



STEPS FOR STARTING CFM

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Invite and Inform the Pastor or Chaplain

Although it is not necessary for CFM groups to be connected to a parish or have a chaplain, it is highly encouraged. Their involvement and support of your CFM action group(s) will be a blessing to the families within your group(s) and can help spread the message of CFM to a wider audience. The “Letter to the Pastor” found in the RESOURCES section and the FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS in this handbook will familiarize your pastor with CFM and, hopefully, inspire him to accept or help identify a chaplain. Once your chaplain is identified, share with them the “Chaplain Flyer” also found in the RESOURCES section and point them to the “For Parishes” page of the website at https://www.cfm.org/resources_for_parishes. A brief, 8-page, *Chaplain Handbook* is also available through your mentor or the national office.

Invite Families to Form an Action Group

Invite 4-6 couples or individuals who want to grow in faith and friendship to attend an introductory meeting. Use the information in the WELCOME TO CFM section of this handbook and on the CFM website to orient them to the movement. Choose one of the free CFM social inquiry meetings found at https://www.cfm.org/try_cfm and lead your friends in this sample meeting. At the end of this sample meeting, ask them if they would like to continue and form a CFM action group and meet for the next 6 to 12 months to discuss other topics of faith and family.

Choose a CFM Program Book

Choose one of CFM's program books, either print or digital. Most groups start with one of our introductory books - *For Happier Families* or *Meeting Jesus Changes Everything* (as part of our Discipleship Series). Program books are a benefit of membership. Descriptions of the introductory books may be found in the RESOURCES section of this manual. Additional program books, along with their descriptions, may be found on our website at https://www.cfm.org/program_book_descriptions. Each introductory program book has an accompanying Leader Guide which can be found on our website at https://www.cfm.org/leader_guides.

Make a Schedule of Your CFM Meetings and Activities

We recommend you set a schedule of meetings for your action group ahead of time or at your first meeting. It makes it easier for members to make their plans to attend. Many groups meet twice monthly for the first four meetings to build a bond amongst members. Subsequently, they still meet twice monthly, if possible, once in their small group meeting and the second time as families for a social, spiritual or service activity. Service activities may be incorporated into your social events or held separately. It is a good idea to have a spiritual element, such as a prayer, be part of all events. By having

social events and service actions, some including the entire family, you help strengthen friendships and build a family of families. A good goal is to have 2-4 social events and 2-4 service actions per CFM year. If you prefer, you can choose to calendar fewer events which allows time for spontaneous gatherings, such as celebrating Sacraments and other milestones, or helping one another with projects. Many groups meet during the school calendar year and take a break for the summer. Family-based activities continue to work well in the summer.

Most groups choose one day of the week for all their meetings. For example, the meetings will always be on a Friday evening. Some go so far as to specify meetings will always be on the same day in each month; for example, the first Friday of every month. Other groups are more flexible. See the RESOURCES section for a “Sample CFM Calendar – Host Sign Up.”

Host Your First Action Group meeting

Meetings are preferably held in members’ homes but can be held elsewhere. Whatever the location, most groups choose to rotate hosting responsibilities. Hosts provide a welcoming atmosphere at the meeting, help the meeting start and end on time, assist the group leaders in guiding the discussion and provide or coordinate simple refreshments during social time. Decide if you want to provide babysitting and, if so, make arrangements. It is good to encourage sharing responsibilities from the beginning. Encourage all families to host a meeting and plan a group activity.

Register Your CFM Group and Its Members with CFM

Membership matters! By having members’ contact information, we ensure they receive all the benefits of CFM which include:

- **Belonging!** You and each member of your group are a welcome and valuable addition to the CFM family, *a community of families* dedicated to promoting Christian values within the family and in society – locally, nationally and internationally! Together we make a difference!
- **Materials!** CFM social inquiry meetings and program books, print or digital, are free with membership.
- **Support!** Real people in the national office and within the movement answer your questions.
- **Connections!** Stay connected with what groups across the country are doing through the monthly ACT e-newsletter.
- **Ideas!** *Marriage Moments* and *Parenting Pointers* are weekly emails with tips for strengthening your marriage and family relationships.

CFM annual membership is \$10 for each new family and \$40 for each returning family. Since materials are free to members, membership dues are a person’s investment in exploring or affirming the Observe, Judge, Act Method/way of life. All funds that are raised help support the work of the Christian Family Movement. No one is refused membership due to financial hardship. Additional donations are appreciated and help advance the mission of the movement.

REGISTRATION OPTIONS

There are two approaches to registering CFM participants. Leaders should consider early in the process which approach will work best for them.

1. Individual/Family membership registration – Member families register themselves with the national office, online or by mail, and receive their program book directly from the office. Online registration is preferred at <https://www.cfm.org/join-and-renew-form> and allows individual members to pay their dues via credit card and select a CFM program book. Families will need to know which program book to request and the name of their action group leader or section leader.
2. Group Leader registration – Each family fills out the “Family Membership Form.” found in the RESOURCES section and submits it along with their dues to their action group leader or section leader. The leader registers all members with the national office by collecting the completed “Family Membership Forms.” The leader may mail each family’s dues to the office or pay online for the entire group via credit card. The leader orders one program book per family. The books will be mailed to the leader to distribute.

Note to Group Leaders - In both cases above, it is the group leader’s responsibility to make sure a list of all members along with their email addresses is submitted to the national office. This can be done by electronic means or mail using an Excel spreadsheet or by using the “Group/Section Leader Membership Form” found in the RESOURCES section.

WORDS OF WISDOM – STAY CONNECTED TO THE BIGGER PICTURE

By staying connected to the national movement, you will be inspired and supported, helping your group(s) to be fruitful and sustainable. Leader support is available at no cost. Your CFM mentor and our national office are available to answer any questions that you might have. They also love to receive pictures and hear updates on how your CFM group/section is doing. Don’t hesitate to reach out.



WHAT’S NEXT?

We believe that, after your initial 6-12 months of CFM meetings, you will have grown in your faith, formed lifelong friendships and have engaged your children in their Catholic faith and the value of helping others. After the introductory program, we invite you to continue this ministry by renewing your own membership and inviting additional friends, neighbors and parishioners to participate in CFM. A CFM section can grow from one group to multiple groups in as little as 6 months or it can also choose to continue with the core groups of families until they feel a need to expand. You can continue this family ministry in a couple of ways:

- Choose a new CFM program book and continue to meet and act with your core group of friends.
- Some of the core group can choose to become leaders of new action groups. They can invite other friends, neighbors or fellow parishioners. New groups can do the same introductory book that was just completed or choose another program book. The core group leaders will not be bored doing the same book again. Each group adds its own values, priorities and experiences to the discussion in a meeting. No two groups are alike.