General Process for Using Growing Faith

Growing Faith Project

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General Process for Using Growing Faith

In households, at the parish, in small communities, with youth and young adults, in nursing homes, with parents of school age children, and at parish meetings

1. Gather those who are going to take part in this session.
2. Make sure everyone knows one another. If there are newcomers or strangers, name tags or a simple game of “introducing the ice.”
3. As folks gather, either the household or small group, play sacred music as a way of setting the stage and preparing the mind and heart.
4. Part of Christian hospitality is to provide food and refreshments. Members can help provide this on a rotating basis.
5. Once everyone is introduced and settled, begin with the opening prayer for Growing Faith. “Make Me an Altar” by Bill Hardwick. Or you can use the opening song by Tom Kendzia, found on the PowerPoint CD-ROM accompanying the guide, which can be played either on a CD player or your computer.
6. The opening prayer and song are followed by a brief period of breathing open the mind based on the Lectionary of the Third from the previous Sunday. Keep the discussion to 5 minutes.
7. The process then can proceed to other whole community catechesis resources, such as Whole Community Catechesis in Plain English, Handmaid by Focus in Whole Community Catechesis, and Heritage of Faith, all available from Twenty-Third Publications. You may also find a “Question of The Week,” found on the Faith Project website, www.harcourtreligion.com. Click on whole community catechesis, then Question of the Week. There is a sample, concrete question (Question of the Week) based on the theme of the Sunday readings as used by everyone in the parish community to encourage reflection, sharing, and practice action during the week.
8. Follow the notes in the Facilitator’s Guide (which are reproducible) and work your way through the Growing Faith booklet for that evening. Make sure you do not rush this process. Let everyone have a chance to share, wonder about things ahead, and report back to his or her faith. If you finish the booklet, save the rest for next time.
9. Encourage participants to write notes in their booklets to personalize them and use them. You may wish to provide a manual by which this can easily occur and returns the booklets for ongoing use throughout their lives.

At the end of each gathering, make sure everyone knows when the next one will be held.
10. Once the prayer or the last PowerPoint slide for each session, or with a spontaneous prayer. You can also use the closing song on the CD-ROM.

Preparation and Materials
•系列蒌 the GF booklet for that gathering.
• Organize whatever food and refreshments will be needed.
• Ask for your volunteers for a one-hour rehearsal of the gathering.
• Make sure participants know one another.
• As people arrive, have the first PowerPoint slide for that night on the screen, announcing the theme.
• Review the GF booklet for that gathering.
• If possible, personal Bibles for each participant
• Enough copies of the GF booklet for each participant
• A white, black, or paper board for writing notes as the group reports from small group activity to the large group
• A dictionary or guide for the Question of the Week.

Growing Faith Project

Growing Faith Project
Suggestions for Use provides strategies to help you successfully reach a variety of groups within your parish.

**Parish-wide, personal use**

**The invitation**
- A large number of people in every parish do not volunteer for parish leadership or ministry teams. They do not have children in school or religious education. They do not attend regular parish functions, outside of Sunday Mass. However, they want to grow in their faith.

Growing Faith provides the perfect tool for doing this. It is designed to be effective even when used privately.

It invites anyone in the parish who wishes to grow in their faith to use Growing Faith, even if they do not wish to attend gatherings/meetings or any type of event.

You can fold two or three copies/pamphlets each year. You may want to schedule one for the early fall and another shortly after Christmas.

For some people, private study of this kind is the best choice. Individuals should not be made to feel that group study is their only option.

**The gathering**
- Again, for some people, gathering may not be the right first step.
- Allow people to be part of parish life by studying at their own speed and at home.

**The reflection**
- Be clear in your announcements about Growing Faith that those who choose to use it individually, as well as those who choose to take part in a gathering, make the best choice for themselves personally.

People should be treated sincerely here and when they wish to enhance their journeys of faith. If no one becomes part of what we present, many people will never get the jump start they need and want for their faith life.

**Break open the word**
- It is possible to break upon the word aloud. The Question of the Week should be used here in the bulletin, posted on the parish website, and made available in any other possible way. Some people will look at the reading, consider the Question, and then share with one another—and this is acceptable. We should always and support folks in their choice.

**Families who have children in catechesis**
- There do not have to be perfect families in your parish to use Growing Faith. Families are at that time of their lives when they want to pass their faith on to their children.

This is why they enroll their children in religious education classes or in the parish school.

Remember, however, that nearly half of families with children of elementary age do not attend Mass or the life of the parish. The reason for this may vary: household to household.

**What is the group like in your faith?**
- Some families are active in the parish and excited about their faith. They may have made a retreat recently or encountered Christ on a deeper level.

- The faith of others, instead, has simply grown cold during their young adult years. They know how important their faith is, but they haven’t been part of religious formation for many years. They feel isolated and, possibly, unconnected.

- Still others are living in a marriage situation that the church does not condone or that they believe the church does not condone. Such situations may include...
The *Growing Faith Project Facilitator’s Guide* contains a CD-ROM with

- PowerPoint® Presentations for each booklet—in English and Spanish!
- “Lead Us to the Water” by Tom Kendzia, music ideal for opening and closing prayers

For more information
call 1.800.922.7696
www.harcourtreligion.com/onlinecatalog