



Small Community
Reflections
On Daily Life & Faith

Growing Faith in Small Groups

This resource relates to *Growing Faith* booklet 3

The Church Passes on Divine Revelation
Why Do We Need the Church?

Based on articles 74-100 of the *Catechism*

1 Arrive and get settled. Check in with each other.

[Be sure everyone feels welcome in this gathering. Help each other get settled comfortably. Let each person say his or her name. If there are guests or newcomers, be sure they're introduced. As a group enter into a brief "check-in" with each other using these questions to get started:]

What happened in your life today?

What really struck you in the recent news?

2 Brief opening prayer.

[Let a different member of the group prepare a prayer for each meeting, based on those in *Desires of the Heart*. Use the music CD to enhance this opening moment and help people focus. Or use other prayers which you may have at hand.]

3 Focus as a group.

[Let someone serve as leader and begin by offering a few short prepared introductory remarks about the theme of this meeting, drawn from the *Growing Faith* booklet in use. You may use these or similar words at this meeting.]

The theme of this meeting includes the following points:

- What Christ entrusted to the apostles, they in turn handed on by their preaching and writing, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to all generations.
- Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture form a single sacred statement of the Word of God.
- The pilgrim Church contemplates God, the source of all her riches.
- The Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship, passes on to every generation all that she believes.

Learn & Teach: We strongly recommend that you adopt the **"Learn & Teach"** method for the most effective use of the *Growing Faith* resources. In this method:

- ✚ Work in small groups of whatever size divides your total group best.
 - In a Small Church Community, it might be two
 - In a larger group it might be as many as four
 - More than four small groups would be too many for this method.
- ✚ Assign a portion of the booklet to each small group.
- ✚ Invite them to **Learn** -- read and share insights based on the discussion questions and method we provide below.
- ✚ Then ask them to **Teach** in the large group, using a 3-step process:

- Name the 3 or 4 (or more) *major points* learned in this segment – write them on a white or black board, or on flip chart paper. Present them to the large group with explanation.
- Choose one or two of these *major points* (the ones that seems most central to faith) and create a question or exercise for discussion – participants may wish to use some of the suggested questions or exercises in the booklet or this study guide.
- Lead a conversation or exercise in the large group, using this discussion question and this method:
 - Ask participants in the large group to work in pairs.
 - Pose the question or exercise and invite the pairs to work together to respond.
 - Invite each pair to present its outcome to the large group.
- ✚ Before going on, the leader may wish to make observations or summarize what happened in this segment.

4 First reading from Growing Faith.

[Let a volunteer now read from the chosen *Growing Faith* booklet, from the first two pages, more or less. Let the rest of the group note (while listening) any questions, insights, or items each may find remarkable. Write notes directly into the space provided in the booklet. When the reading is complete, the group may enter into conversation:]

What struck you in the text?

What affirmed your belief?

What surprised you?

What do you resist about what you just heard or read?

What questions arise from this section?

Turn now to the reflection/exercise on this page of the booklet.

- What is the mission of the church?
- Look at the reflection on the first spread, and share how stories are told within your own family. What happens to a family if members stop seeing each other or telling the family stories?
- How is the work of Jesus continued in today's church?

5 Second reading from Growing Faith.

[Let a volunteer now read from the chosen *Growing Faith* booklet, from the second set of pages, more or less. Let the rest of the group note (while listening) any questions, insights, or items each may find remarkable. Write notes directly into the space provided in the booklet. When the reading is complete, the group may enter into conversation:]

What struck you in the text?

What affirmed your belief?

What surprised you?

What do you resist about what you just heard or read?

What questions arise from this section?

Turn now to the reflection/exercise on this page of the booklet.

- What is the relationship between Scripture & Tradition?
- What is the message of the church to current culture? Use the exercise on the second spread to guide this conversation.

- What aspects of the church are subject to change from one generation to the next? What aspects are unchangeable?
- How does the church “grow” in its understanding of faith?

[If time permits and the group so wishes, you may work through other sections of this booklet together. Members of the group may wish to do so privately or within their household.]

6 Make connections.

[Members of the group now work to connect the teachings found in this section of *Growing Faith* with their everyday lives. You may wish to insert this discussion into the readings and reflections above. Or members may wish to pause at this point for this purpose.]

What is the connection of this material

- To your daily life?
- To what’s happening in the world?
- To the big questions before us as a society?
- If there is no connection, what do you think that means for you?

7 Take it to God.

What would you say to God about this?

What do you think God is saying to you or to us about it?

Take a quiet moment now to turn toward the face of God in this “colloquy” or “conversation with God.” The first lines provided on the next page are meant to *prime your prayer pump*. Continue from there or begin on your own – but spend a little time talking with God. If writing does not suit you, at least make a couple of notes, a word or two, in the space provided to help you make your thoughts and prayers more concrete.

The colloquy will be used in the closing prayer of this gathering, but you will not be asked to share anything you think would be inappropriate for you.

8 Take it home.

What would you like to explore further?

What one action or decision or change do you want to make?

What else comes to mind for you before we quit?

9 Brief closing prayer.

[If members of the group wish to do so, close by sharing parts of each one's colloquy. You may also return to the opening prayer and repeat part of the prayer or song used there. And let there be a warm embrace of Christian love and peace all around.

Be sure to set the time and place for the next gathering. Let each member know which Growing Faith booklet will be used.]

10 Refreshments or a shared meal

