The **stony ground** is someone who shows interest and awareness in the Gospel, yet his heart isn't fully convicted so that when trouble comes his faith is not strong enough to stand. The **thorny ground** is a person who receives the Gospel but who has many other idols and distractions in life - worries, riches, and lusts, which take over his mind and heart and he cannot grow in the truth of God's Word. The **good soil** is someone who has heard and received the Word of God and allows it to take root and grow within his life. This person represents true salvation that bears good fruit.

“On another occasion he began to teach by the sea. A very large crowd gathered around him so that he got into a boat on the sea and sat down. And the whole crowd was beside the sea on land. And he taught them in length in parables, and in the course of his instruction he said to them, ‘Hear this! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep. And when the sun rose, it was scorched and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it and it produced no grain. And some seed fell on rich soil and produced fruit. It came up and grew and yielded thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.’ He added, ‘Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear.’”

1. Imagine sitting with the crowd on the shore and watching and listening to Jesus teach. What are you seeing, hearing, and feeling?

People lean forward, eager for a glimpse of Jesus and hanging on his words. While some are focused on listening to him, I imagine

some children complaining and bickering with their siblings. Those who are fishermen among the crowd might be puzzled at the farming images in the parable. Some wonder what Jesus would say about them: Does he think I am rocky, thorny, or good soil? How can my soil be improved?

2. How does this scripture reading apply to family life? In family life, some days are rocky, some are thorny. Some family members are hard-headed and stubborn. Family conflicts seem to scorch our good intentions. When roots of relationships are fragile or shallow, family life struggles to reflect Good News. Families face many obstacles to living a joyful Christian life and this causes stress. It can be very hard to think of one's family as the "domestic church" if everyone is arguing and being rude. Yet, that is what the Church teaches about families: "the most beautiful image of the union" of Christ and the Church.

## **SOCIAL INQUIRY**

In the Catholic vision of the family, Christian marriage forms the foundation of the Domestic Church, a sacramental reflection of God's love and a school of prayer, forgiveness, and charity.

“The family is almost the most beautiful image of the union uniting Christ and the Church — the union of Christ with the Church makes the church fruitful and makes the Church increase. It is true of every family, whether black or yellow or white; and it is not merely true of Christian families but of any family.”

- “On the Family and Its Mission,” Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, Spiritual Founder CFM, 1950

CCC 2204 -- "The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a domestic church." It is a community of

faith, hope, and charity; it assumes singular importance in the Church, as is evident in the New Testament.”

Many people will not see themselves in this ideal, however. The two-parent, nuclear family has become less prevalent, and alternative family forms have become more common. Ministry to the family would be severely limited if we narrowly define the Domestic Church as the married couple and their children only. Just as the greater Church struggles to live up to its noble calling, so do families. As the U.S. Bishops said in their pastoral letter, *Follow the Way of Love*, “But remember, a family is holy not because it is perfect but because God’s grace is at work in it, helping it to set out anew every day on the way of love.” All kinds of families make up our parishes and our CFM groups.

“(Families) we know you face obstacles as you try to maintain strong family ties and to follow your calling as a church of the home. The rapid pace of social change; the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of our society; the revolution of values within our culture; the intrusion of mass media; the impact of political and economic conditions: all these place families under considerable stress.”

- *Follow the Way of Love, A Pastoral Message to Families* from the U.S. Catholic Bishops for the 1994 International Year of the Family

When we welcome all kinds of families into our CFM community, we are not denying the importance of life-long marriage. Pope Francis address this question in *The Joy of Love*: “As Christians, we can hardly stop advocating marriage simply to avoid countering contemporary sensibilities, or out of a desire to be fashionable or a sense of helplessness in the face of human and moral failings. We would be depriving the world of values that we can and must offer. It is true that there is no sense in simply decrying present-day evils,

as if this could change things. Nor it is helpful to try to impose rules by sheer authority. What we need is a more responsible and generous effort to present the reasons and motivations for choosing marriage and the family, and in this way to help men and women better to respond to the grace that God offers them.” (*Amoris Laetitia*, no. 35).

“Dear families, you know very well that the true joy which we experience in the family is not superficial; it does not come from material objects, from the fact that everything seems to be going well... True joy comes from a profound harmony between persons, something which we all feel in our hearts and which makes us experience the beauty of togetherness, of mutual support along life’s journey. But the basis of this feeling of deep joy is the presence of God, the presence of God in the family and his love, which is welcoming, merciful, and respectful towards all. And above all, a love which is patient: patience is a virtue of God and he teaches us how to cultivate it in family life, how to be patient, and lovingly so, with each other. To be patient among ourselves. A patient love. God alone knows how to create harmony from differences. But if God’s love is lacking, the family loses its harmony, self-centeredness prevails and joy fades. But the family which experiences the joy of faith communicates it naturally. That family is the salt of the earth and the light of the world, it is the leaven of society as a whole.”

- Pope Francis’ “Homily for the Family Day on the Occasion of the Year of Faith,” 2013

Members of a Christian family, because of baptism, have a special relationship: parents are also brother and sister to their children.

Because of Christ, our family ties have a new dimension.

CCC 2219 -- Filial respect promotes harmony in all of family life; it also concerns relationships between brothers and sisters. Respect

toward parents fills the home with light and warmth.

"Grandchildren are the crown of the aged." "With all humility and meekness, with patience, [support] one another in charity."

These Christian principles are reflected in secular terms in the research of family counselors and relationship experts. Social science research recognizes that healthy family relationships are based in love and respect among all the members. Healthy, loving families are the building blocks of strong and good societies.

Researchers across the country and around the world have found that strong families have a wide variety of qualities that contribute to a family's well-being. The first step in developing the strengths of one's family is to consider those areas in which the family is doing well and those areas in which the family members would like to improve. Below is a list of six qualities that researchers at Michigan State University identified as indicators of a strong family:

- They show each other appreciation and affection. For example, they help each other, keep promises, and show affection to each other.
- They are committed to each other. Strong families are very loyal to each other, share responsibilities, make decisions together, allow members to make their own decisions with support, and find it easy to trust one another.
- They practice positive communication. Families that eat together regularly communicate (as long as the phones and TV's are turn off). They like to share feelings with each other and cue into each other's feelings. Putdowns and sarcasm are rare.

- They have strong coping skills. Families with healthy well-being tend to be resilient. Crisis brings them closer together and they are supportive of one another. They look for something good from a bad situation and tend to accept the things they can't change.
- They have a healthy spiritual well-being. It is easy for them to share spiritual values and beliefs with each other. A positive attitude is the norm and they have a sense of peace.
- They truly enjoy spending time together. There is shared a common interest with strong families. They have lots of fun together and often laughter is plentiful. Unplanned spontaneous activities together are common.

- "Traits of a Healthy Family," Terry Clark-Jones

From your personal experience, **OBSERVE**:

*Members should "Get the facts." At this stage of the meeting, members should refrain from expressing their opinions about facts. They should try to simply report, like any good objective newspaper reporter. The knowledge and experience of group members are valuable, but the group must go beyond its own members to gather facts from the larger world and report them objectively. One can editorialize later.*

1. What did you learn from your parents by example? What do you hope to teach your children/grandchildren?

*I learned not to cuss, to go to church, to say grace before meals, to celebrate Christmas and Easter as secular holidays, to respect my elders. I hope to teach my grandchildren to appreciate the Christian meaning of the holidays.*

2. What have you found to be the greatest help in your effort to

form a whole and holy family? Working together as a team with my spouse, being part of CFM since the children were young, being an active member of my parish, having good friends with the same values.

3. What are opposite qualities of family relationships from those listed above?

- They do not show appreciation
- They are not reliable and are controlling, squelching independence.
- They use putdowns and sarcasm. Meals together are rare and the screens are always in hand.
- When conflict arises, it is every person for themselves. Blaming others is the norm.
- Family prayer is not happening, and church is not a priority. Negativity reigns.
- Everyone does their own thing. They don't have common interests.

4. Name the ways the Christian Community helps parents and grandparents develop and nurture strong Christian families?

Christian friends and ministry leaders model kindness and respect for others. Attending church together as a family teaches prayer and Scripture, and the preaching is instructive. This faith practice carries over into the home in daily activities and celebrations with family and friends.

In the light of Christ's teachings, **JUDGE:**

*For CFMers, to judge is not to find another person sinful or holy; it is rather the comparison of how things are with how things should be, in accord with Gospel values. To make such a*

*comparison requires objective observation of how things are, as well as a sincere effort to determine the teaching of Jesus.*

1. What steps or methods can Christian parents take to help their family deal with rapid social change, the diverse religious ethnic and cultural aspects of our society and the revolution of values within our culture?

Spending time as a family builds trust and loving relationships that are an anchor in the storms of life. Cultivating good friendships, as in CFM, helps. Family members can be refreshed and equipped to return to their daily tasks at work and school, fortified by the grace they receive in the home.

2. How does interacting with others who share your values and beliefs strengthen and support your marriage/family?

You know you are not alone. Friends strengthen one another.

Children realize that it is not just their parents who have those rules of behavior.

- How can families best nurture and support one another?  
Get together for CFM meetings; be available to listen when a friend is troubled; plan actions in which family members can serve and have fun together and with others.
- Giving positive appreciation: Researcher Dr. John Gottman, author of *The Relationship Cure* studied thousands of couples to determine what promotes or diminishes the health of their relationships. He found that ideally there needs to be 5 affirming statements to every one critical statement. This also applies to parent-child interactions and even work-related relationships. See that article, "The Positive Perspective: More on the 5:1 Ratio," <https://www.gottman.com/blog/the-positive-perspective-more-on-the-51-ratio/>

3. How can you help your family make Christ more a part of your everyday life?

Practice a habit of daily prayer yourself. Your family will take notice.

Based on what has been discussed, **ACT:**

1. Identify a new family in your neighborhood and welcome them to the community. Invite them to join you for a family gathering.

2. Establish one time every week as your regular time to celebrate your family. If you have children, let them help decide and plan the activity--anything that everyone in the family can participate in and enjoy.

Create or identify a family "celebration plate" that is given to a different family member at each meal. Everyone at the table says a special prayer for that person aloud.

3. Create a weekly time to say a 'thank you' prayer as a family. Bedtime or leaving for school or work are all good times. Have a thank you time before using screens after dinner.

4. Ask a family new to your parish to sit with you at Mass for one Sunday--and to join you for a meal afterward. Ask your parish to invite new parishioners to stand at Mass, then seek them out afterwards.

5. Another action idea: In the meeting ask each family to identify one stumbling block or stone that makes it difficult for their family to be receptive to the Word. It could be for example business, conflicting goals (success in business and trying to get to heaven) or making ends meet.

More community-building action ideas at  
[https://www.cfm.org/community\\_building](https://www.cfm.org/community_building)

More family faith-enriching ideas:

- **Lent at Home Family Actions:**  
<https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/cfmusa/pages/91/attachments/original/1452480663/lenthome.pdf?1452480663>
- **Special Family Night Actions:**  
<https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/cfmusa/pages/91/attachments/original/1452480662/famnites.pdf?1452480662>

## TAKE CFM HOME

Have each family member create a collage that represents them portraying important aspects of the person's character, including their likes and dislikes. Ask each to include something they believe makes them valuable to the family. Once completed, have each family member explain their collage. Glue the collages together onto a board with the family name printed below. Hang it in a place where family members will be able to reflect upon it regularly.

## LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT MEETING

*Take a look at the Observes for the next meeting to see what needs to be done in preparation.*

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Phone or email host if you cannot attend.
2. Look ahead at the Observe questions for the next meeting.
3. Who could you invite to join our group?

*If children have come to the meeting with their parents, gather them to join you in the closing prayer.*

## CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, you humbled yourself by becoming one of us. Because you

lived in a family, you experienced the joys and sorrows of family life. Please walk with us on our journey as a family. Help us to meet the challenges ahead. Give us a loving commitment, a caring nature and a strong sense of family spirit. Guide us to make wise and careful decisions in our work, our study and our play. Grant us a sense of hospitality and service to others. May your peace be with us, may we do your will in all that we say and do and may you be the heart of our home. Amen

And let us pray the Prayer for the Christian Family Movement (found on Page 80 or inside back cover of the Participants' book).

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## THREE

*Corresponds to Page 23 in Participant's Book*

### **The Everyday Vocation of the Lay Disciple**

*Becoming missionaries and catechists  
by and in our laboring life*

Definition of Vocation: A call from God to a distinctive state of life, in which the person can reach holiness. The Second Vatican Council made it plain that there is a “Universal call [*vocatio*] to holiness in the Church” (*Lumen Gentium*, 39).

Definition of Missionary: A person who is sent by Church authority to preach the Gospel, or help strengthen the faith already professed, among people in a given place or region. Essential to being a missionary, whether at home or abroad, is the desire to extend the Kingdom of Christ by preaching, teaching, or other means of evangelization and catechesis.

This chapter discusses how the everyday world of work provides opportunities for lay persons to share their faith through living as Jesus taught us and speaking of the joy of the Gospel.

#### **GATHER**

Share with each other what a typical work day, whether at home or out of the home, looks like for you.

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, you are always with us:  
in our work and in our leisure.  
You listen to our hearts,

and bless even the most ordinary tasks by your grace.

We pray that, by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
we may be inspired and strengthened in our vocations  
as lay members of your body,  
and that we may live in the joy of Christian hope.  
Amen.

## **REPORT ON ACTIONS**

*Take time to report on how you engaged in action as a result of the last meeting. It is encouraging to hear what others are doing and prompts us to put our faith into practice more intentionally.*

Encourage members to look back into the last chapter and re-read the actions together. Ask who has anything to report. Ask how they see family life relating to their work life.

## **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION**

A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke (3:10-14).

“And the crowds asked [John the Baptist], ‘What then shall we do?’ And he answered them, ‘Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.’ Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than you are authorized to do.’ Soldiers also asked him, ‘And we, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation and be content with your wages.’”

John the Baptist appeared as one epoch ended and the next began. He was the last and greatest of the Old Testament prophets, his preaching turned the hearts of the fathers to the children, and he prepared the way for the Messiah. The Bible positions John's ministry as the starting point of Christ's gospel, not because John literally preached the gospel, but apparently because of his preparatory work to Jesus preaching it. Mark 1:5 records, "And all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem went out to him and

were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins."

A reading from the first letter of Peter (2:9).

"But you are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises' of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

These passages reveal how Jesus calls the whole people of God to abide by his teaching in all facets of their lives. Whatever our workplace vocation – government administrator, teacher, soldier, homemaker – as believers, we are “already” in the kingdom, even though we do “not yet” see it in its glory.

Similar concepts can be found in Hebrews 2:8-9, and John 18:36.

1. Reflect upon each designation in this passage: chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation people of his own. What does each mean to you?

Chosen race – In this passage in Peter, the apostle transfers a term, which in the Old Testament, referred only to the people of Israel, to mean members of Christ’s Church, here on earth and in heaven. Another word used for the same term is “elect,” and the elect of the Church Militant (the here and now Church) has a double meaning: 1) They are freely chosen by God’s goodness, and 2) the way they conduct themselves ought to demonstrate this election.

Royal priesthood -- A priest is a mediator. He [or she] acts as an ambassador, a chosen vehicle through whom God has chosen to serve the people and represent Him, on His behalf.

Peter makes it clear we are all priests in this sense of the word.

Holy nation – Refers to the sense in which Christendom stands for a polity as well as a religion, for a nation as well as for a people. It was an ideal inspired by the Jewish theocracy in the completeness with which the Christian principles were applied to all of life, [and] in the aloofness of the Christian communities from the world around them. “...in this sense [it] was an ideal, which inspired and dignified many centuries of

history and which has not yet altogether lost its power over the minds of men.”

(<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03699b.htm>.)

2. From what darkness into what light have we been called? We are called into the light that is Jesus himself. Israel followed the presence of God in the pillar of fire as they escaped Egypt. Jesus says that those who follow him will never walk in darkness, but will have the ‘light of life.’ He promises salvation much greater than the salvation Israel experienced. It is not simply deliverance from a national enemy, but from the forces of rebellion against God that lie behind every form of evil in the world. The world lies in darkness and death because it has rebelled against God, and thus broken contact with the one source of light and life. Jesus is the light that brings light and life back to the world and sets it free from its bondage to sin.  
(<https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/John/Jesus-Reveals-Himself-Light>)

## **SOCIAL INQUIRY**

Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, whose work with the Young Christian Workers in Europe inspired the founding of the Christian Family Movement, insisted that lay people, both women and men, have a vital part to play in the mission of the Church. He said of the layman, “His workbench is his altar.”

Cardijn told workers, “It is according to the plan of Providence that the working classes—the labourer and his family—are necessary collaborators with God, with Christ, and with the Church, in the work of Creation and Redemption. In this sense work and the worker have an apostolic significance. “Without labour there is no wine, no host, no altar, no Mass.” In this sense the worker’s life is a prayer and a sacrifice; daily Mass extended throughout his working day, so that his life is a real vocation and apostolate. He becomes a missionary and catechist by and in his labouring life.”

- "*The Life and Work of Cardijn: The Spirit of the Layman*"

“The lay apostolate is an indispensable complement to the priestly apostolate, which can only achieve its end fully and completely if laymen are faithful to their own apostolate. When this happens, the Mass offered by the priest at the altar will become a Mass prolonged on all those altars of the secular life: the worktable, the loom, the lathe, the joiner’s bench, the typist’s desk. ...The Gloria and Sanctus will rise in praise not only from the Church but from Christian lives which have become a prayer, an atonement, an act of grace. And all the environments of secular life will be transformed into temples where laymen truly render glory to God.”

- Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, *Laymen into Action*, p. 40

“There can be no lay apostolate...without the apostolate of the priest. There can be no other apostolic channel, because he alone can give Christ to the people. It must be added at once, however, that without the lay apostolate, the priestly apostolate is powerless to carry out the human Christian transformation of the world. The union and the reciprocal collaboration between priests and laymen are therefore essential to the unity of the Church and her mission, and to the fulfillment of every apostolate.”

- Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, *Laymen into Action*, p.122

Cardinal Cardijn’s statements can be further understood within the context of his whole vision for the Church as expressed in the following excerpt: “That is why the poorest of workers can be called by God to become a pope, a bishop, a priest, a monk, a missionary, a saviour of humanity, because each has, without exception, a divine vocation. . . .

(a) . . . It is work that must continue God's act of creation, make use of the creation, discover all the riches within creation, and place them at the disposal of humanity, in order that it may attain its destiny. Without work there is nothing, moral, intellectual, or religious. Without work there is no Host, a single drop of wine to consecrate, no altar stone, no vestments, No Church. Without work

there is no religion. There is no Kingdom of God without work, and therefore work must be respected and treated with dignity, honour and justice. By its labour, the international working class must build the Cathedral of the New World, in which the working class is no longer regarded as a slave, but in which he offers up his work as an act of praise in the Mass with Christ.

(b) Like every other family, each working-class family has a divine mission on earth, which no other can fulfil. The parents are deputies of the Creator, procreators. There would be no children without them, no life. God has given them the divine mission of begetting life, of bringing up their children, sanctifying them, and preparing them for life. Courtship, engagement, and preparation for marriage: all this is a divine mission. Why should they respect each other? Why should they honour each other while they are courting? Just as in a seminary or a novitiate, priests prepare for the priesthood or novices prepare for the apostolate as monks, so must future husbands and wives prepare together for an indispensable lay priesthood. It is they who will give to the Church the future priests, monks and missionaries. Without them there will be none.) <https://sites.google.com/a/cardijn.info/cardijn-project/lecture-2---the-churvy>

“Before God, no occupation is in itself great or small. Everything gains the value of the Love with which it is done.”

- St. Josemaria Escriva

From our own experience, **OBSERVE:**

Suggested practice: At the end of each meeting, have each person or couple choose an Observe for which they will do the research before this meeting.

1. What examples of sexual harassment, racial discrimination, etc., have you observed in the workplace or society?

To answer this question, it is best that members first report current statistics on harassment and discrimination in the workplace they found through research and then augment this with eye-witness

observations from their own experience.

2. Based on your experiences in the workplace, volunteer settings, and other situations, what sort of expressions of faith and Christian service come most naturally to you?

This question can be answered from personal experience, but members could be encouraged to ask family members and friends about their experiences. It could also be enlightening if members looked up on the internet any news stories about those who have taken their expression of religions into the workplace, for example: places of work that offer contemplation rooms. Other examples would be places of work that respect the faith of its employees or encourage volunteerism or community service.

3. In what ways do you bring your personal style to your workplace/community (e.g. fashion, mannerisms, favorite sports, social media presence)?

Encourage members to keep a diary over the next month, jotting down times when they believe they impacted their workplace in a way that was uniquely their own

4. How easy is it for those who interact with you to discern your identity as a follower of Jesus?

Members will need to be careful to not turn this question into a “Judge.” To keep it at the level of an “Observe,” i.e. get the facts, a workplace diary of moments and actions that seemed to them to express their discipleship could be kept. Keep in mind, being “identified” as a follower of Jesus need not mean that others discern your faith community affiliation. Rather that they see you making “hard choices” to do the right thing.

5. Who have you seen bring their faith into the workplace? How did they transform a situation?

The answers to this question will depend not just on observation over the next month, but will demand that members search their memories as well. Remembering a time from childhood when an adult brought Christ’s presence into one’s life could be a rewarding

way to research this question. Searching the media for example would also make for a broader understanding of what is meant by “bringing faith into the workplace.”

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

1. Review your personal “environments”: e.g., workplace, parents’ organizations, professional associations, leisure (sports leagues, community and neighborhood circles), and family (his and her sides of the family, old friends). In which environments do you find it easiest/most difficult to share your faith by actions or by words? What characteristics of those environments make sharing easy or difficult?

The answer to this question calls for serious reflection between meetings. It is also an exercise that could benefit each family in the group. Perhaps, the leader could prepare a graph for the members to take home, the month before. Families could share their observations from a given day over several different evening meals during the month, filling the graph out as they go. Trying to do it all at once could be overwhelming. Perhaps families could reflect on in which environments it is difficult to share their faith and why it is difficult to share their faith in these environments.

2. In what ways can your CFM group work with the clergy in your parish and diocese to help one another become better disciples and build a stronger church community?

The individual or couple who agree to take this question might arrange a meeting with one of the clergy members in their parish, or if possible with a priest who works for the diocese. They can ask the priest what his hopes for the parish or the diocese are for the next year. They could then suggest ways CFM can work with the clergy to make these things happen. They can report on his responses. The “Judge” part comes as the group discusses whether they can follow through on these expectations.

3. Sexual harassment, racial slurs, and unjust practices rooted in prejudice are common in many settings. How can Christians

stand up for Christian values in such situations? How can Christians support one another to promote justice and mutual respect?

Suggest that members read this excellent article on witnesses the faith in the workplace: <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/workplace-witnesses>. Ask them to name ways they can apply its principles to their own workplace.

4. Profanity and using God’s name in vain are common occurrences in the secular realm. How can Christians work as leaven for change?

Have members consider the following, “The *Catholic Encyclopedia* defines ‘cursing’ as ‘call[ing] down evil upon God or creatures, rational or irrational, living or dead.’ A curse, the encyclopedia provides, can be a general curse for ill-fate or could involve the weather, earth, and disasters. We also distinguish taking the Lord’s name in vain from the way we use it to curse others: one is a violation of the second commandment; the other is a combination of breaking the commandment and profanity. Profanity has the same meaning as cussing, and we all know what profanities are, so there is no need to provide examples. There are a number of good reasons, but the primary reason Christians shouldn’t use profanity is because the Bible tells us without doubt that profanity is comparable to malice and slander, should *never* be repeated, and contradicts blessing—a principal act of Christ’s followers. God created the entire universe by speaking, and as creatures made in the image of God and having the Holy Spirit in us, it is our charge to be co-creators of goodwill and blessings, not defamations.”

- Shaun McAffe, *Catholic Answers*, March 17, 2017.

<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/am-i-really-not-allowed-to-cuss-or-swear>.

What does this suggest about how we can counteract the cultural trend toward profanity and blasphemy?

Based on our discussion, **ACT**:

1. Identify an area in one of your environments which needs change. Then, envision what would be a better situation, and steps toward improvement you could take. If possible, begin implementing the first step.

“In union with all people of good will, Christians, especially the laity, are called to this task of imbuing human realities with the Gospel.” [56] (Centesimus Annus. Encyclical Letter, His Holiness Pope John Paul II)

Urge members to realize that change happens one step at a time. This question calls upon CFMers to engage in a full “Observe, Judge, Act” sequence regarding one small difference they might be able to make.

2. Meet with your parish priests. Share with them your experience of CFM and CFM’s mission. Invite them to a meeting.

This could be a good follow-through Act for the members of the group who participated in Judge #2.

3. The next time you find yourself in one of your “environments,” (e.g., a family party, a work meeting, among the playground moms), take a moment to pray, asking God to point out someone who needs encouragement. Take action, and reach out to that “someone” with a simple kind word. Report back on whether it helped the person and/or environment.

One or more members should be aware of this question ahead of time – each could agree to be open to such awareness in a different type of environment so that more than one report could be made. This connects well to Act #1.

4. Discuss and plan a time to hold the Family and Community Meeting, “Working Together.” See Page 30 for directions.

Let members know that the “Family and Community Meetings” are intended both to strengthen group solidarity and to attract new members to CFM.

### **TAKE CFM HOME**

1. Share your own lists of personal environments from question 1 of the JUDGE section, and help your children develop their own lists. Using some of the insights from the meeting, encourage your children to think of ways to serve God in their “workplaces.”
2. When you discuss potential summer jobs and careers with your children, encourage them to think of ways that they might add a faith dimension to their work.
3. Discuss how you can show your priest that you appreciate them. Ask them to dinner or another family activity.

### **LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT MEETING**

*Take a look at the Observes for the next meeting to see what needs to be done in preparation*

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Phone or email host if you cannot attend.
2. Look ahead at the Observe questions for the next meeting.
3. Who could you invite to join our group?

*If children have come to the meeting with their parents, gather them to join you in the closing prayer.*

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, the disciples you chose were quite ordinary, and none of them had achieved prominence in the eyes of the world.

We come to you tonight as ordinary people.  
And we know that, by your grace, your Holy Spirit can use us  
to accomplish extraordinary results.  
Thank you for counting us among your friends and collaborators.  
Please make your instructions clear to us.  
Use us to build your kingdom here in our little corners of the earth.  
Our Father, who art in heaven ...

And let us pray the Prayer for the Christian Family Movement  
(found on Page 80 or inside back cover of the Participants' Book).

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## FOUR

*Corresponds to P. 35 in Participants' Book*

### **Transforming Discipleship through Education and Action**

*Clarifying the mission through Observe, Judge, Act*

Objective: CFM forms disciples by educating its members and helping them to take action. This chapter intends to inform the CFM member of the purpose of the methodology used by the movement. CFM discussion guides bring topics that families deal with every day into a Christian, faith-based discussion. Discipleship is accomplished through teaching one to use the methodology of Observe, Judge, Act in their daily lives. Soon members will find themselves observing, judging and acting beyond the meetings and in their own daily circumstances.

#### **GATHER**

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

God, give me grace to accept with serenity  
the things that cannot be changed,  
Courage to change the things  
which should be changed,  
and the Wisdom to distinguish  
the one from the other.

Living one day at a time,  
Enjoying one moment at a time,  
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,  
Taking, as Jesus did,  
This sinful world as it is,  
Not as I would have it,  
Trusting that You will make all things right,  
If I surrender to Your will,  
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,  
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.  
Amen.

- Reinhold Niebuhr

## **REPORT ON ACTIONS**

*Take time to report on how you engaged in action as a result of the last meeting. It is encouraging to hear what others are doing and prompts us to put our faith into practice more intentionally.*

Before your meeting, consider emailing the list of actions from your last meeting to all members as a friendly reminder of what will be discussed. Otherwise, during the meeting, encourage members to look back into the last chapter and re-read the actions together. Ask who has anything to report.

## **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION**

The scriptures presented contain the words “Observe,” “Judge” and “Act.” The intent is to explore what the Bible has to say about these three verbs which are such an integral part of the methodology of CFM. One need not expound on each Scripture. The information below is for clarification if there are questions and might be particularly helpful for Observe question 1.

*Consider the following readings:*

“Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

- Matthew 28:20

Observe - This verse directly follows the great commission of the disciples – “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” As disciples, we are called to observe all that he has commanded us. Observe here not only means to see but to live out.

“You know how to judge the appearance of the sky, but you cannot judge the signs of the times.”

- Matthew 16:3

Judge - Here Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and Sadducees who are able to read indications of coming weather but not the indications of the coming kingdom in the signs that Jesus does offer, his mighty deeds and teaching. We too are called to judge the signs of the times and act accordingly.

“Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

- John 7:24

Judge - This Scripture verse follows an account where Jesus was accused of breaking the Sabbath for healing on that day. He counters with the message that we are not to judge according to appearance. Rather, “attend to the law, not merely in the letter, but in its spirit and design. Learn that the law which commands men to rest on the Sabbath day is subordinate to the law of mercy and love, which requires them to be ever active to promote God's glory in the comfort and salvation of their fellow creatures; and endeavor to judge of the merit or demerit of an action, not from the first impression it may make upon your prejudices but from its tendency, and the motives of the person, as far as it is possible for you to acquaint yourselves with them; still believing the best, where you have no certain proof to the contrary.”

- *The Adam Clarke Commentary*

“If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.”

- John 13:14-15

Act - Jesus not only tells us in his Word what to do, but He gives example and shows us the importance of humility and service in acting out our love of neighbor.

“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.”

- Luke 11:28

Observe and Act - Words from Jesus himself who tell us to learn and live what we learn.

“Be doers of the word and not hearers only.”

- James 1:22

Observe, judge and act - An admonition to not separate learning and acting. This Scripture is a popular one for CFM.

1. Which Scripture quotes speak to you of education? Which quotes are about action? Each of the Scriptures have an element of education. The interesting fact is that education and action are linked. God does not expect us to learn without putting it into practice.
2. How does the Inquiry method of Observe, Judge, Act help us to live these Scriptures in our daily lives? CFM discussion guides use the Inquiry Method. It is an opportunity to explore a topic in depth. Members are encouraged to prepare for the meeting by identifying the topic and bringing their own observations regarding that topic to the meeting. This takes thought and preparation. While at the meeting, the topic is explored in two facets – first, in regard to the “signs of the times” by exploring what is happening in society and the world; and second in regard to the light of Christ’s teaching. Based on this exploration, members are expected to “judge” - which will ultimately help the group to develop and carry out an appropriate action. True growth and improvement in the Christian life

is accomplished through this methodology. It is a tried and true path of discipleship.

## **SOCIAL INQUIRY**

CFM discussion guides bring topics that families deal with every day into a Christian, faith-based discussion. Discipleship is accomplished through teaching one to use the methodology of Observe, Judge, Act in their daily lives. Pope St. John XXIII speaks of discipleship in his encyclical, *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher):

“In Our view, therefore, formal instruction, to be successful, must be supplemented by the students' active co-operation in their own training. They must gain an experimental knowledge of the subject, and that by their own positive action.

“It is practice which makes perfect, even in such matters as the right use of liberty. Thus, one learns Christian behavior in social and economic matters by actual Christian action in those fields.

“The Lay Apostolate, therefore, has an important role to play in social education especially those associations and organizations which have as their specific objective the Christianization of contemporary society. The members of these associations, besides profiting personally from their own day to day experience in this field, can also help in the social education of the rising generation by giving it the benefit of the experience they have gained.”

- Pope St. John XXIII

“Pope Pius X was talking with a group of cardinals and asked them what they thought was the one thing most necessary for the salvation of society.

“To build Catholic schools,” said one.

“To multiply churches,” said another.

“To increase the clergy,” was a third suggestion, but the Pope shook his head at all the answers.

“No, no,” he said. “What is most necessary at the present time is to have in every parish a group of laymen who are at the same time virtuous, well-instructed, determined, and really apostolic.”

- *The Great Mantle-The Life of Giuseppe Melchior Sarto, Pope Pius X.*

“Action does not precede development. They take place simultaneously. Development through action, therefore, is essential. Action is the love of Christ through love of others. A mere intellectual development is sterile, apostolically, unless it is used to love others either by direct action or by refashioning institutions which mold human life.”

- Fr. Reynold Hillenbrand, “Basic Ideas of CFM”

From your own experience, **OBSERVE:**

1. Considering the Scripture quotes above, what do they say to you about the act of judgment? How does this compare to your understanding of what "judging" means? **In CFM we do not judge people but do evaluate situations and circumstances using right judgement. (See the comments after the Scriptures in the section above, particularly John 7:24.)**
2. List some satisfying actions that your involvement in CFM has inspired you to take. **The actions shared might be personal or group related. Group members routinely expose and invite one another to new ideas of action and service.**
3. Share ways in which your faith has grown and your spirit has flourished since you began using the Observe, Judge, Act method. **Since CFM teaches and inspires change and action, members can share their experiences.**

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

1. Why did you become a member of a CFM action group?  
Why have you stayed in CFM?
2. How have your family members taken a role in their own formation--and in the formation of the Church--as disciples of Christ? Has this changed from the past generations?
3. How has the Observe, Judge, Act Method helped you better understand who is "my neighbor" and what it means "to love your neighbor as yourself?" [The quote in the Social Inquiry above by Hillenbrand points out that development and action go hand in hand. For a person to really learn something, it must simultaneously include a related action on the student's part. Once you know your neighbor, you must take action to love him as yourself.](#)

Based on what has been discussed, **ACT**:

1. Learn more about the history of CFM. (Literature is available from the national office or on the [CFM website](#).) Share with the group what you learned and what this means to you
2. Sit together as a CFM group at Sunday Mass.
3. Plan to get together with CFM member from another group or another parish. Ask them about how they deal with specific group problems and challenges. Ask what resources they use and recommend. Share your own resources and successes.
4. Consider being a CFM ambassador, writer, or serve in another way beyond your local action group. [Visit \[www.cfm.org\]\(http://www.cfm.org\) and contact the national office.](#)

## TAKE CFM HOME

1. Identify a current challenge/problem that you have within your family.
2. Using the steps that CFM uses (Observe/Judge/Act), do research into the topic related to the challenge/problem (observe). Follow through with the Judge and Act steps.

## LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT MEETING

*Take a look at the Observes for the next meeting to see what needs to be done in preparation.*

**\*\* Plan to bring research about the Christian Family Movement to the next meeting.**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Phone or email host if you cannot attend.
2. Look ahead at the Observe questions for the next meeting.
3. Who could you invite to join our group?

*If children have come to the meeting with their parents, gather them to join you in the closing prayer.*

## CLOSING PRAYER

*Adapted from the letter of St. Paul to the Colossians 1:9b-12*

May [we] . . . be filled with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding to live in a manner worthy of the Lord, so as to be fully pleasing, in every good work bearing fruit and growing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with every power, in accord with his glorious might, for all endurance and patience, with joy giving thanks to the Father, who has made you fit to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light.

And let us pray the Prayer for the Christian Family Movement  
(found on Page 80).

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## FIVE

*Corresponds to P. 41 in Participants' Book*

### **The Disciple's Call to Serve**

*Learning to help one another with love and discernment*

#### **GATHER**

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

Lord, as we are gathered here today to discuss the topic of service, let us be reminded that we are not only empowered to serve, but we are also specifically called to serve according to our own individual gifts and talents. Your Son not only gave us examples of what a life of service looks like, but also was specific about the repercussion associated with a fruitless life; one void of service. Please guide our lives and lead us according to your will. In doing so, ensure us of a fruitful existence, and make us worthy of your words in Mathew 25:23: "Well done, good and faithful servant." Amen.

#### **REPORT ON ACTIONS**

*Take time to report on how you engaged in action as a result of the last meeting. It is encouraging to hear what others are doing and prompts us to put our faith into practice more intentionally.*

**\*\*Share with one another what you have learned about the Christian Family Movement since the last meeting.**

#### **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION**

*Embracing the Mission Leader Guide ©Christian Family Movement 2018- 46*

A reading from the first letter of Peter (4: 8-11).

“Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

“Love covers a multitude of sins” is also found in Proverbs 10:12. The gifts given to us vary from person to person but are all necessary in building up the kingdom of God on earth. We are called to use all of our gifts for the glory of God and of Christ.

"Whatever the Father has done for us, he encourages us to do for others. His gifts come with the empowerment for us to give them again and again. Jesus told Peter and the disciples, 'Freely you've received, therefore freely give.' (Matthew 10:8) Every benefit we have ever received from the Father is also an empowerment to give to others." - Ray Hollenbach, Christian radio host, in "How Does Love Cover a Multitude of Sins," <http://myktis.com/2016/01/love-covers-multitude-sins/>

"In the power of the Holy Spirit, God’s Son became one of us to reveal the Father and his love. And not just to reveal the Father’s love but to enable us to participate in it. He did this by preaching and working miracles, and above all, by taking upon his shoulders the full weight of human sinfulness, mine and yours. There, on the cross, he conquered our sins by a supreme act of love: he gave his life for us and was raised from the dead. Blessed John Paul II used to say that on the cross Jesus manifest a love stronger than sin and more powerful than death. His love has the power to eradicate our sins." - Archbishop William Lori, Catholic Review, Feb. 7, 2013, <https://www.archbalt.org/charity-covers-a-multitude-of-sins/>

1. What does this passage teach us about how we are called to respond to one another?

Our gifts are to be used to help others. And we are to deploy the gifts with humility as opposed to (as Peter puts it) “complaining” or viewing them as a burden.

2. What perspective does it ask that we take toward “our” gifts?

Our gifts are from God, and were given to us to be used to glorify Him. We should receive our calling with great gratitude and be eager to deploy our gifts for the betterment of others.

## **SOCIAL INQUIRY**

The secular world generally defines freedom as the ability to go where we want to go and do what we want to do. While we have the free will to use our freedom to live only for our own enjoyment, living in this way can lead to chaos and disorder. The good news is that our creator has sent us the perfect example of a properly ordered existence. Christ eliminates all confusion on the subject, not only in word, but in action.

As Christians, we are not only empowered to serve, but are also called to serve. We are called to serve, not only on Sundays and on weekends, but also in our everyday lives. In Mathew 25:35 Jesus says “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.” The Catholic Church sums it up in what is termed the Corporal (bodily) Works of Mercy: (1) Feed the hungry. (2) Give to the thirsty. (3) Clothe the naked. (4) Shelter the homeless. (5) Visit those in prison. (6) Comfort the sick. (7) Bury the dead.

Sometimes the answer to serving or helping someone is a lot more complicated than we want it to be. Some who need help will not take it, while some others take that for which they have no need.

There is a phrase called “Choosing the harder right,” which is recited as a part of the traditional West Point cadet’s prayer. It refers to doing the right thing even when it is harder than we thought. Choosing the “harder right” can be especially challenging when we answer the call to evangelization.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy call upon us to “counsel the doubtful” and “instruct the ignorant.” Fear of seeming arrogant can hold us back. Yet, CFM families are often able to reach other families that are marginally connected to Church, or not at all. Those families may become more engaged when we invite them to participate in concrete ways that are meaningful to their lives. They can also embrace those on the margins and extend the healing ministry of the Church beyond the regular members, effecting Pope Francis vision of “the Church is a field hospital.”

From our own experience, **OBSERVE:**

1. Give an example of a time when you helped someone in their daily life and it felt good. What made it feel good? *Helping others feels right when we are able to discern that we actually did the individual some good. The greater the good the greater the degree of satisfaction. An example might be the difference between giving a homeless person money vs. buying them lunch and using the time to sit and talk with them.*
2. Give an example of a time when you helped someone and it made you feel uneasy instead? What made it feel that way? *Sometimes what people are asking for isn’t what they need. In giving them what they ask for we’re not actually helping them, and we may actually be hurting them.*
3. Tell of a time when you offered a simple way to help someone that really didn’t fix the problem. What more difficult solution might have been more effective? *Example might be where we encountered a person with a problem that required a more*

involved solution, but we threw money at the problem because we didn't want to take the time to get involved.

4. In what ways do the Church, your parish, and CFM act as catalysts to nudge us to serve? Are there forces in your life that are doing the opposite?

In the light of Christ's teachings, **JUDGE:**

1. What does it mean to be "in need?"  
Everyone we encounter is fighting a battle of some kind. Problems with relationships, family, health, work, money, addiction, fear, spirituality (or lack of), etc. Do we take the time to recognize others around us who are in need?
2. What should we do if helping someone turns out to be much more complicated than we had anticipated?  
Ask ourselves how far are we willing to go to impact the world around us.
3. How much of our own "time" and "treasure" are we expected to give? Whose expectations must we meet? Ask ourselves how far Jesus is asking us to go when he says "what you failed to do for the least of them, you failed to do for me".
4. Could we do a better job of using God's gifts appropriately to serve those in need?  
Discernment of how we can best use gifts is the point of the question. Example: A father of young children should not quit his job and travel to Africa to dig wells for the poor (neglecting his fatherly duties), but he may want to give money to help better equipped organizations fund that work. Perhaps that same father can direct the energy toward the people in his local community, workplace, and family. The merit in bringing Christ to others is the same, only the vocation is different.

Based on what has been discussed, **ACT:**

1. Set a goal each week of helping/serving others in some way. Keep it simple.
2. As a group or individually work with parish ministries that care for members of the faith community and their families as they prepare for births, baptisms, First Communion, Confirmation, Holy Matrimony, and death.
3. Choose a parish ministry that is struggling. As a group, volunteer to work with this ministry as a long-term committed ACT project. Seek to attract others to this ministry as well.

### **TAKE CFM HOME**

1. Discuss different ways that you can serve each other and the community.
2. Write the ideas down on posters and place them where everyone will see them daily. Make one poster of family service ideas, and one for community service ideas.
3. Review the posters weekly (at dinner?) and discuss if anyone saw others doing any of these activities (or if they did any of activities themselves).

### **LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT MEETING**

*Take a look at the Observes for the next meeting to see what needs to be done in preparation.*

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Phone or email host if you cannot attend.
2. Look ahead at the Observe questions for the next meeting.
3. Who could you invite to join our group?

*If children have come to the meeting with their parents, gather them to join you in the closing prayer.*

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Father, as we conclude our discussion on service, please help us to move forward with greater discernment of purpose. May the Holy Spirit always guide us according to your Will so that service ceases to become something we feel awkward or uncomfortable doing, but instead becomes what we love to do. Through service, may we see your face and be reminded of Christ's words in Mathew 25:30: "Whatever you did for the least of these brethren, you did for me".

And let us pray the Prayer for the Christian Family Movement (found on Page 80).

### **CFM IN ACTION**

Fifty years ago, the CFM Group at Holy Name Cathedral decided to "adopt" a retirement home for people who were not well off. Once a month, members would, as a group, spend an afternoon at the home. Some would bring musical instruments and they'd have a "hootenanny" with the residents. They'd sing some old-time songs and occasionally even dance with them. Later, when things quieted down, CFM members listened as the elders told some fascinating stories about their lives. For young, middle-aged and old, these occasions were joyous experiences.



## SIX

*Corresponds to P. 46 in Participants' Book*

### **Disciples as Forgiven Forgivers**

*Transformation through  
repentance, remembrance, and reconciliation*

**Brief synopsis:** EAs disciples we strive to live so as to be known by our love, we falter from time to time. We give in to anger, pride, jealousy, complacency, laziness, and other temptations. In doing so we not only disobey the Lord, we also bring harm to others in our community. Seeking forgiveness and forgiving others plays an important role in our discipleship.

#### **GATHER**

Often the one we most need to forgive is ourselves. Reflect on the past month and share moments when you let yourself down. How did you find ways to forgive yourself?

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

Leader: Our failure to be true even to our own accepted standards.

All: O Lord, forgive!

Leader: Our self-deception in the face of temptation:

All: O Lord, forgive!

Leader: Our choosing of the worse when we knew the better.

All: O Lord, forgive!

Leader: Our failure to apply to ourselves the standards of conduct that we demand of others;

All: O Lord, forgive!

Leader: Our blindness to the suffering of others and my slowness to be taught:

All: O Lord, forgive!

Leader: Our complacency toward wrongs that don't touch us and our over sensitiveness to those that do:

All: O Lord, forgive!

Leader: Our slowness to see the good in others and the evil in ourselves.

All: O Lord, forgive!

Leader: Our hardness of heart toward our neighbor's faults and our readiness to make allowance for our own:

All: O Lord, forgive!

Leader: Our unwillingness to believe that you have called us to a small work and our neighbors to a great one.

All: O Lord, forgive!

- With permission,

<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=2246>

## **REPORT ON ACTIONS**

*Take time to report on how you engaged in action as a result of the last meeting. It is encouraging to hear what others are doing and prompts us to put our faith into practice more intentionally.*

Review what the group has learned since the last meeting about parish ministries. Evaluate the progress the group is making toward any major ACT to which it has committed for the year.

## **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION**

The first scripture passage ends the parable of the Prodigal Son. Here we focus on God's expectations of the non-prodigal. Sometimes this passage is difficult to accept. It seems unfair to the older son, but it has a very important message: even our steadfastness in faith and in good works is a generous gift of God. We are, therefore, called upon to be as generous with one another. In the second passage Paul tells us that we are responsible not only to care for one another physically and emotionally, but even more importantly – spiritually. To have the courage to help another disciple turn from sin is a special grace, but we are called to pray for this grace and accept the burden of companioning one another on the road to holiness. This obligation, like that of the older son in the parable, is among the most challenges tasks of Christian discipleship.

A reading from the holy gospel according Luke (15: 31-31).

“He said to him, ‘My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’”

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Galatians (6: 12).

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's

burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

1. What model of forgiveness is expressed in the story of the Prodigal Son in the gospel of Luke?
2. In his letter to the Galatians, what are the “burdens” St. Paul is asking Christians to carry for one another?

“No domestic church does all this perfectly. But neither does any parish or diocesan church. All members of the Church struggle daily to become more faithful disciples of Christ.” (NCCB, *Follow the Way of Love*, p. 10)

“... deficiency, limitation, error, and sin are inherent in domestic churches [and other small faith communities]. ... And interplay of light and darkness is not only characteristic of ‘the historical situation in which the family lives,’ as John Paul II asserts, but equally so within family life, even for families who appreciate themselves as domestic churches. Thus, [our] . . . task in exploring or working with domestic churches is not to concentrate solely on ideals, nor to give up on them as unrealistic, but to attend to the dynamic and often tense relationship between the two which is at the heart of the families’ growth as humans and as Christians.” (Bourg, *Where Two or Three Are Gathered*, p. 67)

## **SOCIAL INQUIRY**

“Forgiveness enables the disciples to travel together. Without it, each would travel alone, alienated from others by everything from petty grievance to unimaginable cruelty. A petition charts a single course toward human community: ‘Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors’ (Matt 6:12; cf. Luke 11:4). Repeating these words in daily prayer makes them no easier to live....

“Jesus urged disciples to pray daily for the ability to forgive, reminding them that they too stood in need of forgiveness. As the disciples experienced Jesus’ steady pardon of their fecklessness,

their faithlessness, and their need for sleep, Jesus hoped they would find it easier to forgive those who had wronged them....

“The forgiveness that discipleship demands stretches beyond the pardon of isolated offense to open the possibility of a more charitable stance toward the world.... Christians become more forgiving people by living into the Lord’s Prayer: we practice forgiveness. This does not happen overnight; it is a miracle of grace that forgiveness happens at all. Christian forgiveness transforms us through repentance, remembrance, and reconciliation. Repentance enables disciples to turn away from violence....

“As we pray, ‘Forgive us our trespasses...,’ we remind ourselves that we are all sinners in need of repentance.... Over time and in community God works on us, transforming us into forgiven forgivers. The practice of forgiveness is indispensable for the journey of discipleship, inviting us to live into a promised peace.”

- Martha Stortz, “The Practice of Forgiveness”

“Paul gives this word in Galatians 6:2: ‘Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.’ In that context he was talking about what happens when you find a friend who is struggling with sin. But throughout the Bible we’re meant to care for one another, to love one another, and to help one another. To be a Christian is to be connected with others—to be in relationship. Jesus did not simply call us to love God, but also to love our neighbor. He started a church to be a place where believers would encourage one another, provoke one another and challenge one another to good deeds, and where we would bear one another’s burdens. That’s what it means to be a part of a team.

- Pastor Adam Hamilton, Senior Pastor

From your own experience, **OBSERVE:**

1. What are the injuries that family members often need to forgive one another for?

The deep ties that bind family members often mean that these are the people to whom we can do the most harm. Unkind words and taking the others for granted are among those slights that easily show up in family interactions. The focus of this question is meant to be on day-to-day observations. As a leader you may find yourself having to be careful that “blaming” doesn’t enter into this conversation. It is meant as an exploration, not a confession.

2. Name ways in which CFM, either within your group or at the national level, has failed to support your discipleship. Once again it is important to keep the observations offered in response to this question on an objective, non-emotional level. What do members hope to find in the CFM community that hasn’t been there for them? Right now is not a time for offering solutions, but for getting the problems on the table for later discussion and action.

3. Explore what reconciliation services your parish or diocese offers. This is an important Observe to assign at the last meeting. Encourage the members who agree to research this question to look not only in your own parish, but at neighboring parishes as well.

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

1. What is the best way to seek forgiveness?  
“One cannot live without seeking forgiveness, or at least, one cannot live at peace, especially in the family. We wrong one another every day. We must take into account these mistakes, due to our frailty and our selfishness. However, what we are asked to do is to promptly heal the wounds that we cause, to immediately

reweave the bonds that break within the family.” – Pope Francis, [Wednesday Audience](#) (11.4.15)

2. How is it possible to carry another’s burden of sin, or for them to carry yours?

If members are struggling to answer this question, we can ask them to ponder Matthew 11: 25-30: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

How does this apply our lives? Can we offer rest and comfort to one who struggles against temptation?

3. Is it best to “forgive and forget”? Why or why not?

Consider the following process, developed for seeking reconciliation between spouses, it can be powerful in many situations where discord and hurt exist:

- **Pray:** Ask the Lord’s healing for situations in your marriage, family or other relationships that aren’t peaceful.
- **Reflect:** What areas of selfishness do you struggle with the most? How do they affect others?
- **Do:** Don’t hesitate to quickly speak healing words in a tense situation: “I love you,” “I forgive you,” “I’m sorry.” These can defuse tension and re-focus the conversation.

<http://www.foryourmarriage.org/marriage-mercy-retreat-day-seven-forgiveness-family/>

4. How can we help others reconcile?

This can often be best done as a group action. See how the Campaign for Human Development brought two very different groups together to work for good in their community.

[http://www.usccb.org/about/catholic-campaign-for-human-development/upload/15-003\\_cchd-newsletter-4.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/about/catholic-campaign-for-human-development/upload/15-003_cchd-newsletter-4.pdf)

Based on our discussion, **ACT:**

Provide some examples of past acts that groups have completed-add links to the CFM website where those acts are described...

1. Through a prayerful examination of conscience, identify words or acts for which you ought to seek forgiveness. Pray for the courage to do so even if your attempts will not be well received. Consider setting a date and time for group members to gather and meditate together to complete this ACT. Perhaps ask a member of the parish's pastoral staff to lead the prayer service. It would be a silent reflection. No verbal sharing, only sharing the sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Members may or may not wish to report on the results at the next meeting.

2. If someone has come to you because they are struggling with temptation, be there for them unconditionally and without judgment.

Members are not called to instigate this dialogue. It is not their call, but that of the person struggling. But members can be alert to signals from others that they need to share and be open to listening. Give advice only if asked – and ordinarily you will most likely direct the seeker to a professional or an organization (such as AA, Alanon, Catholic Social Services or others) that can help them. Caution those who undertake this mission that they will not be reporting back to the group. They are expected to keep the confidence of person seeking help.

3. When you are finding forgiveness particularly difficult, meditate upon the cross of Jesus and the words, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:24).
4. Attend a reconciliation service as a group with your CFM group and your families.

## TAKE CFM HOME

The next time an incident within your family causes your children to be angry with you or a sibling, sit down with them. Ask them to think about how it made them feel. Angry? Embarrassed? Disappointed? Sad? Help them state that to the offender (this may be mutual).

Then: *With younger children:* Hand each a pretend balloon. Ask him or her to blow all of those feelings into the balloon. When they are ready to let go of the feelings, they let the balloon sail into the sky. When ready, imagine that the balloon gently pops, spreading a dusting of love and compassion to both parties.

*With older children:* Write a letter, stating what caused the upset and how they feel about it. Then have your child write a compassion statement or one of forgiveness to the offender and to him- or herself. End the exercise by having them rip the letter up into the garbage, signifying the release of forgiveness.

-Jaimie Perillo, "How to Teach Children Forgiveness"

## LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT MEETING

*Take a look at the Observes for the next meeting to see what needs to be done in preparation*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_

1. Phone or email host if you cannot attend.
2. Look ahead at the Observe questions for the next meeting.
3. Who could you invite to join our group?

*If children have come to the meeting with their parents, gather them to join you in the closing prayer.*

## CLOSING PRAYER

Happy we whose offence is forgiven, whose sin is remitted. Happy we to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, in whose spirit is no guile.

We have acknowledged our sins; we do not hide our guilt, we say:  
"I will confess my offence to the Lord."

And you, Lord, have forgiven us.

So, let faithful men and women pray to you in the time of need.

The floods of water may reach high but they will stand secure.

You are our hiding place, Lord; you save us from distress.

Rejoice, rejoice in the lord, exult, you just!

O come, ring out your joy. All you upright of heart.

*-The Lord Forgives*, Catholic Online, with permission

And let us pray the Prayer for the Christian Family Movement  
(found on Page 80).

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## SEVEN

*Corresponds to P. 53 in Participants' Book*

### **Solidarity:** **The Global Dimension of Discipleship** *Engaging the world outside our immediate community*

**Objective:** CFM members will recognize that Christians share concerns and responsibilities with people in other countries and cultures and discover that the Christian Family Movement has members all over the world.

**Summary:** The "new evangelization" includes a global dimension, extending beyond the Church community to seek to transform secular society with the Gospel. In this meeting, CFM members will observe the world situation more closely, judge how a Christian can collaborate with others who are different from them, and take action to make God's love present.

### **GATHER**

**Ideas:** Ask members to bring to the meeting an item or picture that represents another culture. Serve snacks that are typical of a culture different from yours.

### **OPENING PRAYER**

GOD of love and mercy, you call us to be your people,  
you gift us with your abundant grace.

Make us a holy people, radiating the fullness of your love.  
Form us into a community, a people who care,  
expressing your compassion.  
Remind us day after day of our baptismal call to serve,  
with joy and courage.  
Teach us how to grow in wisdom and grace and joy  
in your presence.  
Through Jesus and in your Spirit, we make this prayer. Amen.  
- Introduction, *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium*

## **REPORT ON ACTIONS**

*Take time to report on how you engaged in action as a result of the last meeting. It is encouraging to hear what others are doing and prompts us to put our faith into practice more intentionally.*

## **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION**

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians (1: 3-8).

This reading shows how the mission of Christ was not just a one-man show. We learn that Paul is working with Timothy, Epaphras, and other brothers and sisters in Colossae to spread the gospel. Paul gives thanks for the Christian communities he has visited in many countries. St. Paul's mission extended to the far-flung Roman empire, "the whole world", accompanied by faithful coworkers like Timothy. This reading is a snapshot of the international reach of the apostles' ministry to all, Jew and Greek, slaves and free persons.

“Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the holy ones and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: grace to you and peace from God our Father. We always give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the holy ones because of the hope reserved for you in heaven. Of this you have already heard through the word of truth, the Gospel, that has come to you.

Just as in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing, so also among you, from the day you heard it and came to know the grace of God in truth, as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow slave, who is a trustworthy minister of Christ on your behalf and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.”

1. The early Christians spread the Gospel far and wide, to many different lands and cultures. What would you imagine were some of their challenges in mission? How does this compare to today’s challenges? *Learning and communicating in a new language; sharing the food and lodging of people from other cultures; experiencing hardship of travel; opposition from governments and from religious leaders in the new places. Missionaries today have similar challenges.*
2. What does it mean to you when he refers to Epaphras as “fellow slave?” *Paul considered himself a "slave" of Christ, in that he was of total service to Christ and could not get [yet?] abandon his calling. His chains were those of love, not steel. Epaphras was Paul’s representative at Colossae where he was a leader the church there (Colossians 1:7). Epaphras was probably with Paul under his house arrest in Rome, as he is described as a "fellow prisoner" (Philemon1:23). Paul speaks of him as a colleague, bound to Christ for the good of the young Church.*
3. Within your family, are there comparisons to the challenges the Apostles had spreading Christianity? *Differences in religious belief and practice among family members can cause conflicts; we may be living far from family members and reliant on new friends to be our companions in faith.*

## **SOCIAL INQUIRY**

These readings show how Christians are called to go out into society as witnesses to Christ and not to hide from the challenges

they will encounter there. In their document, *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium* (1995) the U.S. Catholic Bishops describe how the laity can live out their baptismal call in temporal society. It was issued on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity from Pope Paul VI (1965) and the Fifteenth Anniversary of their document, *Called and Gifted* (1980).

“The laity are called to participate in a ‘new evangelization.’ This means sharing the good news of Jesus personally through the witness of our lives. Moreover, the new evangelization is ‘directed not only to persons but also to entire portions of populations in the variety of their situations, surroundings and cultures.’ Its purpose is to challenge, through the power of the Gospel, those values, judgements, patterns of behavior, sources of inspiration, and models of life that are inconsistent with the word of God and the plan of salvation and to affirm the ways God is working in the world today....

“Small church communities offer an important and unique means of formation for the new evangelization. They strengthen their members to persevere in their faith and mission, providing both inspiration and practical support. To be involved in the new evangelization, however, requires that members of such communities be as ready for engagement with the world outside their community as they are for deepening their relationships within it. If the small community is to be a true expression of the mystery of the Church, then it must be ‘a communion of God's people living out the mission of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit.’”

- U.S. Bishops, *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium* <http://www.usccb.org/about/laity-marriage-family-life-and-youth/laity/called-and-gifted-for-the-third-millennium.cfm>

We are called to be peacemakers, to grow in friendship and charity with all people, another way of saying we are called to solidarity. We live in an increasingly interconnected world, linked by

communications technology and economic partnerships. The Church has members in every nation, each with their own cultures, languages, and civic authorities. All are united in Christ: No longer Jew or Greek, slave or free person, male or female. Because we are one in God's eyes, each of us must seek greater understanding and awareness of our neighbors.

"A comprehensive demographic study of more than 200 countries finds that there are 2.18 billion Christians of all ages around the world, representing nearly a third of the estimated 2010 global population of 6.9 billion. Christians are also geographically widespread – so far-flung, in fact, that no single continent or region can indisputably claim to be the center of global Christianity.... Today, only about a quarter of all Christians live in Europe (26%). A plurality – more than a third – now are in the Americas (37%). About one in every four Christians lives in sub-Saharan Africa (24%), and about one-in-eight is found in Asia and the Pacific (13%)...About half are Catholic. Protestants, broadly defined, make up 37%. Orthodox Christians comprise 12% of Christians worldwide."

<http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/>

The Christian Family Movement is found in over 40 countries, united in the practice of the Observe, Judge, Act method of discipleship. Our Movement teaches us to bring the light of the Gospel into society wherever we can have an impact. As the Catechism puts it (no. 1941), "International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends in part upon this."

CFM-USA is a member of the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements, which has associated movements in more than 45 countries. In 1989, the ICCFM became a Non-Governmental Organization of the United Nations with special consultative status, using that platform to witnessing to Christian ethics in the public square.

## The United Nations Relationship to the Church

Since 1989, the ICCFM has been a Non-Governmental Organization of the United Nations with special consultative status, using that platform to witnessing to Christian ethics in the public square. Although the Church and the United Nations do not agree on many important issues (especially related to population control), the Church chooses to maintain relationships with the UN for the benefit of the common good. The priorities of the Holy See for 2017 were similar to key UN goals – among them, the quest for peace, assisting migrants and refugees, and nuclear disarmament.

Ever since 1964, when it was informally accepted to the United Nations General Assembly, the Holy See\* has had a permanent seat at international discussions and used its observer status to go on record about matters of peace and human dignity. “We consider the United Nations not only important but in itself very useful for humanity,” Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, told UN News (7 February 2017). He went on to say: “The Holy See, the Catholic Church itself, appreciates and considers the United Nations a very important institution for all the nations to come together and discuss problems and even enjoy together what is common.”

\*The Holy See is a nearly 2,000-year old term that refers to the international sovereignty of the Pope, or leader of the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See is the only religious entity represented among the 193 UN Member States.

Source: UN News Center, “Diplomacy of the conscience – The Holy See at the United Nations.”

[http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56121#.Wk\\_M4qinGUK](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56121#.Wk_M4qinGUK)

The UN has identified 17 Sustainable Development Goals that address the needs of people in both developed and developing

countries, emphasizing that no one should be left behind. Broad and ambitious in scope, the Agenda addresses the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental, as well as important aspects related to peace, justice and effective institutions.

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/12/sustainable-development-goals-kick-off-with-start-of-new-year/>

From our own experience, **OBSERVE:**

1. What do you think of when you think of a “small church community?” Besides CFM, what other small Christian communities are in your parish? Bible studies, men's and women's groups, cultural groups, Teams of Our Lady, St. Vincent DePaul Society, Marriage Encounter circles, rosary groups, Taizé prayer groups, grief support groups
2. What are current needs in your local community that a small church community could address?  
Isolation of elderly, loneliness, hunger, injustice, prisoners, military families during deployment, addictions, ignorance about other cultures and religions, environmental problems and pollution, unemployment, mental illness
3. Explore how your CFM group and the other groups in your parish community can network effectively with CFM-USA. Co-sponsor helping projects; research and create a directory of contact information for helping agencies and programs in neighborhood churches, dioceses, and local government.
4. Identify a church agency that helps the poor in other countries. Visit their website and learn their projects and methods. Catholic Relief Services <https://www.crs.org/>; Lutheran World Relief <https://lwr.org/>; Mennonite Disaster Service <https://www.mds.mennonite.net/>

In the light of Christ's teachings, **JUDGE:**

1. What benefits/problems do you see in collaborating with secular agencies to help the poor and people in need?  
This takes discernment. Secular agencies may be involved in activities that are not consistent with Church teaching. Christians need to know what their faith teaches and be able to express it respectfully to those who do not share our faith. Before offering to collaborate, research the other agency's goals and practices carefully on their website and by talking to trusted sources. Check with pastors or diocesan leaders to find out if other Christian groups have successfully worked with this agency. Sometimes collaboration is not possible, but very often a joint project can be arranged that respects everyone's consciences. Christians need to clearly express their beliefs and values at the start of the collaborative projects they undertake.

A good article on this: "8 Reasons Churches Should Partner with Secular Groups." <https://www.christianitytoday.com/karl-vaters/2017/march/8-reasons-churches-partner-secular-community-groups.html?start=3>

2. How can membership in small church communities, like CFM, help us in our ability to help where/when needed?  
Small groups allow people to discover and contribute their unique talents. Communication and execution of a plan is easier with a small group. Families with young children can find a way to participate, since other members of the group can assist them.
3. Besides donating funds to church and secular agencies, how can our families be actively involved in helping others and building peace in the world?  
Working together with other members of the local community promotes friendship and understanding. Children meet the children of their neighbors and learn about our common values.

Based on our discussion, **ACT:**

1. As a group, identify a pressing need in your community. Research the current providers of services to that ‘need’ and report back on a possible plan the CFM group could take to help the service providers and/or create awareness in the community. Good sources of information are your county government website and your state Department of Human Services website. - Civic agencies offer opportunities for volunteers to help families. For instance, the State of Maryland organizes and promotes a “Day to Serve”  
<http://governor.maryland.gov/blog/day-to-serve-were-all-in-this-together/> Local Catholic Charities Agencies and Diocesan Social Justice Agencies, Groups that work with Migrants and groups that work with the incarcerated are also good groups to work with.
2. Visit [www.iccfm.org](http://www.iccfm.org) and explore how CFM is working for solidarity and family life on one other continent. Report to the group what you learned. The ICCFM Leadership Team visited many countries during their 2013-2019 term and helped CFM groups get started using study materials in Spanish and English. See photos here.  
<http://www.iccfm.org/index.php/missionary-visits>
3. Learn more about the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN on the United Nations website.  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs> In 2017, the ICCFM representative to the UN reported on how ICCFM is working toward these goals.
  - Goal 4: Quality Education: We work hard in training in Human and Christian Values with 120,000 nuclear families, 5,000 single-parent families, 30,000 youth and adolescents. Graduating approximately 60,000 from formation programs every 4 years.

- Goal 5: Gender Equality: We are working on Women's Empowerment by integrating a training program for single-parent families where women are head of the household, to date we have 5,000 families in such groups around the world.
- Goal 16: Peace, Justice and strong institutions: The objectives of the training itineraries for families, young people and adolescents of the movements in their formative content promote the experience of peace, justice, respect and equality.

A short presentation of the ICCFM 2017 report may be found here <http://www.iccfm.org/index.php/missionary-visits>

4. Email a member of a Christian Family Movement in another country and ask them to tell you what CFM is doing there. Contact information can be found for continental presidents at [www.iccfm.org](http://www.iccfm.org). You might discover a pen pal.
5. Discuss and plan a time to hold the Family and Community meeting, “The Hunger Banquet,” found in this program guide on Page 59. The purpose of the “banquet” is to make very real the vast differences in the way the world’s resources are presently distributed.

Additional action ideas: Attend an ethnic festival in your town; Sponsor an international food night at your church; visit a cultural center; invite a representative of a church aid agency, like Catholic Relief Services, to speak; help with local refugee resettlement or migrant services

- CFM in Action: See short reports on outreach-type actions on the CFM website <https://www.cfm.org/outreach>
- CFM in India help at local orphanage. ACT Newsletter April 2017. [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/cfmusa/pages/116/attachments/original/1490186081/ACT\\_April\\_2017.pdf?1490186081](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/cfmusa/pages/116/attachments/original/1490186081/ACT_April_2017.pdf?1490186081)

- [Philippine CFM takes action for life](https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2017/05/11/1699144/movement-all-seasons)  
<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2017/05/11/1699144/movement-all-seasons>

## TAKE CFM HOME

1. Chose a country your family would like to learn more about.
2. Research about the country together. What was the most interesting thing you learned? What surprised you the most?
3. How are that nation and its people like our own? How are they different?

## LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT MEETING

*Take a look at the Observes for the next meeting to see what needs to be done in preparation.*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_

1. Phone or email host if you cannot attend.
2. Look ahead at the Observe questions for the next meeting.
3. Who could you invite to join our group?

*If children have come to the meeting with their parents, gather them to join you in the closing prayer.*

## CLOSING PRAYER

God of all peoples, open our eyes to the needs of all our brothers and sisters. Open our hearts to care and open our minds to find creative ways to be in solidarity with them. Bless the Christian Family Movement to continue to form our members to see ourselves as part of a global reality and to be alert to opportunities to take action as your disciples in this world. Amen.

And let us pray the Prayer for the Christian Family Movement (found on Page 80).

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## EIGHT

*Corresponds to P. 65 of Participants' Book*

### **Called to Be Disciples, Together with Other Families**

*Nurturing our CFM community and helping it to grow*

Meeting Focus: Strategizing for spreading the Movement to more families. What's next for your group?

#### **GATHER**

Begin by listening to “Salt and Light.” by Jami Smith.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cd\\_gnvAV8U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cd_gnvAV8U).

This is an optional opening activity that nicely sets up the theme for the meeting.

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

Lord, we love the light.

We surround ourselves with bright and shiny things.

We mix with cheerful and happy people.

We keep our lamps lit, our fires burning and our salt at the ready.

But, Lord, we know

that there are dark and unsavory places inside us:

Places we have not allowed your light to shine;

Activities we have not allowed your salt to flavor;

Dark and unsavory attitudes

that affect the lives of those closest to us;

Dark and unsavory actions and words that hurt  
and leave scars we cannot heal.

Forgive us, Lord.

Bring your light and healing touch to every part of our lives:  
every relationship, every activity, every word.

And as we begin to experience your forgiveness and healing,  
help us to move out into the dark and unsavory places around us.  
Help us to bring your light and hope, your joy and peace to those  
who need it most.

We pray for those for whom grief and loneliness are constant  
companions:

for those who have lost loved ones,

for those who have lost their jobs

or whose livelihood is threatened,

for those who have lost their way and have lost hope.

We pray for children growing up in a technological world,  
for whom technology has become a substitute for love and  
affection.

We pray for all of who are suffering especially those  
for whom even asking for help is beyond their own ability.

Help us discover your light shining in unexpected places.

Help us find ways to share the flavors of your love  
with a hungry world.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

- Ian Webster, "Salt and Light: A Prayer"

## **REPORT ON ACTIONS**

*Take time to report on how you engaged in action as a result of the last meeting. It is encouraging to hear what others are doing and prompts us to put our faith into practice more intentionally.*

Before your meeting, consider emailing the list of actions from your last meeting to all members as a friendly reminder of what will be discussed. Otherwise, during the meeting, encourage members to look back into the last chapter and re-read the actions together. Ask who has anything to report.

## SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew (5:13-16).

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

“[In this] Gospel Jesus uses the images of salt and light to show how we are to bring salvation to the world. In our rather privatized and individualistic culture, we tend naturally to think of religion as something for ourselves designed to make our lives richer or better. Now there is a sense in which that is true, but on the biblical reading, religiosity is like salt, light, and an elevated city: it is meant not for oneself, but for others. “

– Bishop Robert Barron, Daily Gospel Reflection (6/12/2018).

1. Christ instructs that we *are* the salt of the earth and the light of the world- not that we *can be* or that we *should try* to be. Based on what you know about the qualities and uses of both salt and light, in what examples in your family life do you see ‘salt’ and ‘light’ making a difference?

It is easy to identify the many concrete ways we rely on both light and salt to enhance the quality of our lives. If we engage in the metaphor, we can also see “light” and “salt” making a difference in our families in a spiritual sense. For instance, unconditional love serves as a beacon of hope and comfort for those feeling the dark despair that rejection at work, school, etc. can cause. We shine the light of Christ’s love in our families by modeling compassion and mercy as an alternative to the culture of cruelty and revenge that is promoted in the world today. And just as salt enhances the flavors

of our favorite foods, we are salt within our families if we strive to influence our homes for the better. Someone who is salt within the family may lend without expecting something in return, easily forgive wrongs, or show an unexpected kindness “just because.” Family members who are “salt” make our homes better places by preserving and enhancing what is best in our families.

Sometimes light can be too bright, and salt can be too salty. Give examples when you have seen light and salt backfire--in a religious sense.

Perhaps someone in your group has an example of seeing a “religious” person who comes across as seeming “holier than thou,” “too churchy,” or “self-righteous” in a way that drives others away from God rather than closer to Him. Another example is one who is “too pushy” or whose goal is “pushing a religious agenda” which effectively drives others away from God and religion.

## **SOCIAL INQUIRY**

### ***Salt***

“When Jesus said, ‘You are the salt of the earth,’ He meant that all of His disciples were to serve as preservatives, stopping the moral decay in our sin infected world... Those first disciples would have been intimately familiar with this function of salt. Without refrigeration, the fish that they caught would quickly spoil and rot unless they were packed in salt. Once salted, the fish could be safely stored and then used when needed. The spiritual health and strength of the Christian is to counteract the corruption that is in the world. Christians, as salt, are to inhibit sin’s power to destroy lives. This in turn creates opportunity for the gospel to be proclaimed and received....”

### ***Light***

“In Matthew 5:14, Jesus tells His disciples, ‘You are the light of the world’. As ‘salt,’ the Christian is to counteract the power of

sin. As ‘light,’ we are to illuminate or make visible. Our lives are to be an on-going witness to the reality of Christ’s presence in our lives. . . .

“In Philippians 2:15, the apostle Paul says, ‘Believers, you are to shine as light in the world.’ The Greek word used here is very similar to the word for the beacon that a lighthouse emits. [A] beacon is bright and unmistakable in its purpose. It warns of danger. It directs to safe harbor. It provides hope for those who have lost hope.... God uses His children, like beacons from a lighthouse, to show the way to Him.”

- Dr. Michael Youssef, "You Are Salt and Light"

“Small groups enable (us) to fulfill the ‘one another’ commands of Scripture. We are told to love one another, instruct one another, pray for one another, bear one another's burdens, even kiss one another. Small groups provide unique opportunities to build relationships where we can hold one another accountable, pray for one another, challenge one another, and support one another. ....Not only can leaders model (this) discipleship, but they can disciple the individuals in their group to do it as well. Everyone should be discipling someone.”

- Dave Dunham, "Small Groups, Big Impact"

Small faith communities, such as CFM groups, serve as beacons.

From your own experience, **OBSERVE:**

Members should "Get the facts." At this stage of the meeting, members should refrain from expressing their opinions about facts. They should try to simply report, like any good objective newspaper reporter. The knowledge and experience of group members are valuable, but the group must go beyond its own members to gather facts from the larger world and report them objectively. One can editorialize later. (From the CFM Website)

1. Name ways you see the salt of God's grace keeping our society from decay.  
Examples include: through answered prayer, miracles, and compelling people toward service and love.
2. What areas of darkness in our culture stand out as needing the Light of Christ?  
Dark areas of our culture include: value placed on demanding and achieving instant gratification in all things, emphasis and value placed on youth and physical beauty, acceptance of sexual misconduct, materialism, and growing number of distractions that take priority over spending time building our relationships with God and each other.
3. Salt heightens the flavor of foods. Name ways CFM has heightened the flavor of your life.  
Examples include: Helping members build close bonds with other families. Strengthening one's marriage. Providing a framework for bringing service opportunities into one's family.
4. Name some first steps your CFM group can take to be a beacon of CFM's light to other families in your parish.  
You could: Invite other families to your CFM meeting. Sponsor a couples' date night and arrange for free childcare. Organize a "meal train" for a family with a new baby, etc.

In the Light of Christ's teaching, **JUDGE:**

1. How can your formation in CFM help you and your family become salt of the earth, the lamp on the lampstand, and the city on the hill?  
We can learn from the examples of others in our group. Feel encouraged to become bolder in our faith and as witnesses. Discussion in our CFM groups can lead us to more fully understanding our faith, a deeper desire for a relationship with God and a greater longing to live out our purpose as disciples

of Christ.

2. What do you value the most about the relationships you have nurtured through CFM, and how have they become models for other relationships in your family and community?  
We have become family to one another. We value the open sharing of ideas and opinions in a space that is safe and without criticism and judgement. We learn much about how other parents are teaching their children about God and the faith in tangible and compelling ways. We love working with other families on projects that make a difference!
3. In what way do you believe you could best attract more families to join CFM?  
Increasing the visibility of CFM within the parish. Regularly advertise in the bulletin about “CFM doings” and upcoming meetings. Host an event that would meet the needs of families you are trying to get involved in CFM. Visit [www.cfm.org](http://www.cfm.org) for ideas on promotional materials that can be put in your bulletin.
4. Why do you think many families resist the invitation? How might we overcome this resistance? How do we keep from becoming discouraged?  
Possible answer: They are hesitant to committing to “another thing.” We need to try to portray involvement in CFM as life enriching rather than life draining. Involvement in CFM opens up one’s family life, it doesn’t not constrict it.

Based on what has been discussed, **ACT:**

1. Further explore the concept of being “Salt of the Earth” in a concrete way to group members. Work in collaboration with your parish Youth Ministry. Here is an example of a lesson from Creative Youth Ideas:  
[www.creativeyouthideas.com/resources/object-lessons/salt-of-the-earth-an-object-lesson-for-youth/](http://www.creativeyouthideas.com/resources/object-lessons/salt-of-the-earth-an-object-lesson-for-youth/)

2. Discuss a plan to implement the Family and Community Meeting, “Caring for God’s Creation,” found at the end of this program guide, p. 72.
3. Speak to at least two other families in the next month about your experience in CFM and invite them to attend your meeting in the fall and the Family/Community meeting in the summer. These are great ways to grow CFM.

Every season, families move out of CFM into other organizations and life-situations. The membership of your group will fluctuate as the needs of families evolve. Trust that new families will benefit from being in your group and experiencing CFM for a season or more. Keep an eye out for likely new member families from your children’s faith formation, baptism preparation programs, marriage groups, social justice ministries, widows’ groups, single-again groups, etc.

4. As a group, plan to mentor a new CFM group in your church or community in the upcoming year.
  - **Talk with your pastor** about your desire to share CFM with more people in the parish. Explain how CFM is a small group ministry for marriage and family enrichment. Assure him that it won’t be extra work for him. Invite a few friends over to your house to experience a CFM meeting for themselves.
  - **Invite a few couples or single parents** you know or whom you keep running into after Mass to join you.
  - Visit **Start a New Group** on the CFM website:  
[https://www.cfm.org/start\\_new\\_group](https://www.cfm.org/start_new_group)

- On the Start a New Group page, you will find:
  - A sample invitation letter
  - A sample bulletin announcement
  - Simple directions for meetings
  - A flyer to share with the pastor and parish staff:  
[Why CFM? For Pastors and parish staff](#)
- Share with your friends one or more **short videos** describing CFM at <https://www.cfm.org/videos> We have some videos especially addressed to your pastor.
- Here is a flyer that describes CFM: [Build Family and Faith](#)

**Mentoring New Groups:** It's very helpful to place new members with experienced CFMers their first year. This gives them a chance to get comfortable with the experience. Some groups have all the new families together at the start of the year. By adding two experienced families, they will be encouraged to share and learn the ropes of the observe, judge & act method. These mentors are, in essence, sharing the Good News of CFM and helping to grow the gift in their parish.

**Ongoing care of new members:** Sometimes groups don't always "gel" during the first year. The parish leader should stay in contact with new members to help them stay excited about CFM and the benefits it will bring to their families.

- PRAY for the success of the CFM groups in your parish and around the world.

- COMMUNICATE: Call each of the new CFM members midway through the year to make sure they are enjoying their CFM experience. Is it what they expected? Are they having any problems in attending meetings (babysitting issues,

scheduling conflicts)? The parish leader should try to address any concerns that arise.

Talk to the CFM group leaders toward the end of the CFM year to get a sense of any members that may not join again the following year. Try to resolve any problems that may be keeping these couples from staying in CFM (babysitting issues, etc.).

- **Choose a Program Book for a Starter group.** The Program book you choose will depend on the makeup of the group you anticipate forming. You may [contact us](#) at the CFM National Office to help you with choosing a book or [click here](#) for a full list of available programs.
- For example, for a group of young families, we may suggest using [\*Wisdom & Grace for Marriage & Parenting\*](#), a 5-meeting digital meeting guide, or [\*For Happier Families\*](#), an 8-meeting hardcopy guide. For a group with several empty-nest couples, we may suggest using [\*Called to Wisdom\*](#), a 7-meeting digital guide, or [\*The Grand Adventure\*](#), a 6-meeting digital guide specifically for grandparents.

## TAKE CFM HOME

1. Use a fun song--such as, "He is The Light," [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzoOmdZxrx8--](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzoOmdZxrx8--) as an energizing start to a discussion of why and how we are called to light up the world.
2. Get together with other CFM families to share the light of Christ with one another and keep the flavor of your fervor intense.

## LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT YEAR

-When a new family joins your group, or when you begin a new group, it's a great opportunity to reestablish expectations and reiterate goals.

-Long-standing groups can fall into habits that need breaking. Does your group always run overtime? Does your discussion stray off track? Do you never seem to get to the Act portion of the meeting? Do members repeatedly fail to follow through on actions?

*Set a date to meet again to choose the next program book for the group. Program book descriptions at [https://www.cfm.org/program\\_books](https://www.cfm.org/program_books)*

*Who might serve as a lead couple or contact person for this group, helping to organize communication between members and with the national office?*

*If children have come to the meeting with their parents, gather them to join you in the closing prayer.*

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

We thank you, God, for the saints of all ages;  
For those who in times of darkness kept  
The lamp of faith burning;  
For the great souls who saw visions of  
Larger truth and dared to declare it;  
For the multitude of quiet and gracious souls  
Whose presence has purified and sanctified the world;  
And for those known and loved by us,  
Who have passed from this earthly fellowship  
Into the fuller light of life with you. Amen

- Frances Sheridan Goulart

And let us pray the Prayer for the Christian Family Movement (found on Page 80).

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Scripture quotations in this chapter are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

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<https://www.oneplace.com/ministries/leading-the-way/read/articles/you-are-salt-and-light-10252.html>.

## A Word of Encouragement -

"It is worth remembering that leadership in CFM is a pastoral vocation. The Lord has called us to look after his sheep. In Latin, the word "pastor" means "shepherd." We are called to be good shepherds. Jesus talked about what it meant for him to be the Good Shepherd in the Gospel of John. Some of it sounds easy. "The sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out." (John 10:3) And "He walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice." (John 10:4) This is a happy flock, all gathered around the shepherd. In fact, shepherds spend a lot of time chasing after sheep that wander off. Jesus said, "If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the hills and go in search of the stray? And if he finds it, amen, I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not stray." (Matt 18:12-13) If we watch a shepherd and his sheepdog at work, we see how much time is spent rounding up the sheep. Leadership in the Christian Family Movement is a vocation from God. It is the work He asks us to do to build up His kingdom. Other disciples receive other tasks. Some are persecuted, imprisoned, tortured, and some are put to death. Compared to that, what are a few phone calls? This job is easy! As St. Paul said, "In your struggle against evil you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood." (Hebrews 11:2) Time spent on the phone talking to members of CFM can be a joy. CFMers are good people. It is good to take the time to build the bonds of friendship. Christian communities work best when the people involved actually like each other. If all the Lord asks of me is to take the time to call my friends, then I should thank Him for the light burden and make those calls."

- CFM Past-president John Przybysz

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