



Seeing God's Face "An Instant Meeting"

Experienced CFM groups may want to try their hand at writing their own meeting, focusing on a particular experience or concern that your group has right now. Practice applying the CFM method: Observe, Judge, Act. Here are simple steps you can follow.

Gather

Let's try something different!

Instead of finding our topic in the book, at this meeting we will spend about ten minutes coming up with our own, based on our recent experiences. Apply the CFM Social Inquiry method -- Observe-Judge-Act – to a recent experience or current event. CFM teaches us to see God's activity and purpose in our everyday lives.

Setting: For this meeting, you will need some slips of paper, pens, and a small container.

Report on Actions

OPENING PRAYER

O God, we look to you for all good things. Open our eyes to see your hand in all the events of our life and to recognize your grace in unexpected places. When events challenge or puzzle us, strengthen our faith in your wisdom and love.

We thank you, Lord, for your help in our recent CFM actions.

(Here mention your family's and your group's recent Actions – takes the place of reporting on Actions)

For whom and for what else should we pray?

(Offer spontaneous prayer intentions. These will be relevant at the meeting progresses)

We ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Scripture Reflection

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen....

Luke 24: 1-6

- What did the women expect to find when they set out that day?
- How did they react to the unexpected?

SOCIAL INQUIRY

It happens every day. You're brushing your teeth in the morning and all of a sudden you get some insight into a problem you've been struggling with for days. Or you're reading a familiar passage of scripture and, without warning a word or phrase jumps out at you as it never has before. Or you're standing in the checkout line in the grocery store when, for no apparent reason, you suddenly feel very close to God. Or you're sipping a cup of coffee with a friend, and she makes a remark that gives you a brand new way of looking at something.

Call these experiences what you will: moments of insight, inspiration, or grace. I like to call them mini-epiphanies. Strictly speaking, the word epiphany means an appearance or manifestation of God....

We experience these so called everyday epiphanies every time we gain a new insight into some aspect of our faith, feel good about a choice we've made, learn a worthwhile lesson from a bad mistake, delight in some simple pleasure, discover some good in an apparently bad situation, find ourselves thanking God for our blessings, or stand in wonder and awe before the unfathomable mystery of existence.

Melanie Svoboda, SND

Everyday Epiphanies: Seeing the Sacred in Every Thing, p. 1

Now Create an Instant Meeting.

Preparation steps:

Give everyone a slip of paper. In one sentence, each person writes a single event or experience that has been very significant in his or her life since the group was last together.

Keep in mind the intentions for which you prayed at the Gathering Prayer. These may remind you of an experience to share.

Mix the slips of paper in a container.

Then the group chooses one of those 'events' or experiences to be the subject of inquiry in this meeting. (This should be done quickly.)

Sample subjects:

- The crime rate is increasing in our community.
- Our adult son just moved back home.
- Our family is experiencing an illness or loss.
- Our local school proposes a new curriculum.
- A new baby is due soon.
- The election is coming up – or has recently occurred.

Meeting Steps*

Invite the person whose experience is selected to explain it in more depth.

The group then can share their own experience of similar situations or events.

Observe

1. What was the cause of this fact or event? Persons involved, relationships, behavior, reactions?
2. Is there a historical reason or a larger situation leading to the event? Did attitudes or values lead to it?
3. What is the impact or the consequences of the event? Who will be most directly affected?
4. How will the event affect the policies of the structures or institutions involved? How will it affect the broader society?

Judge

1. What connections do you notice between the event and the Scripture reading for this evening?
2. Does another story from Scripture come to mind? What connections do you see?
3. What was unexpected or surprising about the experience or your reactions to it?
4. What is positive in what you have observed? What was negative? Why?
5. What is a Christian judgment of this fact or event?

**If you have more time, select another experience and repeat Observe and Judge.*

Act

1. Based on what you have observed and decided, take one positive action to make a difference in your family life or in your local community.
2. Write about your group's experience with the "Instant Meeting" and share it in *ACT*. Send stories to www.act-editor@cfm.org.)
3. Practice this Observe-Judge-Act process again this week with a new event on your own or with your family.

Look Ahead to Next Meeting

1. Date _____
2. Time _____
3. Place _____
4. Phone or email host if you cannot attend: _____
5. Look ahead to the Observe section for the next meeting.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, through your redemptive power and through the guidance of the Church, help us aid individuals, couples and families to fulfill God's mysterious design. Let us do God's will with the spirit of love and humility, so that we may receive the Kingdom of God in our lives.