

## **Models for Small Church Communities/Faith Sharing Groups**

**The following models have worked for other groups.**

**Don't feel bound by them; tailor a system that works for your group.**

**Model 1:** Opening prayer, presentation for an hour and a half, usually by the leader but not always, closing prayer, snacks. The presentations vary a lot: videos with discussion afterward, discussion on newspaper, magazine, or internet articles, lectures (which are usually heavy with group discussion on the topic), BOW (see model 8, below), etc.

**Model 2:** Opening prayer, presentation, closing prayer, snacks. A theme is chosen for the semester by the group, and then each person in the group selects a particular focus within that topic and takes a turn, each person presenting a different evening's presentation on their chosen focus. Again, this tends to be rather group interactive.

**Model 3:** The group says the Rosary together and then share snacks.

**Model 4:** The group functions like a book club. They select a book, read a particular segment of the book in the intervening week, and then discuss the segment at the next meeting.

**Model 5a:** The group gathers for a potluck dinner, then shares the evening socializing. Since this is a Church group, the members feel free to talk about religious issues if they like, but, either way, they share the companionship of fellow Catholics when they meet.

**Model 5b:** The group selects a restaurant and eats together. Then goes on to some other activity like miniature golf, a Christmas party, or a baseball game. Since this is a Church group, the members feel free to talk about religious issues if they like, but, either way, they share the companionship of fellow Catholics when they meet.

**Model 6:** The group selects a Bible topic for the semester and then follows the Bible topic through a Bible study book designed to go with that topic. The evening starts with a hymn, then precedes on to the topic, and then there is a closing prayer.

**Model 7:** The group engages in Christian (silent) meditation for 20 minutes, then does lexio divina with a reading from the coming Sunday Mass, then share a closing prayer. Lexio divina is done, here, by the leader reading the selected reading and then passing on the reading sheet to the next person. Each subsequent person has a chance to re-read the part of the reading that spoke the loudest to him or her. This re-reading can be as much as the whole reading again, or as little as nothing and simply passing the sheet on to the next person, or anything in between.

**Model 8:** The group gathers to study the readings for Mass the next weekend ahead of time. This is called Breaking Open the Word (B.O.W., for short).

Ray Hertel, Saint Luke's Director of Adult Faith Formation may be able to give you a hand with resources. Please ask him what he can do to support your group.

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