

All About CFM



When families join the Christian Family Movement, they become part of the national lay movement that is CFM-USA. CFM is a movement because it has a constituency that subscribes to its philosophy, methodology, and theology.

The mission of the Christian Family Movement is to promote Christian marriage and family life, to help people to live the Christian faith in everyday life, and to improve society through actions of love, service, education and example. This is our mission. If we accept this mission, we will support it with our time, talent, and donations.

Membership entitles a family to receive program books and a subscription to ACT, the national newsletter, and supports the development of the Christian Family Movement around the world.

OUR SYMBOL

The CFM symbol shows the Holy Family in silhouette behind a modern family. The family is an active agent of evangelization, participating in the mission of Jesus. With the model of the holy family to guide them, the CFM family is moving forth to bring the message and the love of Christ to a changing world. Father, mother, sons and daughters are Christian emissaries to the world.

OBSERVE-JUDGE-ACT

CFM uses the Observe-Judge-Act method of social inquiry and review of life, developed by Cardinal Joseph Cardijn with the Young Christian Workers in Belgium. This method calls us to see the situation clearly, to judge with principles that foster the integral development of people, and to act in our own situations. Through use of Observe-Judge-Act, many CFM families have become involved in helping others in such ministries as foster-parenting, prison ministry, refugee sponsorship, religious education, marriage preparation, and other volunteer ministries in the parish and community.

THE COMMUNITY OF CFM

People group together by accident, choice or design, but community is more than this. Members are united in mutual respect (even when they disagree), and they are willing to be honest about how they think and feel.

As people get to know each other, trust and openness seem to develop around a fellow member in need or for a neighborhood concern. As you work together to answer a need, community forms. Community learns how to laugh at foibles, takes time to relax, play, recreate its humanity, and evaluate its needs and direction.

The CFM group consists of five to seven families with the adults meeting one or two evenings a month in each other's homes. Some groups include their children in the meetings; some groups make plans to gather as families at another time. Through the use of CFM's many different programs, members discuss what they have observed in their own family or community, judge what they have seen in the light of Jesus' teaching, and then act to change things for the better.

CFMers look upon one another as friends and allies in the midst of their parish communities. They look to CFM as a source of continuing education, lively support and regular encouragement.

In 2019, CFM celebrates 70 years of forming families to be missionary disciples through action. CFM-USA is a member of the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements, which is active in more than 40 countries with more than 100,000 families. All the members of the ICCFM share the Observe, Judge, Act methodology. Visit www.iccfm.org to see explore CFM's worldwide activities.

On the 50th anniversary in 1999, CFM held a gala jubilee celebration at the University of Notre Dame, and the Hillenbrand Institute awarded CFM its prestigious Salt and Light Award. CFM participated in the Marriage Summit of Catholic family life organizations, conducted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2012 and 2013, and CFM leaders participated in consultations for the Synod on the Family in 2016.

The National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers presented CFM with its special-recognition award in 1993 for enhancing the quality of life for families. CFM was one of the founding members of the Families against Violence Advocacy Network, and in 1999 received FAVAN's Circles of Peace Award.

In 1987, CFM contributed to a consultation with the U.S. bishops in preparation for the synod in Rome on the Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World. CFM also provided input to the U.S. bishops' 1994 pastoral, *Follow the Way of Love*.

HOW CFM IS SUPPORTED

The major source of financial support for CFM comes from the annual donations of CFMers. This is the lifeblood of the Movement's continued existence. First-year members are asked to contribute \$10; for continuing members the suggested donation is \$40 per family. Many generous volunteers donate additional time, talent and treasure to make CFM available throughout the world.

Please register at www.cfm.org to belong to CFM, or you may return a membership form provided by your group leader along, with your annual donation to CFM, so that your membership may be recorded and you can receive CFM resources. For more information about CFM, visit www.cfm.org, or contact the National Office: director@cfm.org or 800-581-9824.

NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Share your group's actions with ACT, the national electronic newsletter of the Christian Family Movement, by sending information to director@cfm.org. Photos of groups in action are always a plus.

CONNECT WITH CFM ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- www.facebook.com/ChristianFamilyMovement
- Share your group's Actions with director@cfm.org to be featured on our Facebook page.
- Twitter account @CFMACT. Please use #CFMACT when posting about your group.

Outline of a CFM Meeting

CFM groups usually meet in homes. If this is impossible because of the size of members' homes or geographical distances involved, groups sometimes meet in a church facility. The group members take turns hosting and leading the meeting.

GATHER AND REPORT ON ACTIONS

Take a few minutes to let one another know how your life has been since you last met. Group members report on the progress of CFM actions taken individually, as a family, or by the group.

OPENING PRAYER AND SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

God's word and our prayer move group members out of their busy lives and toward the issues of the meeting. Prayer helps them to focus on these issues from a Christian perspective.

SOCIAL INQUIRY - Observe, Judge, Act

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.

JUDGE

For CFMers, to judge is not to find another person sinful or holy; it is rather the comparison of how things are with how things should be, in accord with Gospel values. To make such a comparison requires objective observation of how things are, as well as a sincere effort to determine the teaching of Jesus.

ACT

If the group judges through prayer, observation, and reflection that things are not as they should be, then ways to bring about a change will come forth from the group. Actions listed in the book are suggestions. The best actions come from the group. They may be directed toward improving family life relationships, or toward the community and beyond.

TAKE CFM HOME

Simple questions are provided at the end of each chapter to facilitate carrying the conversation into the home with children and other family members.

CLOSING PRAYER

Prayer is supplied for each meeting, but this is also a good time to offer prayers for the intentions of the group.

SOCIAL TIME

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

Hosting a CFM Meeting

Many CFM groups rotate hosting the meeting each month. The host often facilitates the meeting, or another member takes this role.

Call the couples in your group 3 to 4 days before the meeting to remind them to come, give directions, etc. Encourage them to do their Actions and Observations before the meeting.

Try to involve your children in the preparation for the meeting. The night of the meeting, ask them to help welcome everyone...help take coats, put out the snacks, etc. Keep refreshments simple.

Provide beverages (soft drinks, coffee, tea) and some sort of dessert after the meeting.

Start on time and end on time. Remember the social time after the discussion is also important for the building of community...and relaxing! If the discussion goes too long it will mean less social time.

Ask for volunteers to read sections of the chapter. It is good to hear many different voices read. Be aware of the time and “keep it rolling” in order to progress from OBSERVES to JUDGES to ACTS...the whole sequence is the CFM meeting. If you’re spending more time on one question, call a “time out” to get on track or skip a question or two to keep things moving.

Don’t be afraid of silence. Often people need time to organize their thoughts before they respond. Leave time for this to happen.

Try to stick to the questions. If a really good side discussion happens, encourage people to continue it during social time.