



EIGHT

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_gvnAV8U.

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 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/
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
 - 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-- 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

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).

WORKS CITED

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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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