

Faith Alive!

In My 24/7 Life

**For an Adult Faith Formation Session
Appropriate for use as an RCIA Session**

by

Living Faith at Work

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Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Notes for Session Coordinator	1
Agenda.....	5
Fundamental Purpose of Faith Alive! Sessions	7
Prayer Experiences	
Opening: <i>Jesus, My Carpenter Brother</i>	9
Closing: <i>Prophets of a Future Not Our Own</i>	31
Teaching Witness: Being Catholic Christian 24/7: Possibilities and Practicalities	
Outline: Ideas for the Teaching Witness	11
Introductory Learning Experience: On the Walk to Emmaus	17
Introduction to Centering Prayer	20
The Practice of <i>Lectio Divina</i>	21
Developing a Personal Support Group	22
Making a Pledge	25
Potential Reflection Questions for Support Groups	26
Hand Out: Reflection Questions for the Being Catholic Christian 24/7: Possibilities and Practicalities	27
Personal Witness: My Resources for Deepening in Faith.....	28
Hand Out: Reflection Questions for My Resources for Deeping in Faith .	30
Materials List.....	35
Additional/Alternative Activities	38
Hand Out: Abstract of the Teaching Witness Talk, Being Catholic Christian 24/7: Possibilities and Practicalities.....	39
Hand Out: Information about the Living Faith At Work Website.....	40

Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

Notes for the Session Coordinator

- *Within this planned session, there are a number of activities. In addition, there are several alternative activities made available in the pages after the planned session. The session coordinator and/or the team should feel free to choose among the planned and alternative activities. The point is to adapt the session to the particular needs of the group expected to participate in this session.*
- In preparation for the session, read over the session agenda and all the session elements and note the materials needed for the session. Obtain the materials and arrange them for use as planned in the session elements.
- Use your usual meeting place. If this includes a special space for prayer, use that for the opening and closing prayers for this session.
- We suggest allowing between 1½ and 2 hours for the session. This allows for some choice in what you include or remove from the session according to the needs of those anticipated to be participating.
- Some of the activities are presented here as small group (5 or 6 members) activities and others as whole group activities. If your participants number less than 9, treat all activities as whole group, adjusting as necessary for that situation.
- Where small groups are able to be utilized, try to separate the groups with enough space to avoid distractions caused by overhearing what is being said in the other groups.
- The timeframes given on the working agenda are all inclusive, that is, they include the time that must be allowed for moving the participants into and out of small groups and the various locations utilized for the sessions. The teaching-learning activities ought not be scheduled or allowed to run through all the allotted time in each segment. People, especially adults, will dawdle as they move between activities or locations—the greater the distance the more they are likely to dawdle.
- Determine who will be the Prayer Leader or person responsible for conducting the prayer services during the session. Give them the prayer

service materials in time to prepare for the planned rituals. The opening prayer is also provided in a one page, private reflection format for distribution to the participants, if so desired.

- For this session, it is important that the participants see work more broadly than as only a job for pay. As part of the introduction for the session, it would be helpful to make a few comments about what work is.

Very broadly Living Faith at Work defines work as any productive activity. This would include children whose work can be that of students and stay-at-home parents whose work is housekeeping and child rearing. It is also worthy of note that each person may function in several different jobs or work efforts in the course of a day. An adult might work-for-pay with an employer, work at home on house cleaning or yard maintenance, and work at parenting with his/her children. We humans also experience different work over our lifetimes from student, to employee, to parenting, and to grand-parenting and supporting our adult children and grandchildren in many, varied ways.

- If at all possible, the reflections captured on chart paper over the previous sessions should be posted on the walls of the meeting area. They serve as a reminder of all the interactions that have gone on prior to this session.
- The Introductory Learning Experience activities included for this session is more expansive than in other sessions as it is also a part of the Teaching Witness. In a way, it is a review of the year's sessions. In explaining the directions, it may be useful to have 2 or 3 team members model the actions as they are explained.
- The Introductory Learning Experience, *On the Walk to Emmaus*, can be led by a separate facilitator or by the person giving the Teaching Witness. Having one person enables a very smooth transition from the multiple ideas expressed in the Walk to Emmaus process and the ideas to be expressed in the Teaching Witness.
- Allow more time for the Teaching Witness than for the Personal Witness as the Personal Witness tends to be shorter. Allow more time for the reflection activities than for the witness talks. Recommended times are 15-20 minutes for the *Walk to Emmaus* exercise, 15-20 for each of the two reflection sessions minutes for the teaching witness talk, 15 minutes for the teaching talk, and 8-10 minutes for the personal witness talk. Shorten the talks rather than the reflection time.

- An outline for the teaching witness, “Being a Catholic Christian 24/7: Possibilities and Practicalities,” is included in the documents. The outline is not intended to be delivered in totality. Rather the person giving this talk should select the ideas and method of presentation that would best fit the needs of the anticipated group. The preferred deliverer of this talk would be a priest or deacon of the parish. Alternatively, a pastoral minister who is not a cleric could give the talk. A DVD with a video of the teaching witness is available from Living Faith at Work.
- The Personal Witness talk is intended to be a sharing of one person’s efforts at recognizing and using “My Resources for Deepening in Faith.” In the documents is a sheet with some ideas to help shape the presentation, but the key is the personal story of the speaker. A polished oration is not expected and probably would be less effective than the rougher texture of a personal, conversational sharing of the speaker’s efforts and feelings.
- The givers of both talks are strongly encouraged to practice their talks in advance with a fellow team member offering feedback and suggestions for improvement in delivery and for keeping the talks within the time limits.
- When the reflection questions for the teaching and personal witness talks are given out, it is very important to give the participants time to reflect privately and even write out a few notes about their personal reflections before asking them to share their thoughts. The first sharing should be in a pairing of two or three people. Such a small group serves three purposes: (a) it is easier to try out one’s ideas with just one or two other people than the full group, (b) it is harder to avoid sharing when there are only one or two others in the group, and (c) once a person shares an idea in a small group, the person is more likely to share it with a larger group.
- When bringing the entire group back together for the Sharing of Learning Reflections and Applications, lend some importance to the action by capturing the ideas in public writing.
 - We recommend having at least two writers, preferably three, equipped with markers (water based).
 - Space and equipment permitting, have chart paper ready on two or three stands and a writer/scribe next to each stand.
 - If space and/or equipment do not allow for chart paper on stands, tape chart paper sheets to the walls in two places (one place for Reflections/Learnings and another for Applications).

- Prepare the writers/scribes in advance to capture the speakers own words in so far as possible. Avoid summarizing and/or paraphrasing.
 - Put headers on the chart paper sheets to clearly identify them as “Reflections & Learnings” and “Applications.”
 - As the session coordinator solicits statements of Reflections and Learnings, assign them to a writer/scribe in rotation. Do the same for the Applications when they are given.
 - Use no more than 10 minutes for capturing Reflections and Learnings, then move on to the Applications.
 - Be sure to give time for private consideration and jotting of notes about the application before soliciting ideas for capture on the chart paper.
 - Consider taking the last minute or two of time allotted for this activity to summarize briefly the Reflections and Learnings and the Applications.
 - Save the chart papers for posting in the meeting space for the next session.
- In dismissing the group at the conclusion of the final prayer, encourage the participants to share a greeting of peace and thanks with several of the people around them. Allow time after the session and before closing the facility for participants who wish to continue talking with each other.

Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

Agenda

15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Gathering and Opening Prayer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Registration & Hospitality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcoming statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Greetings b. Identify key people of the session's program B. Group Formation C. Opening Prayer Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move the people to the Prayer Space. 2. See separate file for the prayer "Jesus, My Carpenter Brother" 3. At the conclusion of the prayer, have the participants return to the full group meeting space.
30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> II. Introductory Learning Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. On the Walk to Emmaus III. In-Depth Learning Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Teaching Presentation: Being a Catholic Christian 24/7: Possibilities and Practicalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suggested outline/contents in separate file 2. Whole group presentation 3. Distribute reflection questions at the end of the talk while giving directions for reflecting.
55 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B. Reflection on Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal and private first 2. Shared in dyads within the small groups C. Witness Presentation: My resources for Deepening in Faith <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute reflection questions at the end of the talk while giving directions for reflecting. D. Reflection on Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal and private first 2. Shared in dyads within the small groups 3. Shared with entire small group

15 minutes	<p>IV. Sharing Learning Reflections & Applications</p> <p>A. Whole Group Sharing & Reflection</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring the whole group back to together and invite them to share some of the reflections they gave or heard in the small groups. 2. Have several team members write the reflections on chart paper as they are given by group members. 3. Suggest having the at least three sheets of chart paper taped on to walls and one writer at each sheet taking turns writing the reflections. <p>B. Reflection—Application Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After about half the time is up or when reflections stop flowing, pose a new question for the entire group, “How can or will you apply the ideas brought forward today?” or “What commitment(s) are you willing to make about improving your relationship with Jesus Christ?” 2. Allow about 2 minutes for private consideration and note taking. 3. Solicit volunteers to state their responses to the question(s) and put them on chart paper as with the reflections. Do not attach names to the commitments.
5 minutes	<p>V. Closing Prayer Service</p> <p>A. See file for Closing Prayer Services</p>

Faith Alive!

Fundamental Purposes of the Faith Alive! Sessions

- To strengthen the **connection** between people's faith and work. (Work is defined as any productive activity we do.) [**Connection could be interpreted as interaction, interrelationship, and/or interdependence.**]
- To enhance parishes as formation centers which affirm, equip, challenge, and support believers in their daily life mission to live the gospel, especially at work

I. An examination of why our commonly understood Catholic Christian vision, at the grass roots level, needs further development for integrating faith and work.

A. Dualistic thinking

1. sacred vs. secular **or** spiritual vs. material [This issue has existed throughout human history. Today's materialistic culture makes the issue particularly relevant for Catholic Christians today.]
2. separating the divine from the human
3. misunderstanding the American concept of separation of church and state

B. Tendency to view spirituality as fundamentally an interior, contemplative experience.

C. Failure to take seriously one's own ordinary life events including work as a way of encountering the divine.

D. Too much emphasis upon mission and ministry being directly related to internal church work or parish commissioned responsibilities.

E. Lack of recognizing one's work as a possible "religious" vocation, an opportunity to strengthen the connections between God, oneself, and others.

- Again, Mission has a church. The church belongs to the mission. The church equates to “the people gathered.”
- “Call” equals desires, gifts, talent, interests, skills. All God given for one’s unique piece of the mission. We are stewards of what God has given—the call and the mission. The mission is born of us. The church is the vehicle.

II A realization we, as church, are forming people as disciples in the world. The Faith Alive! Retreat builds upon the foundation belief that together we can continue to strengthen our focus upon the vocation and mission of the laity in the world.

- A. Emphasis upon forming people for volunteer or paid "inner/ecclesial church life and work" needs to be extended to formation for daily life and work.
- B. Recognition that the average lay person would benefit from learning more about recent church teachings on the role of the laity in the world, the call of lay people to be Christian influences in the social, political, military, economic, educational, medical, cultural, etc., spheres of life
- C. Need to foster approaches in Christian formation that are life and work-centered, that foster faith-inspired reflection, decision-making, and action in the midst of the marketplace (we can infuse much of this into what is already going on in parish formation of people).
- D. An opportunity to encourage believers to find meaning, value, and creativity in their work, experiencing their labor as God-centered, as a vocation, as kingdom building, as responsible and honest stewardship.
- E. A call to lay people to further develop and deepen their own unique spirituality rooted in who they are and what they do, a stewardship of God’s gifts integrating personal growth and concern for the common good, grounded in scripture and Catholic Christian tradition.
- Integrating personal and social moral growth based on scripture and Catholic Church tradition.

Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

OPENING PRAYER

JESUS, MY CARPENTER BROTHER

Opening Song *All Are Welcome* (#753 in *Gather* hymnal, #406 in *Today's Missal Music Issue 2005*)

Leader Let us pray.

All Dear God, you have loved us, washing us with the waters of Baptism, strengthening us with the oil Confirmation, and feeding us with the Eucharist. These gifts have brought us into the Body of Christ. We give thanks for these wondrous gifts.

Leader Let us pray to Jesus, who in his incarnation became our brother and worked as a carpenter in the town of Nazareth.

ALL Jesus,

I have chosen to follow your path this season of my life. Please accept my life as a song of praise and glory to you.

Help me to dedicate each activity and choice of my day as a prayer of thanks and praise to you.

If and when I deviate from your path, encourage me back to your ways.

When I accept your grace and step back to your pathways, please accept those returning steps as prayers of repentance and petitions for forgiveness.

Amen.

Session Eight: Opening Prayer

Directions

Directions

Gather the participants in the space designated and decorated as the prayer space for the meeting. Have the participants take the provided hymnals or song sheets with them. If the *Gather* hymnal is not available, use what you have and select the listed songs or ones similar to them.

Prepare the prayer space. Use your customary decorations for the space. If there is not a customary decoration, we suggest a table covered with a cloth and holding a cross, a bowl of water, a small glass/cup of oil, a loaf of unsliced bread or pita bread, and a lighted candle.

Provide the participants with copies of the prayers to be recited.

For added effect, have the participants assemble around the cloth covered table and have the cross, water, oil, bread, and candle carried to the table in procession by members of the session's team. The leader may note, if necessary, that the processors are bringing in the symbols of our salvation—the cross, our baptism—the water, our confirmation in the faith—the oil, the nourishment of our spiritual life, the Eucharist—the bread, and the mission to be light to the world—the lighted candle.

Once all are gathered and the prayer space set up, begin the prayers.

Materials needed

Copies of the prayer to be read.

Optional for setting up the prayer space

Table covered with a cloth

Cross

Bowl of water

Glass or cruet of oil

Loaf of bread, unsliced, or piece of pita bread

Candle

Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

Being a Catholic Christian 24/7 Possibilities and Practicalities

Outline of Ideas for the Teaching Witness

Several notes before beginning:

This outline is not meant to be totally incorporated into the Teaching Witness talk. It contains many ideas from which the witness can choose those most appropriate for the expected participants and the witness. Leave time and space in the talk for personal touches. Be aware of the time limitation necessary for the session and limit the content to fit the time.

If applicable, introduce and facilitate the walkabout review of the year's adult faith formation sessions. The process is titled "On the Walk to Emmaus." Forms and procedures are provided in documents following this outline.

Ideas suggested for incorporation into the teaching witness presentation.

Prior to the review process, On the Walk to Emmaus.

- If they were kept and posted on the walls, call attention to the reflections and ideas captured in previous sessions.
- If the reflections were not captured in the earlier sessions or if they were not posted, briefly review the topic and one or two main teachings from the earlier sessions, possibly by asking the participants for ideas that they remember.
- Note that it is rare for all persons to learn the same things even though they may all have experienced the same thing at the same time.
- We will undertake a process to help focus what we learned and at the same time to gain an appreciation of the many other things we could have learned and/or appreciated. After review, we might even change our mind about the things we learned that were most significant to us.

- Introduce the On the Walk to Emmaus exercise using the directions and form provided separately.

Conduct the exercise, On the Walk to Emmaus

After On the Walk to Emmaus

- Elicit comments from the participants about what they observed and/or learned from the Walk to Emmaus exercise. Ask questions like
 - What did you hear that was as you expected?
 - What did you hear that surprised you?
 - What themes or strings of ideas did you notice in the ideas you traded or heard in your group?
 - What got you to think something like, “Aha, I had not thought of that.”?
- Make explicit the point that the ideas that other people have can be of benefit to me. We are each stewards of the ideas we have and as stewards need to be open to sharing these ideas with others. There are many ways to think about things, and we will gain from interacting with others to receive and give the possibilities.

Ideas for the teaching talk

- Being Catholic Christians 24/7 is about infusing every moment of our days with the core value of our faith, the essential teaching of Jesus.
 - Love God
 - Love your neighbor, that is, your fellow human beings.
- Easy to say, very complex in the doing.
- To live out these values, we need support.
- Many resources are available and offer much in the way of support.
- First I want to mention two forms of support that are considered very effective. One involves just you and the other involves a group, that is, at least one other person.
 - The first is a form of prayer, called Centering Prayer.

- An ancient prayer form recently re-introduced to western society.
- A prayer form that invites God to be active in our hearts and minds.
- Information on this is on a separate handout.
- The other is a support group.
 - More specifically though, we can choose to be part of a small group whose purpose is to help, support, and provide accountability for each other in living out the “Love” commandants of Jesus. This can be one other person, two or three.
 - Information about forming a Personal Support Group is on a separate handout.

Beyond these two effective support processes, there are many others to consider. There are many resources available. I would like to share with you some that I use and potential sources of many others that may be just the “amazing grace” you need to support and energize your faith in your daily life. These may help you be constant and consistent in your stewardship of the great gifts God has given to you.

1. Public Worship and Devotions

- The Church offers opportunities for public, communal prayer and reflection in many ways over the course of time.
- The most prominent and significant one is the weekly celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Mass. Participation in the weekly Mass can help deepen one’s faith and the practice of the faith in daily life. The influence of the Mass can be deepened by personal or household preparation through reading, and perhaps reflecting on, the scriptures of the Mass ahead of time.
- If your circumstances allow it, you might benefit from participation in the Mass liturgy once or more during the week.
- In addition to the Liturgy of the Mass, each parish typically has a number of other public, communal devotional and supportive services.
- Ask the participants to help draw up a list of such opportunities in their parish. The list could include activities such as

† Evening prayers

- † Stations of the Cross
- † Eucharistic adoration
- † Holy Hours
- † Benediction
- † Communal Sacrament of Reconciliation
- † Communal recitation of the Rosary
- † Communal recitation of one of the “little offices.”
- † Participation in sacramental preparation programs
- † Participation in RCIA programs
- † Participation in Post Cana programs
- † Participation in Faith Sharing and/or Scripture Study groups

2. Personal/private prayer practices

- There are many times we can pause for at least a short prayer. For example, morning and evening prayers, meal blessing prayers, prayer before a difficult task, prayer of thanks after completing a difficult task.
- Prayer can take many forms. What other times might be reminders to take a moment to offer a prayer to God of
 - † Blessing and Adoration
 - † Petition
 - † Intercession
 - † Thanksgiving
 - † Praise
- There are multiple prayer styles such as centering prayer; charismatic prayer; devotional prayers such as novenas, the Rosary, and stations of the cross; meditation; *lectio divina*, etc.
- Handouts for Centering Prayer and *Lectio Divina* are included in the documents in this manual. They can be handed out during the talks, made available for pick up after the talks, or included in a packet of handouts given to the participants.

3. Personal inspiration and reminders

- Regular reading with mind, heart, and soul -- Scripture, religious and spiritual books, other good literature viewed through the eyes of faith,

etc. (If the presenting team has prepared a display of religious and/or spiritual literature, reference the display.)

- Discovering inspirational resources in films, television, on the Internet, etc.
- Your personal recommendations categorized in some way. For example:
 - Printed materials (books, pamphlets, periodicals, etc.)
 - Audio-visual materials (e.g., radio, television, videos, CDs)
 - Internet based materials such as web sites and listserves.
 - Personal physical reminders
- Screen saver on your computer—a verse or picture that has inspirational meaning for you. For example, “Lord, you are God and I am not” or “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” or “God so loved the world that he...” or “Could you not watch one hour with me?”
- A picture or symbol on your desk or at your workstation that has inspirational meaning for you. For example, a cross, a fish, a lamb, a dove, an ark, a rainbow, an anchor, a rooster, or an Alpha & Omega.
- Ask the participants to share daily or frequently occurring events or things that inspire them, that remind them of God’s love for humankind. For example, sunrises and sunsets, a quiet walk in the woods or by the water, a parent caring for his/her child, a couple walking hand-in-hand, etc.

4. Explore the Living Faith at Work website

- Explore the Living Faith at Work website (www.livingfaithatwork.org) before the session. Make comments about the contents the website as you show them to the participants.

5. Resources List

- Distribute the included *Resources for Growing Spiritually* list and ask the participants to quietly mark those resources they have used with a checkmark.
- Ask the participants to share one experience in using one of the resources they marked with a person seated next to them.
- Ask for a few people to share their experiences with the group.

6. Being a Resource

- In addition to looking for and using resources in support of our mission in life, we need to be ready to be a resource to others. As stewards of the gifts we receive, we must be ready to share them with others in need.
- Compliments and “Thank you” might be the simplest resource we can give. We need only to look for and show appreciation for that which others do.
- We can support others by just being there, by being ready to listen, really listen, as they talk and share their concerns and worries. Simply listening may be enough. At times we may have suggestions to give and ideas to share, if that is needed by those we are listening to.
- Other times we may be a resource by interceding and giving help without being asked, careful always not to force the help but to make it available without expecting reciprocation.

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. Which resources had I known about but forgotten until today?
2. Which resource(s) are new to me?
3. When and how have I been a resource to another?
4. What would it do to my life, if I utilized one of these resources in my daily/weekly routine? Would I like that?
5. What resource(s) am I going to use in my daily life?

Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

Walk to Emmaus Review Process

1. Facilitator distributes the “On the Walk to Emmaus” form. Facilitator calls the attention of the group to the four columns and three rows. The first column has no lines around it and provides the title for the row. The next three columns are framed to limit the amount that goes into them.
2. Facilitator explains that the participants will place their own thoughts in the first column immediately under the title for the row and explains the meaning of each row.
 - “Reminded of” seeks ONE idea about our faith life as Catholic Christians that we were reminded of in the course of the Faith Alive! or adult faith formation experiences. We may have forgotten it and it was brought back to our conscious thought. Or, we might not have forgotten it, but it was made more vivid in our thoughts during our experiences in the program.
 - “New Insight” seeks ONE NEW idea about our faith life as Catholic Christians that we learned during the Faith Alive! or adult faith formation experience. This would be something that now has significance or importance to us.
 - “Application to My Life” seeks ONE idea, activity, attitude, or habit of mind or body that we plan to put into our lives on a daily or weekly basis as a result of this Faith Alive! experience.
3. Facilitator explains that after the group writes their individual thoughts in the first, unframed column, they will walk about the room and trade ideas. They must find 9 *different* people with whom to trade ideas—one type of ideas for the same type of idea. That is, “Reminded of” for “Reminded of,” “New Insight” for “New Insight,” and “Application to My Life” for “Application to My Life.”
4. Facilitator tells the group they will have four minutes to write their own thoughts, one for each row. Start the time. Note when two minutes are remaining and again when one minute is remaining. Call time after about four to four and half minutes.

5. Facilitator tells the group they will have nine minutes to find and trade information with nine other people. Their thoughts go in the framed boxes. People trade their idea for the other persons' idea, one type of idea for the same type of idea (row for row). People write the other person's ideas into the framed space and put that person's name in the box beneath the frame.
6. Facilitator starts the clock for the exchange of ideas. Warn people when five minutes remain, three minutes, two minutes, and one minute. Allow an extra minute if necessary for the group to get finished.
7. Facilitator has participants return to their seats with their groups. They are asked to reflect on what they have acquired and discuss patterns or strands discovered. The discussion may be with the entire group or briefly in the table groups and then share an idea or two with the all the session's participants.

Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

ON THE WALK TO EMMAUS

Reminded of			
	Name	Name	Name
New Insight			
	Name	Name	Name
Application to my life			
	Name	Name	Name

By Louis Trenta based on Robert Garmston and Bruce Wellman, *The Adaptive School: Developing and Facilitating Collaborative Groups*.

Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

An Introduction to Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer was developed centuries ago to help us with the listening part of communication with God, otherwise known as prayer. It has been reintroduced to western society as a prayer form. It is not intended to replace other forms of prayer. It is intended to invite God to be active in our souls. The guidelines are meant to be simple. They are:

1. Find a quiet place to sit.
2. Choose a word that for you is a sign that you want God to be present and active within you. Think of it as your “invitation word.” Some possibilities include Jesus, Lord, Father, Spirit, Cross, Resurrection, Love, Master, etc.
3. Sit comfortably and repeat your invitation word peacefully and gently. Let your mind and soul settle into a listening silence.
4. If you become aware of wandering or distracting thoughts during your prayer time, gently go back to your invitation word.
5. Conclude your prayer time with a few moments of silence. Alternatively, you may end by slowly reciting the Our Father, the Hail Mary, or the Glory Be.

Most writers recommend practicing Centering Prayer for two twenty minute periods a day, once early in the day and again around the evening meal time, to gain the maximum benefit. Even shorter times and once a day can be beneficial.

If Centering Prayer is to be done in a group, the leader might say or lead a prayer to the Holy Spirit asking for his help during the prayer time. If it is not distracting to the participants, gentle, flowing background music might be played during the prayer time. The leader would initiate the recitation of the prayer chosen to conclude the session.

Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

The Practice of Lectio Divina

Select a scripture passage on which you wish to focus. A good source would be the readings for the next Sunday liturgy, particularly the psalms. Other easy passages for those just starting the practice of *Lectio Divina* would be Luke 1:26-33, Mark 10:13-16, Mark 4:35-41, 1 John 4:7-11, Psalm 1, Psalm 23, and Proverbs 10:1-12.

Quiet your mind and body before starting. The setting can be one of silence or one with soft background music that is not distracting to the participants.

1. **Read:** Read the passage slowly and prayerfully several times. After the first reading, ask God to help you learn the meaning of the text. Silently focus on a word or phrase that grabs your attention. Pay attention to what the word or phrase brings to mind. Seek to understand it.
2. **Reflection:** Quietly re-read to yourself the word or phrase that grabbed your attention. Now, re-read the entire passage. Listen as if the Scripture were being addressed to you personally, with "your name" as the greeting of a letter. Allow your imagination to place you into the scripture text or scene asking the question, "What is it saying to me today, this moment? What I am feeling anxious about, etc?" Ponder its personal message to you.
3. **Prayer:** Re-read this passage again. Let it form words for a loving prayer, your response to the Father. After some reflection on what you have heard, speak a prayer of love, using the words and images of this passage to engage the God Who has spoken to you.
4. **Contemplation:** Re-read the text a final time and allow yourself to be absorbed by the "mystery" of God that is made real in this Word, in your heart, in this moment. Be silent in mind and body until distraction calls you to move along.

Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

Developing a Personal Support Group

The starting point for participating in a personal support group is to accept that the ideas that other people have can be of benefit to me and my ideas can be of benefit to others. We are each stewards of the ideas we have and as stewards need to be open to exchanging these ideas with others. There are many ways to think about things, and we will gain from interacting with others to receive and give the possibilities.

- Being Catholic Christians 24/7 is about infusing every moment of our days with the core value of our faith, the essential teaching of Jesus.
 - Love God
 - Love your neighbor, that is, your fellow human beings.
- Easy to say, very complex in the doing.
- To live out these values, we need support. One form of support is a Personal Support Group.
- In a general way, any group engaged in church ministry that meets on a regular basis could provide support by way of reminding us of our faith and the way of life believers have promised to live.
- More specifically though, we can choose to be part of a small group whose purpose is to help, support, and provide accountability for each other in living out the “Love” commandments of Jesus. This can be one other person, two or three. We recommend keeping the number small both to reduce the difficulties in scheduling a non-conflicting meeting time and to increase the closeness of the members.
- In these support groups, each person, in turn, is the focus of attention by the others in the group. Each shares the successes and challenges they have recently encountered. The others listen *non-judgmentally*; reflect what they have heard; and *if asked*, offer ideas for consideration by the person who is the focus at the moment.
 - The frequency, duration, and location of support group meetings are totally up to the participants.

- The meetings can be weekly, biweekly, or monthly. We recommend not going more than a month between meetings.
- The meetings can be held any place that can be conducive to quiet conversation, a corner of the company lunch room, on a walk from the car to the place of work, a walk in a park, over breakfast or lunch at a restaurant, at or after a family meal (a family can be a support group), after Sunday Mass in the church proper or the vestibule.
- The meetings can be times of extended conversation or only as long as it takes to respond to two inquiries, “How have things gone since our last meeting?” and “What are you plans until our next meeting?”
- Guidelines or Ground rules for a Personal Support Group:
 - What is shared in the group is not shared outside the group.
 - The members of the support group are to treat the responses to the questions they ask in a totally non-judgmental way.
 - The member who is the focus of the questions will supply his/her own judgment.
 - The goal of the questions is to have the member verbalize and consider what and how they have done since the last meeting of the support group. This may call for the questioners to reflect back to the member what they understand using such phrases as, “What I hear you saying is....;” “If I understand you correctly, you mean....;” and “Do you mean to say....?”
- A good question that usually comes up around this point, is “What is to be the substance of our meetings?” or “Where do we begin?” The guidelines and support group questions could go in any direction without some target behavior or changes in behavior. For that reason, it is important for the participants to set a beginning point.
- After some private prayer and reflection, each participant should make a pledge or commitment. That pledge can be the subject of the self-reporting over the first several support group meetings until the group or the individuals choose other goals.
- A simple pledge form is included with these notes as one way to develop an initial pledge. We suggest that the participants complete 1, 2, or not more than 3 items on a pledge sheet.

- There is no one way to initiate the reflection questioning of a Personal Support Group. A set of potential reflection questions is included with these notes for your consideration. Try them and others you may think of. Keep using those that have the greatest impact on changing your behavior to accomplish your pledge(s).
- Final word: For those times when you cannot meet with your support group, you can use the list of questions to guide a conversation with Jesus. Set aside about 10 minutes in a quiet place. Bring yourself to focus on yourself and your relationship with Jesus. Imagine Jesus to be sitting next to you or across from you. Then converse with him, telling him your responses to the questions. Spend a few additional minutes in silence, focused on Jesus. Listen quietly.

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MAKING A PLEDGE

As steward of the gifts given me by the Father, with Jesus' commandment to love my neighbor in mind, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, I commit myself to:

___ Begin:

___ Stop:

___ Let go of:

___ Recommit to:

___ Get better at:

___ Pray about:

___ Think through:

___ Learn more about:

___ Change my attitude about:

___ Talk about:

___ Talk with:

___ Write to:

___ Visit:

___ Share:

___ Help:

___ Other:

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Potential Reflection Questions for Support Groups

Keep in mind that the members of the support group are to treat the responses to the questions they ask in a *totally non-judgmental* way. The member who is the focus of the questions will supply his/her own judgment. The goal of the questions is to have the member verbalize and consider what and how they have done since the last meeting of the support group. This may call for the questioners to reflect back to the member what they understand using such phrases as, “What I hear you saying is....;” “If I understand you correctly, you mean....;” and “Do you mean to say....?”

Looking back over the past week (or since we last met):

1. What do I/you appreciate or value from my/your experiences of the past week?
Elaborate, please.
2. What challenges have I/you had over this time?
3. How did I/you meet challenges?
4. How did this make me/you feel?
5. What alternatives might have been better choices for meeting those challenges?
6. What should I/you rejoice in? Give thanks for?
7. What challenges do I/you see in the next week?
8. What choices are available to me/you toward successfully meeting those challenges?
9. Which choice would best reflect Christ’s love for me/you and for those with whom I live and work?
10. Which choice would give me/you the most reason to rejoice? To give thanks?
11. How would I/you feel if I/you choose and follow the path most in line with Christ’s love for me/you and His world?

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Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. Which resources had I known about but forgotten until today??
2. Which resource(s) are new to me?
3. When and how have I been a resource to another?
4. What would my life be like, if I chose to incorporate some of these resources into my daily/weekly routine?
5. What 4 or 5 resources would it be reasonable for me to consider using in my daily life?

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My Resources for Deepening In Faith

Outline of Ideas for the Personal Witness

A note before beginning: This outline is not meant to be totally incorporated into the Witness talk. It contains many ideas from which the witness can choose those that best tell the witness' personal story about the resources chosen and used, how the witness chose them, and how the witness uses them. Be aware of the time limitation necessary for the session and limit the content to fit the time.

- My growing awareness of the need to draw upon resources for my ongoing faith commitment and growth.
- How these resources have strengthened me and helped me to better live my faith in daily life.
- Recognition that different people may need to draw upon various resources suitable for them for their spiritual growth.
- Talk about your weekly celebration of liturgy, including any preparation through reading scriptures ahead of time, etc.
- Talk about your prayer styles such as meditation, centering prayer; charismatic prayer; devotions such as the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, or recitation of one of the short “offices;” *lectio divina*, etc. Share those you have tried and continued; those you have tried and not continued.
- Talk about your spiritual reading, that is, regular reading with mind, heart and soul—Scripture, religious and spiritual books, other good literature viewed through the eyes of faith, etc. Reference the display provided by the program team.
- Talk about times you discovered inspiration in films, television, on the Internet, etc.
- Talk about times and ways you come together with others for prayer, mutual support, accountability (could be regularly or irregularly, in a small group or a one-on-one conversation with a friend).
- Give your personal recommendations categorized in some way. For example:

- Printed materials (books, pamphlets, periodicals, etc.)
- Audio-visual materials (e.g., radio, television, videos, CDs)
- Internet based materials such as web sites and listserves.
- Personal physical reminders

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What spoke to me in a particular way in this witness talk?
2. What spiritual resources do I now include in my daily life?
3. How could I improve the quality of the spiritual resources in my daily life?
4. How would I expect my life to change if I introduced one new spiritual resource into my daily life? Would I like that?
5. What am I willing to do to improve in my daily spiritual life?

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Closing Prayer

(In the meeting room at the space designated for prayer rituals)

Prophets of a Future Not Our Own (Adapted)

By Archbishop Oscar Romero

- Reader 1. First, it helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view.
- Reader 2 The Kingdom of God, of Truth and Love, Is *NOT* only beyond our efforts; it is beyond our vision.
- Reader 3 We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.
- Reader 4 Second, nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.
- Reader 5 No speech says all that should be said.
- Reader 6 No prayer fully expresses our faith.
- Reader 7 No spiritual discipline brings perfection.
- Reader 8 No care for another brings wholeness.
- Reader 9 No program or project accomplishes our mission.
- Reader 10 No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

ALL

This is what we are about,
We plant seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted knowing that they hold
future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our
capabilities.

Reader 11 Third, we cannot do everything, and there is a
sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables
us to do *SOMETHING*, and do it very, very
well.

Reader 12 Fourth, it may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a
step along the way, an opportunity for God's grace to
enter and do the rest.

ALL

We may never see the end results, but that is the
difference between the master builder and the
worker.

We are workers, not master builders...
Ministers not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future that is not our own.
Amen.

Leader: Let us pray.

ALL: Jesus, our brother, today we have considered our relationship with you and the Spirit you sent to be with us, and we thank you for this Faith Alive! experience. You have given many gifts, natural and spiritual, to our stewardship. In this session, we have made commitments to use the gifts you have given us to build up your kingdom. Help us keep these commitments so that the water of faith, the oil of loving commitment, and the bread of everlasting life may touch and act upon every aspect of our lives.

We ask this in your name. Amen

Closing Song: This Little Light of Mine

Needed resources

- Copies of the prayers and reading for all participants
- Copies of This Little Light of Mine for all participants

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This Little Light of Mine

Words (1, 3, & 4) and music by Harry Dixon Loes.
In the Public Domain.

(1)

This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine.
Let it shine.
Let it shine.

(2)

In all the work I do,
I'm gonna let it shine.
In all the work I do,
I'm gonna let it shine.
In all the work I do,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine.
Let it shine.
Let it shine.

(3)

Everywhere I go
I'm gonna let it shine.
Everywhere I go
I'm gonna let it shine.
Everywhere I go
I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine.
Let it shine.
Let it shine.

(4)

Let it shine til Jesus comes,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine til Jesus comes,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine til Jesus comes,
I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine.
Let it shine.
Let it shine.

Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

Materials list for this Session

For the Opening Prayers

- Copies of the Opening Prayer, “Jesus, My Carpenter Brother,” for each participant.
- If individuals will be reading the various parts of the prayer rather than the group, identify them and be sure they are ready and willing.

For the Introductory Learning Experience

- Chart papers with notes from previous sessions posted on the walls.
- The form for On the Walk to Emmaus.

For the Teaching and Personal Witness talks: copies of the outlines and related information about the talks.

- Copies of the information sheets for
 - Centering Prayer
 - Lectio Divina
 - Personal Support Groups
 - Commitment/Pledge sheet
 - Potential Reflection Questions for Support Groups

For the Reflections

Copies of the reflection questions
Pencils

For the Sharing of Learning Reflections

Chart paper (use Post-it chart paper or have masking tape available to tape the paper to the walls)

Markers (water based so they do not bleed through the chart paper)For the Closing Prayer

Potential Handouts for Further Exploration of Faith and Work

- The Living Faith at Work website flyer. The website is at <http://www.livingfaithatwork.org>.
- Include an abstract of the teaching talk, *Being Catholic 24/7: Possibilities and Practicalities..*

Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

ADDITIONAL OR ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Use the information sheet on forming Personal Support Groups as the basis for a teaching talk. After a brief explanation of the groups, have the participants form their own Personal Support Groups and set a time and place for their first meetings. You might have them consider and make their initial commitments or pledges in lieu of the reflection on the teaching talk.
- Have the personal reflection done by a person who practices either Centering Prayer or *Lectio Divina*. The witness could walk the participants through the process(es) they use in practicing that prayer form.

Faith Alive! In My 24/7 Life

Being Catholic Christian 24/7: Possibilities and Practicalities

Abstract

1. Being a Catholic Christian 24/7 is about infusing every moment of our days with the core value of our faith, the essential teaching of Jesus.
 - a. Love God
 - b. Love your neighbor, that is, your fellow human beings.
2. We need support to do this.
 - a. Prayers that invite God to be active in our minds and hearts.
 - b. Support groups of 2 or 3 people who meet with us on a regular basis
3. We humans are each unique and differ in the graces we need and the graces/help we can give to others.
4. Public Worship and Devotions.
 - a. The Church offers opportunities for public, communal prayer and reflection in many ways over the course of time.
5. Personal/private prayer practices: there are many forms and styles of personal prayer. Which do you use regularly? Which do you use rarely?

◇ Blessing and Adoration	◇ Thanksgiving
◇ Petition	◇ Praise
◇ Intersession	
6. Personal inspiration and reminders.
 - If we look for it, we can find or place inspiration in many parts of our daily lives and activities. For what are you looking? Where do you look?
7. Explore the internet. Explore the Living Faith at Work website (www.livingfaithatwork.org)
8. Check out the resources list shared during the session.
9. Set out to be a grace or resource to others.
10. Try forms of prayer other than those you customarily use. For example, *Lectio Divina*.

<http://www.livingfaithatwork.org>

The Living Faith at Work website [<http://www.livingfaithatwork.org>] contains more information, individual activities, and small group activities.

There you will find

- Materials for use by individuals. These may also be used in small groups as discussion starters.
- Materials for facilitators of small groups including some suggestions on facilitating small groups. Abstracts and reflection/discussion questions for several books related to living our faith in our daily lives are included.
- The Faith Alive! program in three formats: **Faith Alive! the Retreat*—a Friday-Saturday Retreat, **Faith Alive! for the Generations*—eight sessions designed for mixed age groups, and **Faith Alive! for Adult Faith Formation*—six sessions designed for use individually or in a series.
- A PowerPoint slide show about living your faith at work.
- A list of suggested readings.
- Homilies or homily notes for the Sundays before St. Joseph the Worker and Labor Day from the past several years.
- Information and Internet links related to Catholic Social Teachings.
- Contact information for Living Faith at Work.
- Internet links to a variety of websites that contain information, prayers, reflections, activities, and even more Internet links related to living a life faithful to the Catholic Faith.

<http://www.livingfaithatwork.org>