

Starting a CFM Group



*Christian
Family
Movement*

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The Church speaks clearly of the duties of family members to one another that build a radiant faith... But the Church doesn't stop there; it also speaks of the relationship between families and the larger culture, the duty of service, working for the common good, welcoming strangers, and giving voice to the Christian conscience. That is the message; you are the messenger.

Address of Bishop Anthony M. Pilla
To the Christian Family Movement
August 5, 1995

The Mission of the Christian Family Movement is:

- To promote Christ-centered marriage and family life;
- To help individuals and their families to live the Christian faith in everyday life; and
- To improve society through actions of love, service, education and example.



National CFM Office Contact Information

Christian Family Movement
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Website: www.cfm.org

Phone: 800-581-9824

We are here to help you. Please contact us with any concerns or questions.



Why CFM?

The Christian Family Movement is a parish-based national network of small groups of Catholics and their families. A typical CFM group consists of five to seven families with the adults meeting one evening a month in one another's homes or at the parish. They follow special programming that focuses on topics of importance to their marriages, families, church and community. Families benefit in at least six ways.

First, CFM provides a Christian community in which individuals, marriages and families are supported and grow. Parents interact with other parents who have similar morals and values. Families socialize together and develop an extended family connection. This interaction between families helps to build a strong family support system.

Second, this experience helps husbands and wives spend time together and develop common interests. Various aspects of the program enhance the couple relationship. Experience shows that CFM is a non-threatening environment for inter-faith

marriages. Single parents also find support in a CFM group.

Third, CFM enriches families. Much of what is discussed in the small group meetings of parents is carried back into the family. Parents learn how to be better parents and how to build happier families.

Fourth, CFM nurtures spiritual growth and provides Christian formation for the entire family. CFM challenges participants to be seven-day-a-week Christians. It helps individuals and families apply the gospel to their everyday life.

Fifth, CFM is a catalyst for creating parish and community leaders. CFM challenges individuals to develop their gifts and talents and use them in the service of their communities.

Sixth, CFM increases social consciousness. It helps families to be aware of the problems in their families, neighborhoods and community. CFM encourages them to dialogue and make changes guided by their faith.

CFM Enriches Families and Builds Faith

✓ ***In a recent survey, CFMers said that CFM helped them live their faith.***

CFM meetings are practical and help members see the connection between faith and daily life.

✓ ***The survey said that CFM helped members become better parents.***

Members support each other in tough decisions and give each other new insights into family life.

✓ ***Couples felt that CFM helped them to be better spouses.***

CFM meetings improve communication between spouses on important issues of faith and family. CFMers support each other in living their Christian commitment to marriage and family life.

Starting a CFM group is easy!

In this CFM Starter Kit, you'll find everything you need to make a difference in your family life and the lives of 3 other families.

- 4 copies of the CFM inquiry book of your choice
- Directions for meetings
- Information about CFM, which you can share with your parish staff
- Resources for advertising, growing, and leading your new ministry

Starting a CFM Group

1. Invite three couples who want to grow in their faith to your home for a 90-minute meeting. (See sample invitation on page 6.) You can have a few more members in your group, whatever your living room comfortably holds. Additional copies of the book are available at the reduced price of \$10.
2. After you have your group identified, schedule the first meeting in your home (preferred) or a parish meeting room. Decide if you want to provide babysitting for the children. Arrange for a babysitter if you choose this option.
3. Provide a welcoming atmosphere at the meeting. Start and end on time. Offer simple refreshments for a social time at the conclusion of the meeting. Before the meeting, you may want to view the Christian Family Movement DVD with your group.
4. Send in your membership donations and forms. Registration forms are included in this kit. You can also print them from our website or register and donate online at www.cfm.org.

Leading Your Group

1. We recommend that you meet weekly or twice a month until your group is well established. After that, you may choose to meet only once a month.
2. Between meetings, call the persons who were invited, but who did not attend.
3. Call to remind people of upcoming meetings.
4. Follow the simple meeting plan in each chapter of your book. See also the next page of this guide.
5. Keep your pastor and parish staff informed about your CFM group. If they have not already seen this kit, give the pastor or staff member the *Why CFM?* information page in this kit (page 3). Point them to the Videos section on the website, www.cfm.org, under the About tab.

What's Next?

1. When you conclude the meetings in your first book, invite your group to continue their membership in CFM. This is also an excellent time to invite new members to join your group. A sample invitation is on page 6. CFM members are asked to renew their memberships annually.
2. Choose your next program book from among our many offerings. For a complete listing see cfm.org.
3. Contact the National Office via phone or email to request your membership materials. Program books are provided as a benefit of membership in CFM.

The CFM Meeting Format

Gathering Prayer – The group always begins with a prayer, read or sung, prepared or spontaneous.

Report on Actions – (5 -10 minutes) Group members report on the progress of CFM actions taken individually, as a family, or by the group. This is the appropriate time to describe needs in your family, parish or community that have come to the attention of the members.

Scripture Reflection – (15 -20 minute discussion) Quiet reflection and discussion about the scripture helps group members to step away from the ordinary pressure and distractions of the day and begin to focus on the issues of the meeting from a Christian perspective.

Social Inquiry – (60 -90 minutes) The Social Inquiry (*Observe* and *Judge* and *Act*) is the heart of the CFM meeting.

OBSERVE – *The world around you.*
Gather information from your community or from your own personal experience. Often facts can be opinions of others, too. At this stage of the meeting, members should refrain from expressing their opinions about facts. 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. The chance to editorialize comes later.

The importance of this section of the meeting cannot be over-emphasized. Unless the group reports objective facts during the discussion, the meeting will not lead to action.

JUDGE – *In light of Christ’s teachings,* judge. In the Judge part of the meeting, the group decides by discussion whether the observed situation or topic is in line with Gospel values and what Christ would want us to do. The group should try to refer only to the information brought out by the Observe questions.

ACT - *To make a difference.* Members choose an action to bring “the way things are” more in line with “the way things should be.” The best actions come from the group as a result of the discussion. Actions in the program book are just suggestions. An action may be done as an individual, a couple, a family, a small group, or a parish. The key is to take something away from the meeting and resolve to do something to live out the Gospel teachings in your everyday life.

Look ahead to the next meeting – Set the time and place. Preview the Observe section to see if specific assignments are required.

Prayer – The meeting concludes with a prayer. The program book usually has a suggested prayer or another may be chosen by the group or the discussion leaders. Other suitable prayers are located on the inside covers of most inquiry books. Alternatively, a member of the group might lead a spontaneous prayer praising God, thanking Him for His blessings, and asking Him to grant special petitions that group members might have.

Social Time – A short social with simple and inexpensive refreshments helps members to know and understand one another better and builds community.

Invite Your Friends to Try CFM

Dear _____,

Many of us are looking for a way to enrich married life and find meaningful, faith-building activities for our families. Even though we all have busy schedules, we want to make time to build strong families and happy marriages.

We have found a simple way to make this happen and we would like to invite you to try it with us. We are beginning a small group of three (or four or five) couples at our home.

The group will meet (recommended: weekly or twice a month) for 90-minutes. (Details of your meetings here: The group may either meet as adults only or they may decide to bring their children with them to the meeting. Some groups like to start their meetings with a meal. Some just offer light refreshments. If the group will have a babysitter at the meeting, explain that here. The details are totally up to each group.)

We will use a program book from the Christian Family Movement – CFM. (It is a good idea to ask every family to contribute \$10 for their book, to reimburse the parish or whoever purchased the Starter Kit. This investment makes members more aware of their commitment to the group.) We can take turns hosting each of the 8 meetings in the program book.

If you would like to find out more about CFM, visit their website, www.cfm.org. The video section the website provides a good introduction to CFM. If you prefer, we have a DVD with a short introduction about CFM that we can share with you. The U.S. Catholic Bishops recommend CFM in *Follow the Way of Love* and other church documents, and CFM is a member of the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers.

We think it will be fun getting together and talking about family and building our faith at the same time. We hope you can come.

Your friends,

Rose and Chris

Tools for Building CFM Groups

SAMPLE BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

WHAT IS CFM?

The Christian Family Movement is a new group starting here at St. _____. We are looking for couples who want a place to share values, faith and a place to experience Jesus in their lives and the lives of their family.

CFM is hosting coffee and doughnuts on (date) and (location). Stop in and find out what we are up to and see if CFM is for you.

CFM OFFERS FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT FOR TODAY'S BUSY FAMILY

Families, fun, and faith in action -- that is what the Christian Family Movement is all about. Through prayer, discussion, and action families grow in their faith and provide support and friendship to one another. Families learn to live their faith in their every day lives, at home, in our communities and in the market place. If you want to learn more about this new group here at St. _____, attend the upcoming information night on (date), at (location).

OBSERVE- JUDGE- ACT in CFM

Observe – Judge –Act is a method that develops everyday Christians. Members of the Christian family Movement are asked to OBSERVE a situation from daily life. They JUDGE whether or not it needs to be changed based on Gospel values. If so, they ACT to make a difference. They undertake a simple action that will help to change the situation; that will bring persons and the world closer to what Christ wants. By this process, they change themselves. They grow in love and understanding of God's world, and develop a way of life that puts their faith into action in their homes, workplaces, and communities.

Helpful hint: Our logo communicates our mission. Copy it from the CFM website and send it to your bulletin editor so they can run the logo alongside your announcement.

A SHORT PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT

Many of us are looking for a way to enrich married life and find meaningful, faith-building activities for our families. Even though we all have busy schedules, we want to make time to build strong families and happy marriages. We are starting some small groups at St. _____ that will meet (weekly or twice a month) for 90-minutes. The groups will set their own schedules and plan their own activities, depending on the interests and ages of their members. We will use a program book from the Christian Family Movement – CFM. The U.S. Catholic Bishops recommend CFM in Follow the Way of Love and other church documents and CFM is a member of the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers. An information meeting will be held at _____(place, date, time.)

Building Community

Interaction between CFM families helps promote love, improve communication, develop friendship and build community. Here are some examples of group activities that CFMers across the country have enjoyed

Games night
Hay ride
Family bowling
Pool party
Laser tag
Nature hike
CFM picnic
Sledding

Apple picking
Attending Mass together and sharing a meal
Bonfire and hotdog roast
Visit places of pilgrimage
Collecting mittens for the poor
Helping at a soup kitchen
Sponsoring a family at the holidays
Doing yard work for the elderly



CFM is about families, faith in action and fun.



Join in the Mission of CFM!

You and the other families in your Starter Group have grown in friendship, understanding, and faith as you experienced this introduction to the Christian Family Movement. You have also experienced the enthusiasm and hospitality of CFMers from the national office and perhaps, from groups around the country who have encouraged you. Now, we invite you and your families to join other members of CFM in renewing your membership for another year.

You will find registration forms in the Starter Kit folder or on our website at www.cfm.org.

As members of CFM, you and your family participate in a network of families who want to help other families grow in their faith, strengthen their marriages, and make a difference in their world. CFM members make a suggested donation of \$40 per family annually to support the work of the Movement: Producing quality family-centered programming, forming lay leaders, and providing guidance for family group creation and development. Please join us!

What Does Your Donation Do?

- 1. You help other families build faith.** Your membership donation makes it possible for CFM to offer the Starter Kits for **new** CFM families at a reduced introductory rate of \$10 per family.
- 2. You receive excellent marriage and family enrichment resources.** All members receive ACT, CFM's bi-monthly e-newsletter, with features on married spirituality and ideas for family faith building. In addition to ACT, interested CFM members receive resources for parenting and marriage support and can access resources on our website, www.cfm.org.
- 3. You help CFM continue to serve families.** CFM maintains a national office which employs a part-time Member Services Administrator and a part-time Communications Director to oversee the production and distribution of CFM program materials, family resources, and member communications. The bi-monthly production of the ACT newsletter is done by the volunteer ACT editor.
- 4. You touch families around the world.** CFM-USA contributes \$1 per family to the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements, in support of CFM around the world.
- 5. You support the growth of CFM** through our participation in the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers. Periodically, we advertise or participate in events to spread the word about CFM.
- 6. Your commitment to CFM inspires others to donate time, talent and resources to nurture and grow the movement.** For example, CFM's national board of directors meets semi-annually to facilitate the publication of program materials, maintain the financial health of CFM, and further our mission by reaching more families. Although most board members travel to board meetings at their own expense, CFM provides for the travel expenses of our National Chaplain and also offers help with travel expenses for some board members who otherwise would not be able to participate on the national level.
- 7. Additional donations are appreciated.** CFM is a lay organization which relies totally on the support of its members and friends nationwide. CFM also depends on the generosity of those who donate their time and talents to the mission of CFM.

Donations to the Christian Family Movement are tax deductible.