



*Christian
Family
Movement*

Leaders Training Handbook

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Redondo Beach, CA
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CHECKLIST: FIRST GROUP MEETING

Things to prepare in advance:

1. Flyer

Hand out at the CFM Kickoff event. Mail flyers to those who did not attend the Kickoff.

Include the following on the flyer:

- 1st meeting -- date, time, location and directions.
- Bring checkbook for annual dues if not already paid.
- Bring calendar for scheduling.

2. Group Roster

At Kickoff event and the First Group Meeting, check member information.

Familiarize yourself with the names before the first meeting.

At first meeting ask members to check name spelling, address, phone, number of children, e-mail.

Bring updated roster to October board meeting and to your next Group Meeting!

3. Tentative Group Schedule

Show group meetings, outreach activities (sandwiches or food pantry, etc.), CFM events, Group host donuts, and any other relevant dates.

4. Sign-up Sheet to Host the Group Meetings

Remind your group that the Parish Hall can be scheduled for your meeting. Reserve at the Rectory well in advance.

5. Baby-sitting Sign-up Sheet

For anyone who has older children that would like to be included on CFM baby-sitter list.

6. Meeting Agenda

Copy and handout to your group.

7. Responsibility of Host, Responsibility of Group Members, The CFM Commitment (TCFMIF)

Copy and handout to your group.

8. CFM Books

Distribute only to members who have paid & write their names in their book.

9. The Role of CFM National

Have on hand "Why CFM National is Important" in case questions arise.

GROUP MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Read Chapter in Book Prior to the Meeting

The next meeting's discussion topic should be indicated on the flyers. Repetition is the key to understanding. A little preparation time (a few minutes reading the chapter in advance) will make for a much better meeting. It will help keep the meeting pace up and give you a chance to reflect on the topic prior to the meeting itself.

2. Attend Group Meetings

Make attending the Friday meeting a priority. Attendance is important to the group. If we all miss a few meetings chances are you may only see another member of your group once or twice. It is OK to attend without your spouse. CFM will provide a list of older children who want to baby-sit.

3. Let Host Know if You Cannot Attend

4. Arrive On Time

5. Participate in Discussion

It is more interesting and fun when everyone participates.

6. Maintain Confidentiality

In order for people to share in the discussion, keep their comments confidential. Friday night meetings are intended for group members only.

7. Be Respectful of Others

Discussion of controversial topics is OK as long as we are respectful of each other. Remember everyone has an opinion; we are lucky if we can challenge them to think about their position, it is rare to change their opinion.

8. Help With Your Group's Event

Help plan and put on the event that your group hosts. If everyone helps the jobs will be easier and faster for everyone. Attendance at other CFM group events is optional. Don't feel like you can't be in CFM because you can't attend the events, or they are not appropriate for the ages of your children. It is the Group meeting that is the core of CFM.

9. Bring Problems to Leader's Attention

If you have concerns please discuss it with your group leaders in private or the CFM section leaders.

10. Have Fun !

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEETING HOSTS

Meeting Reminder

- At least 1 week before meeting send out a flyer and/or give group members a reminder call. Remember, flyers can be sent from the rectory.
- Include directions.
- Include any special instructions (sandwiches, food pantry, etc.).
- Include RSVP on flyer to help estimate refreshments.

Refreshments

- Alcoholic beverages are up to the preference of the host couple.
- Food does not have to be elaborate.

Plan Discussion Topic

- Select topic from book, or
- Prepare alternative topic, or
- Ask leaders if you need help.

Schedule

Try to wrap up the discussion no later than 9:45 PM. People can always stay later to socialize, but some need to relieve the baby-sitter. Let people know it is ok to leave early if needed.

Opening or Closing Prayers

If you are not comfortable leading the opening and/or closing prayer, let your leaders know before the meeting starts.

THE CFM COMMITMENT

And you thought the Almighty blessed us with Fridays! Not so, it was in fact your cohorts from CFM. Recognizing the desperate need that some couples have for a cheap date, a genius at CFM World Wide Command decided to designate Friday night as the perfect time for a CFM meeting. Where else can busy folks go in their casual rags, be welcomed, fed, entertained, and quite possibly stimulated intellectually and spiritually. And for free! Sound like a great deal? Is it too good to be true?

It's true all right! But there of course is a catch. We have to get ourselves in the car and drive a few minutes, in the dark no less! But we are tired on Friday nights. And our spouse has to work late. There are no sitters either. Especially when you call one night before! Excuses, Excuses....

Your CFM Board recently discussed attendance at our individual meetings. While most are well attended, there seems to be some chronic absences. We debated at length the busy schedule and frequency of meetings and so forth. We also looked at group size and the number of new members this year. After considerable discussion and open sharing of our own CFM experiences, we came to a simple conclusion. CFM membership is a commitment.

Most CFM members join year after year because of the great fellowship and spirituality they have experienced over the years. The closeness that occurs in a CFM group comes from good meeting discussions and familiarity with one another. We can only become familiar if we see one another often enough. And that only happens when we are committed to making our CFM meetings a priority. That means a conscious effort to avoid scheduling other social occasions on Friday night! If every member misses 3 or 4 meetings, there is a chance some members will only see one another a few times in a year. Let's avoid that and join with your CFM leaders and re-commit to meeting attendance. You know it's a worthwhile priority, that's why you joined isn't it! Thanks.

ICE BREAKERS

Ice breakers help ease the strain of the first meeting if people don't know one another too well. Here are a few to use...

Introduce Another

Introducing one's partner or another person to the group.

Sharing

Sharing one or more of the following items with another person:

- Something funny that happened on your wedding day.
- What family trip you enjoyed the most.
- A funny incident that happened with the children.
- What time of the day you like best or least.
- What kind of job you would really like to have.
- A hobby, or what you enjoy most doing.
- Your partners most endearing quality.

Truth & Lie

Each person writes down 3 statements about themselves, 2 True and 1 False. Distribute pencils and paper. Allow several minutes for them to think about their statements. Give an example to simplify it such as: I am related to Christopher Columbus, I once competed for Miss America, and I have a Baseball Card collection. All three statements should sound possibly true, but of course one is not. Many times the most odd sounding statements are the true ones! After some time to write their statements down, each person takes a turn by reading their 3 statements aloud. The rest of the group tries to determine which statements are true or false. It is really fun and can be quite an insightful experience.

Famous Names

The host couple holds a list of stickers with famous people's names on them. As people arrive at the meeting, they receive a sticker on their back. Each person can ask up to three "yes/no" questions from each person at the meeting until they figure out who their famous person is. It is a great way to get everyone to interact with everyone else at your first meeting. This game works best during the "social" part of the meeting, before the structured meeting begins.

GROUP LEADER MEETING CHECKLIST

Before the next meeting, check to see that you have done the following:

One week before: Call the Hosts

- Have they called or mailed information to the group announcing the meeting?
- Have they selected a topic?
- Do they need help with topic selection and/or material?
- Do they have opening/closing prayers?

Before the meeting:

- Prepare any flyers you may need to present to your group i.e.. - upcoming events collected from Board meeting, schedules, rosters, etc.
- Prepare an agenda for your meeting to hand out.
- Discuss the meeting with co-leaders. Who will cover what?
- Have a prayer prepared (sometimes the host may not be comfortable leading the prayer, be prepared just in case).
- Remember, keep the business section as short as possible. Use handouts where possible, and only cover near term events. Don't rehash the CFM board meeting.
- Call in sandwich drop-off the day before your meeting
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After the meeting:

- Mail any flyers plus agenda to members who missed meeting. Call if necessary for counts, etc.
- Call in any necessary counts to appropriate Board Members.
- Drop off sandwiches after your sandwich meetings.
- Drop off pantry items the weekend following the meeting.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE FOR MEETINGS

7:30 - 8:00 PM Social (may be 8:15 if you do sandwiches)

Social time tends to draw out, leader should keep an eye on the time and move group into the meeting at the appropriate time.

8:00 - 8:15 PM Business

Current and upcoming business should be handled now. Having information such as time, dates and sign-up requests in writing will help to expedite the meeting. While you might touch on more future business, details of these should be saved until the event is nearer. First year groups may take longer because more explanation is necessary.

8:15 - 9:45 PM Discussion

Please refer to the materials on discussion for hints on how to have a good discussion group. It is not mandatory to break at 10:00 PM however try to be aware of people's baby-sitting commitments. Sometimes a good discussion can be continued into the dessert & coffee time. This will allow those that need to leave an opportunity to do so.

9:45 PM Closing Prayer and Special Intentions

10:00 PM Dessert

These times are guidelines, but you may want to discuss with your group what schedule they would prefer. Make sure adequate time is allotted for the discussion since it is the core of CFM.

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

- Gathering Prayer
 - Show Operation Christmas Child video
- Old Business
 1. Introduce new people
 2. **Handout** folders to new people
 3. **Handout** Updated Roster
 - Any corrections???
 - Need to collect dues from those who have not paid yet.
 4. **Handout** Meeting Schedule
 - Finish filling in meeting schedule
- Recap
 1. **Handout** Sept 22 agenda to new people
 - Any questions? See the leaders!
 2. Does anyone have anyone to put on babysitter list?
List will be available next meeting
- New Business
 1. Pumpkin Carving Party
 - **Handout** flyer
 - Sunday, October 29th 11:30AM at El Retiro Park
 - Bring your kids, lunch, and pumpkins!
 2. Thanksgiving Feast
 - **Handout** flyer
 - Explain various jobs at party
 - **Send around job sign up sheet**
 - Need ideas for crafts for the kids
 - Explain Group Feast – food to share
 - Sign up tonight or next meeting for what you would like to bring
 3. Operation Christmas Child
 - Outreach at Thanksgiving Feast
 - Donna Paine to explain
 4. Vocation Angel
 - What is it?
 - Host to Host – totally optional!
- Dates To Remember
 1. Sunday, 10/29 – Pumpkin Carving Party
 2. Friday, 11/3 – Next meeting @ Ward's; Pantry night
 3. Sunday, 11/12 – Thanksgiving Feast
 4. Friday, 11/17 – Group Meeting
 5. Saturday, 3/3 – CFM Talent Show ***Note date change**
- Discussion topic – Cohen's
 - Special Intentions and Closing Prayer

GROUP EVENT COORDINATION

Delegate

In planning your group's event, remember to delegate! Your group will feel more a part of the event and your life will be much calmer.

Old Events

If your event has been done before, feel free to call upon previous leaders who have coordinated it before. No need to re-invent the wheel!! There are also write-ups on some events done by the previous leaders. These can be of tremendous help in organizing your event.

“How-To” Write-ups Exist for the Following Events:

- Halloween Bowling
- Christmas Visit With Santa
- Christmas Caroling
- Ice Skating / Broomball
- Variety Show
- Palm Saturday Mass / Easter Egg Hunt
- Wilderness Park Campout
- Family Fun Day

New Events

If your event is new, your section leaders can assist you with the planning and coordinating.

Checklist

- Discuss the event with your group for ideas and assistance.
- Plan what you will need.
- Budget.
- Reserve the venue you will be using i.e. hall, skating rink, etc. well ahead of time, some have lead times of 6 months or more.
- Make flyers to distribute at board meeting for fellow leaders
- Have someone take pictures for newsletter and recruitment posters.
- Write up for newsletter.
- For new events, write-up “how-to” for CFM files.

GROUP OUTREACH

The goal of CFM is the development of couples, families and others in their personal relationships through social consciousness and involvement.

This goal remains the same today. We are called not only to Observe and Judge, but to Act.

The best actions come out of your groups experience and allow members to act individually, or as couples, families, or groups, to improve the quality of family or community life.

Following are examples and suggestions to consider..

CFM Event Outreach

CFM tries to have some outreach at each of our events. Usually this is something extra brought to the event to help others in need..

Individual Group Outreach

Your group determines what Outreach activity your group specifically would like to do. This is very rewarding and gives a real sense of personal involvement.

Past activities and suggestions to help you identify actions you can undertake:

- Retirement home regular social visits
- Read your local newspaper, paying special attention to articles about community needs.
- Identify and learn about local charities and service agencies that minister to the needy. Contact them and find how your CFM family or group can assist them.
- Many worthwhile organizations and programs can benefit from CFM support. The following is just a partial listing of such opportunities:
 - Big Brothers & Sisters, -Habitat for Humanity, -Crisis Pregnancy Centers, -Food Banks, -Literacy programs, -Shelters for Women & Family

More groups can be identified by contacting the local Chamber of Commerce, the United Way, or public and religious social service agencies in your community.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD FACILITATOR

Respect
Welcoming
Compassionate
Good Sport
Caring
Open
Punctual
Flexible
Affirming
Focused
Accepting
Patient
Humble
Long-suffering (hang in!)
Prayerful
Grounded
Humor
Sensitive
Dependable
Diplomatic
Nonjudgmental
Organized
Loving
Prepared
Enthusiasm
Values confidentiality
Gifted
Faith-full
Committed
Energized
Vision

ASKING SHARING QUESTIONS

Sharing questions are simple one or two sentence questions, usually open-ended, which give people permission to talk about themselves. They help people move beyond casual conversation into intimacy.

- No right or wrong answers.
- Sharing of self, not sharing of ideas or opinions.
- Be aware of the group's willingness to risk.
- Begin with safe questions, moving gradually to deeper questions.
- Allow members freedom in molding their own responses.
- Allow members to pass on a response if they do not wish to speak at that time.
- Encourage brief, but complete responses.
- Discourage long discussions by any one person.
- Give every member a chance to respond.
- Encourage personal sharing of experiences and feelings.
- Avoid superlatives of "best" and "worst".
- Avoid asking follow-up questions: it takes too much time.
- Facilitator may model by beginning the sharing.
- Watch the time! Limit the time in advance.
- No confession questions.
- Tie questions thematically into the focus of the entire session.

POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

- YOU set the tone for the group.
- Be prepared for the meeting.
- Be attuned to the level of interest, ability and knowledge of each person.
- Keep the discussion moving and focused on the subject.
- Don't go around the group in sequential order.
- Make good use of the allotted time.
- Don't be afraid of silence. It gives time to absorb what has been heard and helps formulate responses and sharing.
- Show you care by remembering each person's name, what you have learned about him/her, and some responses he or she has made.
- Attendance may drop when participants become aware of the commitment needed. Keep in touch with those absent and encourage them in their efforts to participate.
- Keep your sense of humor. Christianity is a joyful experience!
- Trust in God, the power of prayer, and the goodness of people!

TECHNIQUES FOR THE SMALL-GROUP LEADER

1. Set a Climate of Openness and Love

Accept each person for who they are and where they are. Help the group members accept one another. Be sensitive to the feelings, moods and needs of each person.

2. Be a Good Listener

Be attentive. Use eye contact, facial expression, and body posture. Don't interrupt. Be attuned to what is being said verbally and non-verbally.

3. Be Supportive

Respect each person's ideas and feelings, especially the timid and those who have difficulty expressing themselves. Draw out the best each has to give. Praise insights and faith experiences shared. Be sensitive to those uncomfortable with shared prayer and personal faith sharing.

4. Be Affirming

The group may have people from all walks of life-housewives, teachers, mechanics, doctors, plumbers, office workers, factory workers, and retirees-with varying amounts of knowledge, attitudes, and values.

5. Be Encouraging

Some will have some knowledge of the Bible and experience at faith sharing; others very little. Encourage each in their efforts to be open to God's Word and one another.

6. Be a Skillful Questioner

A question can enlarge the group's vision of a topic or redirect the discussion if it wanders off the track.

7. Be Responsive to the Holy Spirit Working in the Group

You are not the expert, but rather a fellow learner on the same faith journey seeking comfort, confidence, and challenge in God's Word.

8. Be Familiar with Destructive Behavior

The dominator, rambler, or opinionated person can hinder the group's progress. Draw the focus back to the group by encouraging others to share.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

Facilitators generally find that the hardest part of their job is staying on schedule, staying on the topic, and dealing with difficult situations. Intervening gently to redirect the conversation is a learned skill. The following are some suggestions to help you.

Staying on Schedule and on the Topic

- Set clear boundaries and healthy time limitations.
- Be clear about your own goals and agenda. Read aloud the objectives for the session and clarify them for the group.
- Your tone of voice and body language can help keep the discussion moving. Stand up or lean forward as you firmly suggest moving to the next topic.
- Help somebody stay on track by asking, “I am not following you. Is this related to our topic today?”

Dealing with Difficult Situations; Facilitator or Problem Solver?

When someone asks you to be the problem-solver, counselor, or advice-giver, redirect them in one of these ways:

- “I am not comfortable problem-solving in a group. Let’s talk after the session and see if we can come up with some ways for you to address your situation.”
- “I don’t have the skills to solve that situation. If you like, we can talk after the session about some resources that are available to provide help in that situation.” Have available for all participants a list of resources in the local community.
- “You obviously have some wonderful ideas and a lot of feelings to share. However, in the interest of our time limitations, we need to move on.”
- “It wouldn’t be appropriate for me to give my solutions to your situation. Only your solutions will work for you.” After the session, offer her a list of helpful resources.

When Someone Dominates

Set limitations on a person who dominates the group by talking too much and giving too many details. Some possible responses:

- “I can see you have a lot to say on the subject. Because of our time limitations, could you help us focus on the main idea?”
- “Could you summarize so that we can give everybody a chance to speak?”
- Put your hand on her shoulder. “That subject would be a good conversation to continue after the session with other who are interested. You may even want to go out for coffee and discuss it then. For now, we do need to stick to the agenda.”

When Someone Blames

- Suggest a change of emphasis for the person who is blaming someone else for her pain (e.g., husband, boss, child).
- Focus on her feelings. “How do you feel about what’s happening?” Help her name her own feelings.
- Suggest that she take some actions. “What steps have you taken to answer your own needs? How do you want to change the situation?”
- Acknowledge that you have heard the feelings, then suggest she look for experienced help. “Sounds like you have a lot of feeling about that. You may need to look at those with someone who can be objective.”

WHY DO THEY ACT THAT WAY?

I Am Negative

Because I am nervous or afraid or not confident or have been hurt in the past. I will respond best if you are NOT negative toward me. Recognize my legitimate objections and gently challenge me to be more positive. If I am ruining things, talk to me privately.

I Am Quiet

It may be a number of reasons. First, it is just my personality. Or I don't know much about the subject or I'm afraid what I say will be laughed at. I respond best when you ask me direct questions but rescue me if I get embarrassed and can't think of anything to say. Affirm my ideas when I do talk.

I Am Daydreaming

Because I have other things on my mind. The conversation just is not interesting to me. You can call on me to draw me back in, as long as you are careful not to embarrass me. I respond best when questioned about my interests or experiences.

I Distract The Group

Because I am embarrassed or have some trouble with someone else in the group. Maybe I was forced to be here and I'm rebelling. I will respond best if you do not talk down to me or yell at me publicly – But be firm and don't put up with my distractions. Ask me privately, one on one, to change my behavior. Enforce that. If I don't cooperate, ask me to leave.

I Am Opinionated

Because I have strong ideas about many things and I am confident in discussions. I usually don't realize I'm shutting others out. I respond best when you gently cut me off with a "Thanks. Let's see how everyone else feels about this." I can usually summarize discussions well and would love to have you ask me to do this.

I Am Talkative

Because that's my nature. I talk so much because that's how I find out what I think. I don't mean to talk more than my share. I respond best when you affirm my ideas but gently let me know that it's someone else's turn. For instance "That's a interesting way to look at it, now let's hear what some others have to say."

I Am A Balanced Person

Because I've had experience in group discussion. Tell me how glad you are to have me in your group. Let me help with the group.

GROUP COHESION

Every Group is Different.

- It takes 3 or 4 meetings for groups to gel, Veteran groups may gel right away, others may take through December.
- Use nametags, icebreakers, and roster to help everyone to get to know each other during first few meetings.
- If someone misses a meeting, follow up soon by mail with copies of announcements so they don't lose touch with the group's momentum.

Attendance is Important.

Groups are successful only when the Friday night adult meetings are well attended, by all members.

- Communicate the necessity of attendance to your group.
- Lead by the example of your own attendance. Both leader spouses should attend. Co-leaders: Both leader couples should attend. You can divide meeting preparation, Board meeting attendance and other tasks, but do not divide your commitment to group meeting attendance.
- Keep people coming with meetings that are purposeful, interesting and fun. The key to this is planning by leader and host so that things go smoothly. Be flexible but use active time management. Especially so that the social and business parts of the meeting (though essential) do not take away from the focus, time and quality of topic discussion. Be prepared, but also flexible to the direction the group takes.

Be Positive

- Don't let meetings turn into gripe sessions. Focus on positive actions that the group or members themselves can take forward.
- Remember not everyone in your group is married, has children, or attends SLM School.

Embrace spirituality.

Start and end your meetings with group prayer circle. Offer an opportunity for group prayer or reflection. Use simple standard prayers, or readings, or make up your own. Many people find public prayer difficult, but most all group members will embrace it and be grateful for the opportunity.

Confidentiality

Inform and remind members that what is said in meeting is confidential and not to be repeated outside.

GETTING MEMBERS TO HELP

- Leverage your time commitment.
- Delegate, ask for help from group members.
- Get help, ideas and advice from other leaders and section leaders.
- Members want to help, but often don't until asked.
- Members feel more connected when they actively participate.
- Invite: "Is that something you could do?"