



Training for SCC Facilitators

OPENING PRAYER SERVICE

1. Read Isaiah 6:1-8 "*Here I am, send me!*"
2. Each person takes a turn telling God why you are here.
3. We offer our training to the Father, in the name of Jesus, through the Holy Spirit.

1. As a facilitator, you are fulfilling Christ's command to His disciples:

- A. Mark 16:16
"Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation."
- B. EVANGELIZATION = helping others grow closer to God by *sharing*
 1. Share what He means to you
 2. Share what He has done for you
 3. Share honestly your struggles and be vulnerable
 4. Share stories from your *life* more than from your intellectual knowledge
 5. Share Jesus by being genuinely concerned about each member
- C. Concentrate on *sharing*, not discussing
 1. What's the difference between sharing and discussing?
 2. Discuss what your name means
 3. Now share what your name means to you personally
 4. Notice the difference!
- D. Practice by faith-sharing with other facilitators, using "Group Sharing" questions.

2. As a facilitator, you are a servant in the model of Jesus Christ

- A. Read Galatians 5:13 "serve one another in love"
- B. Imitate Jesus' style of leadership
 1. Be closely connected to God, with an active prayer life
 2. Strive always to grow spiritually
 - a. Be teachable and open to constructive critiquing
 - b. admit your struggles and failings
 - c. Communicate your desire to do God's will
 - d. "I must decrease so Christ can increase"
 3. Know that you are called by God to the ministry of facilitating an SCC
 4. Have an intense, unconditional love for everyone
 5. Consider the needs of others to be as important as your own
 - a. Have enough free time to be in caring relationship with each member of your group
 - b. You are not ruled by self-centeredness, laziness, lack of dependability, forgetfulness, control issues, or unhealthy emotional needs
 6. Look for ways to wash the feet of those in your care
 - a. Read John 13:1-5, 12-17
 - b. How will we wash the feet of the members of our SCCs?
 1. Humility (we are not better or superior)
 2. Promoting unity through acceptance (unconditional love)
 3. Forgiveness for those who make things difficult
 4. Generosity by being genuinely interested in each member (their needs are as important as your own)
 7. Be fully committed to this ministry

3. The necessity of commitment

- A. As a facilitator, you are making a commitment to *one year* of service
 - 1. This may be renewed annually
- B. If you cannot fulfill your commitment due to legitimate reasons:
 - 1. Notify your SCC Director as soon as you suspect your term might have to end
 - 2. Share with your group the need for a replacement
 - 3. Have the group pray for a replacement
 - 4. Tell your director whom you recommend as a replacement
 - 5. The replacement must go through formal training as soon as it's available
 - 6. Co-facilitate with the replacement for as long as possible
 - 7. The replacement facilitator takes over when needed
- C. The meetings can take place in your home, or switch to a member's home, or rotate among as many homes as members are willing
- D. Remind members to call you when they have to miss a meeting
 - 1. If you have to miss a meeting, assign a temporary replacement
 - 2. This replacement must be someone you know can handle it
 - 3. The meeting switches to the replacement's home for that meeting
 - 4. If you have to miss meetings often, you need an assistant facilitator who's been formally trained
- E. Remind members that the SCC meetings are top priority for this time slot
 - 1. Only family needs and job responsibilities take higher priority
 - 2. Why is commitment and continuity so important
 - a. To build community
 - b. To build relationship with God
- F. Keep an attendance record
- G. As a facilitator, you have the greatest responsibility to work on your own spiritual development, so that you can:
 - 1. Set an example of commitment
 - 2. Set an example of doing the "homework" to be prepared
 - 3. Set an example of learning from the scriptures
 - 4. Genuinely care about each member and their needs and concerns
 - 5. Personally follow the guidelines in the hand-out "Belonging to a Small Christian Community"
- H. All facilitators must first experience:
 - 1. Being in an SCC as a member for at least 2 months
 - 2. Formal training
 - 3. Periodic, pre-scheduled visits by the Director of SCCs
 - 4. On-going formation in SCC retreats, facilitator renewal workshops, etc.

4. Building community

- A. See "Format of the SCC Meetings"
- B. Contact people who've missed more than 2 meetings in a row
- C. Make sure each person gets an opportunity to share during the meetings
 - 1. At first, you will be doing most of the sharing while inviting others to share
 - 2. After 4 weeks or so, everyone will share freely without your prompting
 - 3. Do not pressure any one person to share, just gently invite
 - 4. Make sure no one monopolizes the time
 - a. clue: They will make comments on everything shared by others or jump in before others get a chance to speak
 - b. Get others involved by asking, "What do you think about that?"
 - 5. Guide the meetings by asking simple, open (not yes/no) questions such as, "How do you think that applies to your experiences?"
- D. Help the group accept each person's opinions with love
 - 1. If you can't approve of someone's opinion, nevertheless affirm the person. God Himself will enlighten that person as his spiritual journey proceeds.
 - 2. If an opinion becomes a complaint about the Church or a person, turn it into an opportunity for healing:
 - a. Ask the rest of the group if someone has once faced a similar situation and learned to handle it like Jesus would

- b. If no one answers, ask the whole group how they think Jesus would handle a similar situation
 - c. OR ask the group what good might come out of this type of situation
 - 3. If an opinion stirs up trouble, defer the topic to your director or priest
 - 4. Prepare yourself by using the "Common Challenges" page.
- E. Attend retreats and other parish functions together
 - 1. Cancel your meeting during the week the other functions are held
 - 2. Spend time greeting community members after Masses
- F. At least twice a year, preferably more often, hold a community party
 - 1. Members take turns hosting the parties
 - 2. It can be a BBQ, pool party, holiday celebration, etc.
 - 3. Everyone helps by bringing food, paper goods, etc.
 - 4. Invite all family members and fallen-away group members
- G. The trust level must grow
 - 1. Trust comes from feeling safe within the group
 - a. If someone wants to remain quiet, don't push him to talk
 - b. Watch for the potential of someone's feelings getting hurt, and gently steer the conversation in another direction
 - c. When someone shares a problem, ask the group if anyone can share how they got through a similar situation
 - d. Watch body language for indications of openness, hurt, fear, discomfort, confusion, etc.
 - e. Empower others to join in with opening and closing prayers
 - 2. The more trust grows,
 - a. the more people will open up and share personally
 - b. the more they will become receptive to new personal growth
 - 3. Review the handout "Belonging to a Small Christian Community" with each new member
- H. Be an inclusive, not exclusive group
 - 1. If non-Catholic spouses or friends want to visit or join the group, they are welcomed warmly
 - 2. No one is ever kicked out. If someone becomes too disruptive, hand the matter over to your director
 - 3. If your group is specialized (eg., women only) and someone wants to visit who does not fit, welcome him. If he wants to join permanently, invite him to speak to your director.
 - 4. The ideal size of a group is 8 to 10 people; 6 = minimum, 12 = maximum. If more than this wants to join, refer them to your director.
- I. As a group, come up with a name for your SCC.
 - 1. Decide a theme: what is important to everyone in your group? (eg., evangelization, love, journeying to holiness, etc.)
 - 2. Pick a name that depicts this theme (eg., a Saint, book of the Bible, fruit of the Spirit, etc.)
 - 3. Plan a time to create a banner that depicts your theme and name
 - 4. The banner should be displayed at all meetings, and will be used in special parish functions

5. Measuring your effectiveness as a facilitator

- A. Prayerfully review the meetings after people leave to discover how you can better serve the community
- B. Do the meetings begin and end on time?
- C. Is refreshment/fellowship-time important to the people?
- D. Do your members invite others to join?
- E. Are your members getting more involved in parish work and events?
- F. Are you aware that their lives are changing, even if only gradually?
- G. Are they glad for opportunities to get together outside of SCC meetings?
- H. Use the "Self-Analysis" questionnaire.

6. What a Small Christian Community is NOT

- A. It is NOT a Bible Study group
 - 1. It is a faith-sharing group
 - 2. The Bible is used as a lamp to shed light on what is happening in our daily lives
- B. It is NOT a time for religious instruction
 - 1. It is a time for personal testimonies
 - 2. It contributes to the learning process.
- C. It is NOT a time for intellectual discussions (eg., worldly wisdom, theological teachings, "safe" and impersonal talk)
 - 1. It is a time for personal sharings
 - 2. The intellect does get stimulated as we listen to others share
- D. It is NOT a social club
 - 1. It is a spiritual experience
 - 2. Fellowshiping enhances the spiritual experience
- E. It is NOT a gossip session
 - 1. All personal sharings are kept confidentially within the group
 - 2. No one, present or absent, is to be spoken of unkindly
- F. It is NOT a counseling session
 - 1. It is an opportunity to receive and give support
 - 2. If someone does need counseling, refer them to other resources

7. Keep the focus and purpose of the meetings on the spiritual level

- A. Prayer is an important part of the SCC meetings
 - 1. Begin each meeting in prayer
 - 2. Encourage members to take turns doing the opening prayer
 - 3. End the meetings with prayer
- B. The Scriptures are the focus of the meetings
 - 1. Watch the time to be sure that all readings are dealt with
 - 2. When conversation leads away from the Scriptures, bring the focus back
 - a. First let the tangent develop if it seems appropriate and helpful
 - b. Listen to the Holy Spirit tell you when it's been enough
 - c. Find a way to tie the sharings back to the assigned Scriptures
 - d. Or gently interrupt and put the focus back on the Scriptures
 - e. To avoid hurt feelings, say something like, "That's excellent. Let's talk about that more during refreshments."
- C. Silence in a meeting is not something to be afraid of
 - 1. Give people time to reflect and pray silently, as they collect their thoughts
 - 2. Don't think that silence means you have to fill in the gap by speaking, but wait for others to speak, so you don't monopolize the time
 - 3. Look for clues that someone wants to speak but is hesitating, and gently invite them to share

8. God chooses the weak so that it is *His* strengths that change the lives of those to whom we minister.

- A. This keeps us humble because we know it's Him, not us, doing the works
- B. In Scripture, we see this happen to the greatest of God's servants
- C. Recognize that your inadequacies are actually your greatest blessings.

CLOSING PRAYER SERVICE

- 1. Read Isaiah 6:1-8 "Here I am, *send me!*"
- 2. Read together: "Prayer to Become God's Instrument"
- 3. Receive an anointing for ministry