

Households of Faith

Start a small group with your friends and neighbors for family enrichment

Families of all ages and stages benefit from belonging to a small group that supports their vocation to family life and Christian witness and service. They need one another. Getting together for prayer, study, fellowship and service will be an ongoing blessing for them.

Simple Ingredients for your HOF Group

Invitation: Once you know where the group will meet – at church, a hall, or in homes -- invite families to meet for an information gathering. Target your invitation to current ministries and organizations where young parents are involved.

Promotion: Send out updates on planning and highlight what your group will offer to enhance the families' faith and fellowship.

Meeting: Some groups like to start their meeting with a simple meal. Some group find meeting in the afternoon on Sunday works for them. Some meet later in the evening -- Our first CFM groups met later at night after the kids went to bed. Share the meeting hosting duties. If you want children to attend meetings with their parents, plan for supervision and activities for those age groups. Allow the adults some space for conversation while kids are supervised nearby. Keep your meeting to 90 minutes.

Commitment: Specify the expectations of membership. Invite the families to make a commitment to participating in the group for a season, with and opportunity for annual renewal. A prayer ritual of commitment is appropriate.

Schedule and Calendar: Create a calendar for your meetings, listing hosts, topics, etc. This helps people plan ahead and keep their commitment to the group. It is important for people to feel that they "belong," rather than just "attend."

Materials and Method: Choose a format for your meetings. It is helpful to have a regular format that continues from month to month. You might want to make your group lectionary based, reflecting on the upcoming Sunday's readings. You could use the lectio divina method of reflection or use a commentary with questions. Or you might want your meetings to be topical. A group could do a book study or follow a small group program.

Resources. Contact the National Institute for the Family for suggestions on resources and guidance on creating your own meeting materials. drsprzy@verizon.net



Here is a format that you can adapt as you wish:

- GATHER: Catch up since the last meeting.
- PRAY: Ask the Holy Spirit to inspire your Gospel reflections.
- READ the Gospel aloud once or twice.
- ASK: What one word came to mind when you heard the Gospel proclaimed?
- READ: A short commentary of your choice. If your parish has an educational resource for reflecting on the Sunday readings, there may be something you like there. Look at the *Nazareth Pages* by Dr. David Thomas, Catholic family life minister. He shares his weekly Gospel reflections for free and the CFM posts them on their webpage here <https://www.cfm.org/blog>
- OBSERVE: What issues in your daily life did the Scripture address?
- JUDGE/DISCERN: What do you find challenging about this Gospel reading? What response does this reading require from you?
- ACT: Take one positive action to make a difference in your family life or in your community.
- CLOSING PRAYERS: Pray for the intentions of the group.

National Institute for the Family

