

Faith Alive!

for the Generations

Session Seven: Resources

by

Living Faith at Work

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Faith Alive! for the Generations

Session Seven

Resources

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Faith Alive! for the Generations

Notes for the Session Coordinator

- 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.
- Prepare the home kit, that is, the materials for extending the learning and reflection into the household beyond/between the sessions. See separate notes related to the home kits. Use the ideas and principles normally used in Generations of Faith sessions. Determine when and how to distribute the kits.
- Prepare a Prayer Space within the meeting area using the items described in the Prayer Experiences documents.
- A time of 2½ hours for the entire session seems to work best for families. Schedule evening sessions to end by 8:30 PM as families start leaving about then to put children to bed.
- 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.
- Start with the meal. Begin on time and have the participants eat immediately after signing in and getting their name tags. Allow for uninterrupted time during the meal. The suggestion is to allow about 25 minutes for the meal, giving a 5 minute warning before closing the meal and initiating the learning and reflection part of the program.
- One option for ending the meal time and beginning the program is to have a very brief prayer to close the meal. Follow that with the welcoming information, statement of purpose, and group formation. In this option, the Opening Prayer Service flows directly into the All Ages Learning Experience.

- Determine who will be the Prayer Leader or person responsible for conducting the prayer services during the session. Give them the prayer service materials and time to prepare for the planned rituals.
- Read over the document, “Fundamental Purposes of the Faith Alive! Sessions,” in preparation for giving the purpose of the Faith Alive! Sessions during the opening of the session.
- In forming the groups for the session, use the Generations of Faith principles and practices normally used by your parish or institution. Grouping of high-schoolers should be as fits the situation or topic. If the participant pool is small, let them go with the adults or stay with their parents at the student’s option. Once the groups are formed, it may be necessary to allow time for the members to introduce themselves to each other. If so, have them give their names and just one interesting fact about themselves.
- It is important that the participants see work more broadly than just 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.

- The Learning Experience activities included for this session should fit within the allotted 15 minutes.
- For the reflection part of the Learning Experience, the process can be speeded up by having 2 people ready to write the ideas on separate flip charts.
- 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 each of the two reflection sessions, 15 to 20 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, “Resources: Support for Our Mission,” 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 each 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 living “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 In-depth Learning Experience 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.
- To insure and encourage the obtaining of reflections from all groups, several suggestions are:
 - Ask for a spokesperson for each age group or each small group to speak on behalf of the group.
 - Ask for ideas from those less than 10 years old, more than 10 but less than 15, more than 15 but less than 25, more than 25 but less than 50, more than 50. Do this to get a variety of age groups to share their ideas.
 - The Closing Prayer ritual is written for a session ending in the evening, hence the reference “rest” in the final prayer. If the session is held at another time, consider revising or dropping the last prayer.
 - 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! for the Generations

Session Seven Resources

45 minutes	<p>I. Gathering and Opening Prayer</p> <p>A. Registration & Hospitality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sign-in 2. Name Tags 3. Home Kit (in essence, a lesson plan for parents to use with children) 4. Meal 5. Welcoming statement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Greetings b. Identify key people of the session's and the year's program c. Give purpose of the Faith Alive! for the Generations sessions (see Fundamental Purposes of the Faith Alive! Sessions.) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. To strengthen the connection (interaction, interrelationship, interdependence) between people's faith and work. (Work is defined as any productive activity we do.) ii. 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. <p>B. Group Formation—Intergenerational Small Groups</p> <p>C. Opening Prayer Service</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move the people to the Prayer Space. It should be prepared in your customary way or, if preferred, with a crucifix, a bowl of water, a small glass of oil, and a loaf of unsliced bread or pita bread. 2. See separate file for the prayer experience "Grace for Our Lives."
15 minutes	<p>II. All Ages Learning Experience</p> <p>A. Help for the Lord</p>

70 minutes	<p>III. In-Depth Learning Experience</p> <p>A. Teaching Presentation: “Resources: Support for Our Mission.”</p> <ol 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. <p>B. Reflection on Presentation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal/private 2. Shared in dyads within the small groups <p>C. Witness Presentation: “My Resources for Deepening in Faith.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suggestions and guidelines for the witness are in a separate file 2. Distribute reflection questions at the end of the talk while giving directions for reflecting. <p>D. Reflection on Presentation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal/private 2. Shared in dyads within the small groups 3. Shared with entire small group
15 minutes	<p>IV. Sharing Learning Reflections & Home 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</p>

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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. 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
- D. A call to lay people to further develop and deepen their own unique spirituality rooted in who they are and what they do, 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! for the Generations

SESSION SEVEN: OPENING PRAYER

GRACE IN OUR LIVES

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 gifted us with faith, washing us with the waters of Baptism, strengthening us with the oil Confirmation, and feeding us with the bread of Eucharist. These gifts have brought us into the Body of Christ. We give thanks for these wondrous gifts.

Males May the strength of God guide us.

Females May the power of God preserve us.

Children May the wisdom of God instruct us.

Adults May the hand of God protect us.

Males May the way of God direct us.

Females May the shield of God defend us.

Children May the angels of God guard us.

All Against the snares of the evil one.

Adults May Christ be with us!

Males May Christ be before us!

Females May Christ be in us!

Children May Christ be over all!

All May thy grace, Lord, always be ours.

(Attributed to St. Patrick)

Adults May we see God's grace
in the innocence and sense of justice of our children.

Children May we see God's grace
in the guiding voices and hands of the adults in our lives.

Males May we see God's grace
in the humble and normal tasks of our daily lives.

Females May we see God's grace
in the exciting and adventuresome events of our daily lives.

All May we see God's grace in all of our lives!

ALL May thy Grace, Lord, always be ours.

Session Seven: 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.

Gather the participants in the space designated and decorated as the prayer space for the meeting. Provide them 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

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All Ages Learning Experience

Session Seven: Help for the Lord

Introduction

Let's think about Jesus the human being. Here we have God the Almighty, Creator of the Universe, come to save one of his creations, us—men and women, boys and girls, babies, children, and adults.

When he came, he chose to rely on the human beings around him to help him live and to save us. He needed the resources of this world in order to save the world he created.

For today's activity let's take a look at the help the Lord needed and accepted throughout his life here on earth. In particular, let's look at Jesus the baby, Jesus the teen-ager, Jesus the wandering teacher, and Jesus the sacrificial victim.

Activity

Directions for grouping

The groups can be (a) the usual multigenerational groups or (b) age-based groups such as (1) school children and early teen-agers—maybe pre-driver's license—with an adult facilitator or two, (2) teen-agers and young adults, (3) adults, and possibly (4) grandparents. Groups should have no more than eight people in them.

Directions for each group's focus

The four focus times in Jesus' life are (a) Jesus the baby, (b) Jesus the teen-ager and young adult before his public ministry, (c) Jesus the wandering teacher, and (d) Jesus at the time of his passion and death.

If the groups are generational, one focus time can be assigned to each group on a random basis at the discretion of the team facilitating the program.

If the groups are age-based, assign the focus time of Jesus life so that the school children and early teen-agers get Jesus the baby and the teen-agers and young adults get Jesus the teen-ager and young adult. The focus on Jesus the wandering teacher and Jesus the victim can be assigned to either adult group as suits the team facilitating the program.

Directions for working in the group

Provide chart paper and water-based markers to each group.

Select a member of each group whose job it will be to make sure everyone gets a chance to contribute their ideas, the facilitator. The person selected to do this also picks a person to be the writer for the group, that is, a person to write the group's ideas on provided chart paper, the reporter.

After the key focus question is asked, the group members are to remain quiet and think of possible answers. The program facilitators should give one minute of quiet after asking the question and then signal that it is time to share answers in the group.

After the minute of silence, the facilitator asks each group member in turn to give **one** idea to the reporter who writes it down. Continue going around the group until all ideas are share or until they are told to stop.

The focusing question

Think about Jesus at the time of his life assigned to your group. What help did Jesus need in order to live that part of his life? In what ways did Jesus rely on the others in his life at that time of his life?

Whole group sharing

Option 1: Allow 5 to 8 minutes for the small groups to write out their ideas. Then stop them leaving about 5 minutes for reporting out. Ask the reporters to share one idea that their groups thought were

important. Repeat until time to conclude and move on to the teaching presentation.

Option 2: While the groups are generating ideas, have team members walk about the room observing and noting the ideas. Stop the small groups with 4 to 5 minutes to go before going to the teaching presentation. Ask the observers to share the major and key ideas they heard being generated.

Team preparation

The session team ought to do this exercise on their own as part of the preparation so that they will be ready to offer suggestions if a group gets stuck and cannot come up with ideas. A couple of ideas that should be brought up are clothing, shelter, expressions of love (hugs and kisses), food, companionship, and private prayer (in his adult years at least).

Summing up and transition

God, the Creator, chose to rely on the good stewardship and resources of his creation. That seems to say that we need to be ready to give support, to provide resources to others, and be ready to ask for support, to ask for resources from God and those who live and work with us.

[Introduce the presenter of the teaching presentation.]

Materials

Flip chart paper for each group

Markers, water-based

Focus question printed large on flip chart paper for all to see at the appropriate time

Faith Alive! for the Generations

Resources: Support for Our Mission

Outline of Ideas for the Teaching Witness

A note 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.

Introduction

- Jesus became a human being and depended on the people in his life on earth while he carried out his mission of salvation. While only he could be our savior, by his life among us he chose to show us the need to give and receive support with those among whom we live. He not only gave to the people of Judea; he received and accepted much from them as well. He did not live alone.
- Our mission is to do the work of Jesus; to carry the values our faith teaches us into all aspects of our daily lives including our work life.
- In a sense, it is in the activities and interactions of our daily lives that the second great commandment that Christ gave—to love our neighbors as ourselves—is lived out.
- As human beings, each with our own unique set of faults, failings, and weakness and talents, successes, and strengths, we each need to prepare our own nest of support to help us stay on track through the days and weeks. We need to reach out and activate the graces available to us, particularly those best fitted to our personalities and characters.
- 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

- [We spent a session on Liturgy or the Eucharistic Sacrifice in an earlier session.]
- 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.

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. Reference the display provided by the Faith Alive! for the Generations team.
- Discovering inspirational resources in films, television, on the Internet, etc.
- 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.
- If possible, connect a computer to the internet and use a video projector to enable all participants to watch a brief exploration of the Living Faith at Work website (<http://www.livingfaithatwork.org>) and the links it has to many other sites with inspirational and devotional materials.
- Even better, if the participants can have access to a computer lab or a number of computers, let the participants explore the Living Faith at Work website and its links on their own.
- If an internet connection is not available but a computer and projector are, copy and display the four pages from the Living Faith at Work website provided with the materials for this session.
- If a computer and projector are not available, make copies of the web page files included with these documents and distribute them during the talk.

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's 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.

7. Involve the participants in a prayer method that has not been commonly practiced in your Church community.

- We recommend that you engage the participants in an abbreviated (3 to 5 minute) experience of *lectio divina*. See the document on *Lectio Divina* included with this session's materials. Also, there is a one page summary of *lectio divina* in the materials suggested for the Home Kit.
- One suggested text for the brief *lectio divina* could be Luke 9:12-17.
- Another possibility is to use the *Our Father* or parts of it.

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! for the Generations

RESOURCES FOR GROWING SPIRITUALLY

As an individual

- Finger rosary (1 decade)
- Lector at Mass
- Down on your knees the first thing in the morning
- Journal
- Home Eucharistic ministry
- Start and end days with praise and thanksgiving
- Say a prayer for person who cut you off on the freeway
- Say a short Thank You to Jesus each day
- When outside, find God in nature sunset, flowers coming up, trees
- CD/tape for inspiration
- Surrender your worry about what you can't control, past or future
- Make room for sanctuary (when someone is stressed/depressed)
- Contemplative Prayer and meditation
- Rosary
- Adoration of Blessed Sacrament
- Spend time in an empty church
- Pray for someone who is really bugging you, each day
- Sit in silence
- Approach Sunday liturgy with the intention of leaving with one practical thing that you can put into practice during the week.
- Pin St. Christopher on vision "pray for us"
- Spiritual music
- Thanksgiving and praise when we don't know what to pray.

- Select and regularly meet with a Spiritual Director
- Appreciate art as worship
- Volunteer with underprivileged kids

As part of a group

- Prayer Group—small faith group
- Rosary gathering—group meet before Mass
- Music ministry group
- Retreats with others
- Find positive people with which to surround yourself
- Walks around the block/exercise with someone and talk as you walk
- Youth Missions
- Couple faith sharing group (support group with strong theme of faith)
- Join with other seekers and believers
- Small Christian Communities (faith groups)
- Do volunteer service to the community
- Serve in one of your parishes ministries

Through the media

- ◆ 7:30 a.m. Sunday – Joal Osteen – Channel 5
- ◆ 103.3 WCRF Christian music
- ◆ EWTN TV (Roadrunner channel 18)—Catholic TV, Mother Angelica
- ◆ 95.5 The Fish
- ◆ Ravi Zacharias (WCRF Sunday's 2 pm) speaker author

Through reading

- Reading books based on our faith
- *God Calling* by A.J. Russell (book of inspirational readings)

- “Staying in the Present” (written like a parable: *The Present* by Ken Blanchard.)
- *Awareness* by Anthony Domello (book)
- *One Bread One Body* (book)
- *Prayer of Jabez* (book)
- *Mother’s Treasury of Prayers* (book)
- *Pray with the Heart!* Medjugorge Manual of Prayer
- *Centering Prayer in Daily Life and Ministry* by Thomas Keating & Gustave Reininger (Editor).
- *Centering Prayer: Renewing an Ancient Christian Prayer Form* by M. Basil Pennington
- *Centered Living* by M. Basil Pennington
- *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis
- *Fr. Allender’s Hopes*
- *Home Sweet Home* – Scott Hann
- *Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren
- Fr. Ben Groeschel
- Authors – Matthew Kelly (www.matthewkelly.org), Henri Nouwen (www.henrinouwen.org), Max Lucado
- Prepare weekend readings and study before Sunday
- *The Word Among Us*
- Bible stories/Bible study
- *Ligourian* magazine
- *Magnificat* magazine
- *Living Faith* booklet
- *New American Bible* – Bible Compare.com
- Bible next to the toilet
- *Catholic Digest*
- At Home with the Word
- Motivational booklet on email address
- Daily reflections (for example, Give Thanks for Blessings and Pray for Guidance)

Websites

- www.vatican.va (the official Vatican website)
- www.usccb.org (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)
- www.dioceseofcleveland.org
- www.livingfaithatwork.org/ (Living Faith at Work: information and dialogue aids)
- www.osjspm.org/ (Office of Social Justice, Diocese of St. Paul, MN)
- www.appleseeds.org/religfav.htm (Fr. Brian’s Favorite Bookmarks)
- www.ohiocathconf.org (Ohio Catholic Conference)
- www.christophers.org/3minlink.html (The Christophers: Three Minutes a Day, short daily reflections)
- www.americancatholic.org/ (Has a daily Minute Meditation on the home page)
- www.magnificat.net/ (an online Catholic magazine)
- www.wau.org/ (daily meditations and a magazine)
- www.sacredspace.ie/ (Sacred space, a prayer and reflection site)
- www.contemplativeoutreach.org (information and guidance on forms of contemplative prayer)
- www.kyrie.com/cp/ (information about and instructions for Centering Prayer. Links to additional related sites)
- www.thecentering.org (dedicated to teaching the method of centering prayer, arranging prayer groups, etc.)
- www.ewtn.com/ (Eternal Word Television Network, Catholic teachings and more)
- www.catholicnews.com/
- www.catholic.com
- www.Catholic.org

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**Homily for the Sunday before
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[MSWord](#) | [PDF](#)

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for Living Faith at Work**
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Publications for Individual Use

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Practical Tips for Being a Catholic at Work

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Self Inventory: A Deeper Look at Who I Am and How I Serve

[MSWord](#) | [PDF](#)

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How in the World Do We Make a Difference? Getting to the Heart and Soul of Work

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Spirituality at Work: 10 Ways to Balance Your Life on the Job

[One page abstract of the book]

[MSWord](#) | [PDF](#)

[Reflection questions for each chapter]

[MSWord](#) | [PDF](#)

Suggested Reading Materials

- Douglas, Norman, Vuillemin, Lawrence, & Hallam, Stephen. *How in the World Do We Make a Difference? Getting to the Heart and Soul of Love and Work*. Skokie, IL: ACTA Publications, 2006. [One page abstract of the book: [MSWord](#) | [PDF](#)]
- Droel, William, L. and Pierce, Gregory F. Augustine. *Confident and Competent: A Challenge for the Lay Church*. Chicago: ACTA Publications, 1991.
- Droel, William. *Full Time Christians: The Real Challenge from Vatican II*. Mystic, CN: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002.
- Hammett, Edward H. *Making the Church Work: Converting the Church for the 21st Century*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 2000.
- Nash, Laura and McLennan, Scotty. *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday: The Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.
- Pierce, Gregory F. A. *Spirituality at Work: 10 Ways to Balance Your Life on the Job*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2001. [One page abstract of the book: [MSWord](#) | [PDF](#) ; Reflection questions for each chapter: [MSWord](#) | [PDF](#)]
- Thompson, C. Michael. *The Congruent Life: Following the Inward Path to Fulfilling Work and Inspired Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000. [One page abstract of the book [MSWord](#) | [PDF](#) ; Reflection questions for each chapter, longer set [MSWord](#) | [PDF](#) and shorter set [MSWord](#) | [PDF](#)]

Links to Other Websites

[St. Joseph's Christian Life Center](#) - Living Faith at Work is an outreach of the non-profit St. Joseph Christian Life Center, the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland Retreat House.

[Catholic Diocese of Cleveland](#)

[The Vatican](#)

[Heart to Heart Communications](#) - H2HC is non-profit organization which provides a variety of programs for individual and workplace enrichment, especially in the area of leadership.

[American Catholic](#) - Daily minute meditations, saints of the day, information about the Catholic faith, and more from the Franciscans and St. Anthony Messenger Press.

[Appleseeds](#) - Fr. Brian Cavanaugh, TOR, provides approximately 500 links to sources related to Church, Religion, Saints: Scholarly Spiritual Resources. The links are categorized for easy use.

[Contemplative Outreach](#) - Dedicated to sharing the practice of centering prayer as taught by Fr. Thomas Keating.

[Kyrie](#) - Provides information and instruction in centering prayer from Cistercian writers. Also, links to information about other forms of contemplative prayer.

[Sacred Space](#) - Daily prayer and reflection guide on-line. Approximately 10 minutes a day. Produced by the Irish Jesuits.

[Social Justice Issues and Information](#) - Website of the Office of Social Justice of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Very thorough, very informative.

[The Christophers' Three Minutes a Day](#) - Brief inspirational stories and reflections for each day of the year. Click on the day of the week for the current story/reflection.

[The Word Among Us](#) - A daily meditation is provided on the home page of this magazine's website. Offers practical help in reading scripture and living in greater openness to the Spirit.

ACCEPTING THE EMBRACE *of* GOD: THE ANCIENT ART *of* **LECTIO DIVINA**

by Fr. Luke Dysinger, O.S.B.

1. THE PROCESS *of* **LECTIO DIVINA**

A **VERY ANCIENT** art, practiced at one time by all Christians, is the technique known as *lectio divina* - a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures which enables the Bible, the Word of God, to become a means of union with God. This ancient practice has been kept alive in the Christian monastic tradition, and is one of the precious treasures of Benedictine monastics and oblates. Together with the Liturgy and daily manual labor, time set aside in a special way for *lectio divina* enables us to discover in our daily life an underlying spiritual rhythm. Within this rhythm we discover an increasing ability to offer more of ourselves and our relationships to the Father, and to accept the embrace that God is continuously extending to us in the person of his Son Jesus Christ.

***Lectio* - reading/listening**

THE ART of *lectio divina* begins with cultivating the ability to listen deeply, to hear “with the ear of our hearts” as St. Benedict encourages us in the Prologue to the Rule. When we read the Scriptures we should try to imitate the prophet Elijah. We should allow ourselves to become women and men who are able to listen for the still, small voice of God (**I Kings 19:12**); the “faint murmuring sound” which is God's word for us, God's voice touching our hearts. This gentle listening is an “atunement” to the presence of God in that special part of God's creation which is the Scriptures.

THE CRY of the prophets to ancient Israel was the joy-filled command to “Listen!” “Sh'ma Israel: Hear, O Israel!” In *lectio divina* we, too, heed that command and turn to the Scriptures, knowing that we must “hear” - listen - to the voice of God, which often speaks very softly. In order to hear someone speaking softly we must learn to be silent. We must learn to love silence. If we are constantly speaking or if we are surrounded with noise, we cannot hear gentle sounds. The practice of *lectio divina*, therefore, requires that we first quiet down in order to hear God's word to us. This is the first step of *lectio divina*, appropriately called *lectio* - reading.

THE READING or listening which is the first step in *lectio divina* is very different from the speed reading which modern Christians apply to newspapers, books and even to the Bible. *Lectio* is reverential listening; listening both in a spirit of silence and of awe. We are listening for the still, small voice of God that will speak to us personally - not loudly, but intimately. In *lectio* we read slowly, attentively, gently listening to hear a word or phrase that is God's word for us this day.

***Meditatio* - meditation**

ONCE WE have found a word or a passage in the Scriptures that speaks to us in a personal way, we must take it in and “ruminate” on it. The image of the ruminant animal quietly chewing its cud was used in antiquity as a symbol of the Christian pondering the Word of God. Christians have always seen a scriptural invitation to *lectio divina* in the example of the Virgin Mary “pondering in her heart” what she saw and heard of Christ (**Luke 2:19**). For us today these images are a reminder that we must take in the

word - that is, memorize it - and while gently repeating it to ourselves, allow it to interact with our thoughts, our hopes, our memories, our desires. This is the second step or stage in lectio divina - meditatio. Through meditatio we allow God's word to become His word for us, a word that touches us and affects us at our deepest levels.

Oratio - prayer

THE THIRD step in *lectio divina* is *oratio* - prayer: prayer understood both as dialogue with God, that is, as loving conversation with the One who has invited us into His embrace; and as consecration, prayer as the priestly offering to God of parts of ourselves that we have not previously believed God wants. In this consecration-prayer we allow the word that we have taken in and on which we are pondering to touch and change our deepest selves. Just as a priest consecrates the elements of bread and wine at the Eucharist, God invites us in lectio divina to hold up our most difficult and pain-filled experiences to Him, and to gently recite over them the healing word or phrase He has given us in our lectio and meditatio. In this *oratio*, this consecration-prayer, we allow our real selves to be touched and changed by the word of God.

Contemplatio - contemplation

FINALLY, WE simply rest in the presence of the One who has used His word as a means of inviting us to accept His transforming embrace. No one who has ever been in love needs to be reminded that there are moments in loving relationships when words are unnecessary. It is the same in our relationship with God. Wordless, quiet rest in the presence of the One Who loves us has a name in the Christian tradition - contemplatio, contemplation. Once again we practice silence, letting go of our own words; this time simply enjoying the experience of being in the presence of God.

2. THE UNDERLYING RHYTHM of *LECTIO DIVINA*

IF WE are to practice *lectio divina* effectively, we must travel back in time to an understanding that today is in danger of being almost completely lost. In the Christian past the words **action** (or *practice*, from the Greek *praktikos*) and **contemplation** did not describe different kinds of Christians engaging (or not engaging) in different forms of prayer and apostolates. Practice and contemplation were understood as the two poles of our underlying, ongoing spiritual rhythm: a gentle oscillation back and forth between spiritual “activity” with regard to God and “receptivity.”

PRACTICE - spiritual “activity” - referred in ancient times to our active cooperation with God's grace in rooting out vices and allowing the virtues to flourish. The direction of spiritual activity was not outward in the sense of an apostolate, but **inward** - down into the depths of the soul where the Spirit of God is constantly transforming us, refashioning us in God's image. The *active life* is thus coming to see who we truly are and allowing ourselves to be remade into what God intends us to become.

IN THE early monastic tradition, *contemplation* was understood in two ways. First was *theoria physike*, the contemplation of God in creation - God in “the many.” Second was *theologia*, the contemplation of God in Himself without images or words - God as “The One.” From this perspective *lectio divina* serves as a training-ground for the contemplation of God in His creation.

IN CONTEMPLATION we cease from interior spiritual *doing* and learn simply to *be*, that is to rest in the presence of our loving Father. Just as we constantly move back and forth in our exterior lives between speaking and listening, between questioning and reflecting, so in our spiritual lives we must learn to enjoy

the refreshment of simply *being* in God's presence, an experience that naturally alternates (if we let it!) with our spiritual *practice*.

IN ANCIENT times contemplation was not regarded as a goal to be achieved through some method of prayer, but was simply accepted with gratitude as God's recurring gift. At intervals the Lord invites us to cease from speaking so that we can simply rest in his embrace. This is the pole of our inner spiritual rhythm called contemplation.

HOW DIFFERENT this ancient understanding is from our modern approach! Instead of recognizing that we all gently oscillate back and forth between spiritual activity and receptivity, between practice and contemplation, we today tend to set contemplation before ourselves as a goal - something we imagine we can achieve through some spiritual technique. We must be willing to sacrifice our "goal-oriented" approach if we are to practice *lectio divina*, because *lectio divina* has no other goal than spending time with God through the medium of His word. The amount of time we spend in any aspect of *lectio divina*, whether it be rumination, consecration or contemplation depends on God's Spirit, not on us. *Lectio divina* teaches us to savor and delight in all the different flavors of God's presence, whether they be active or receptive modes of experiencing Him.

IN *lectio divina* we offer ourselves to God; and we are people in motion. In ancient times this inner spiritual motion was described as a helix - an ascending spiral. Viewed in only two dimensions it appears as a circular motion back and forth; seen with the added dimension of time it becomes a helix, an ascending spiral by means of which we are drawn ever closer to God. The whole of our spiritual lives were viewed in this way, as a gentle oscillation between spiritual activity and receptivity by means of which God unites us ever closer to Himself. In just the same way the steps or stages of *lectio divina* represent an oscillation back and forth between these spiritual poles. In *lectio divina* we recognize our underlying spiritual rhythm and discover many different ways of experiencing God's presence - many different ways of praying.

3. THE PRACTICE of *LECTIO DIVINA*

Private Lectio Divina

CHOOSE a text of the Scriptures that you wish to pray. Many Christians use in their daily *lectio divina* one of the readings from the Eucharistic liturgy for the day; others prefer to slowly work through a particular book of the Bible. It makes no difference which text is chosen, as long as one has no set goal of "covering" a certain amount of text: the amount of text "covered" is in God's hands, not yours.

PLACE YOURSELF in a comfortable position and allow yourself to become silent. Some Christians focus for a few moments on their breathing; other have a beloved "prayer word" or "prayer phrase" they gently recite in order to become interiorly silent. For some the practice known as "centering prayer" makes a good, brief introduction to *lectio divina*. Use whatever method is best for you and allow yourself to enjoy silence for a few moments.

THEN TURN to the text and read it slowly, gently. Savor each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the "still, small voice" of a word or phrase that somehow says, "I am for you today." Do not expect lightening or ecstasies. In *lectio divina* God is teaching us to listen to Him, to seek Him in silence. He does not reach out and grab us; rather, He softly, gently invites us ever more deeply into His presence.

NEXT TAKE the word or phrase into yourself. Memorize it and slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world of concerns, memories and ideas. Do not be afraid of "distractions."

Memories or thoughts are simply parts of yourself which, when they rise up during *lectio divina*, are asking to be given to God along with the rest of your inner self. Allow this inner pondering, this rumination, to invite you into dialogue with God.

THEN, SPEAK to God. Whether you use words or ideas or images or all three is not important. Interact with God as you would with one who you know loves and accepts you. And give to Him what you have discovered in yourself during your experience of *meditatio*. Experience yourself as the priest that you are. Experience God using the word or phrase that He has given you as a means of blessing, of transforming the ideas and memories, which your pondering on His word has awakened. Give to God what you have found within your heart.

FINALLY, SIMPLY rest in God's embrace. And when He invites you to return to your pondering of His word or to your inner dialogue with Him, do so. Learn to use words when words are helpful, and to let go of words when they no longer are necessary. Rejoice in the knowledge that God is with you in both words and silence, in spiritual activity and inner receptivity.

SOMETIMES IN *lectio divina* one will return several times to the printed text, either to savor the literary context of the word or phrase that God has given, or to seek a new word or phrase to ponder. At other times only a single word or phrase will fill the whole time set aside for *lectio divina*. It is not necessary to anxiously assess the quality of one's *lectio divina* as if one were "performing" or seeking some goal: *lectio divina* has no goal other than that of being in the presence of God by praying the Scriptures.

Lectio Divina as a Group Exercise

THE most authentic and traditional form of Christian *lectio divina* is the solitary or "private" practice described to this point. In recent years, however, many different forms of so-called "group lectio" have become popular and are now widely-practiced. These group exercises can be very useful means of introducing and encouraging the practice of *lectio divina*; but they should not become a substitute for an encounter and communion with the Living God that can only take place in that privileged solitude where the biblical Word of God becomes transparent to the Very Word Himself - namely private *lectio divina*.

IN churches of the Third World where books are rare, a form of corporate *lectio divina* is becoming common in which a text from the Scriptures is pondered by Christians praying together in a group. The method of group *lectio divina* described here was introduced at St. Andrew's Abbey by oblates Doug and Norvene Vest: it is used as part of the Benedictine Spirituality for Laity workshops conducted at the Abbey each summer.

THIS FORM of *lectio divina* works best in a group of between four and eight people. A group leader coordinates the process and facilitates sharing. The same text from the Scriptures is read out three times, followed each time by a period of silence and an opportunity for each member of the group to share the fruit of her or his *lectio*.

THE FIRST reading (the text is actually read twice on this occasion) is for the purpose of hearing a word or passage that touches the heart. When the word or phrase is found, it is silently taken in, and gently recited and pondered during the silence which follows. After the silence each person shares which word or phrase has touched his or her heart.

THE SECOND reading (by a member of the opposite sex from the first reader) is for the purpose of "hearing" or "seeing" Christ in the text. Each ponders the word that has touched the heart and asks where the word or phrase touches his or her life that day. In other words, how is Christ the Word touching his own experience, his own life? How are the various members of the group seeing or hearing Christ reach

out to them through the text? Then, after the silence, each member of the group shares what he or she has “heard” or “seen.”

THE THIRD and final reading is for the purpose of experiencing Christ “calling us forth” into *doing* or *being*. Members ask themselves what Christ in the text is calling them to *do* or to *become* today or this week. After the silence, each shares for the last time; and the exercise concludes with each person praying for the person on the right.

THOSE WHO regularly practice this method of praying and sharing the Scriptures regularly find it to be an excellent way of developing trust within a group; it also is an excellent way of consecrating projects and hopes to Christ before more formal group meetings. A summary of this method for group *lectio divina* is appended at the end of this article.

Lectio Divina on Life

IN THE ancient tradition *lectio divina* was understood as being one of the most important ways in which Christians experience God in creation. After all, the Scriptures are part of creation! If one is daily growing in the art of finding Christ in the pages of the Bible, one naturally begins to discover Him more clearly in aspects of the other things He has made. This includes, of course, our own personal history.

OUR OWN lives are fit matter for *lectio divina*. Very often our concerns, our relationships, our hopes and aspirations naturally intertwine with our pondering on the Scriptures, as has been described above. But sometimes it is fitting to simply sit down and “read” the experiences of the last few days or weeks in our hearts, much as we might slowly read and savor the words of Scripture in *lectio divina*. We can attend “with the ear of our hearts” to our own memories, listening for God’s gentle presence in the events of our lives. We thus allow ourselves the joy of experiencing Christ reaching out to us through our own memories. Our own personal story becomes “salvation history.”

FOR THOSE who are new to the practice of *lectio divina* a group experience of “*lectio* on life” can provide a helpful introduction. An approach that has been used at workshops at St. Andrew’s Priory is detailed at the end of this article. Like the experience of *lectio divina* shared in community, this group experience of *lectio* on life can foster relationships in community and enable personal experiences to be consecrated - offered to Christ - in a concrete way.

HOWEVER, UNLIKE scriptural *lectio divina* shared in community, this group *lectio* on life contains more silence than sharing. The role of group facilitators or leaders is important, since they will be guiding the group through several periods of silence and reflection without the “interruption” of individual sharing until the end of the exercise. Since the experiences we choose to “read” or “listen to” may be intensely personal, it is important in this group exercise to safeguard privacy by making sharing completely optional.

IN BRIEF, one begins with restful silence, then gently reviews the events of a given period of time. One seeks an event, a memory, which touches the heart just as a word or phrase in scriptural *lectio divina* does. One then recalls the setting, the circumstances; one seeks to discover how God seemed to be present or absent from the experience. One then offers the event to God and rests for a time in silence. A suggested method for group *lectio divina* on life is given in the Appendix to this article.

CONCLUSION

LECTIO DIVINA is an ancient spiritual art that is being rediscovered in our day. It is a way of allowing the Scriptures to become again what God intended that they should be - a means of uniting us to Himself. In *lectio divina* we discover our own underlying spiritual rhythm. We experience God in a gentle oscillation back and forth between spiritual activity and receptivity, in the movement from practice into contemplation and back again into spiritual practice.

LECTIO DIVINA teaches us about the God who truly loves us. In *lectio divina* we dare to believe that our loving Father continues to extend His embrace to us today. And His embrace is real. In His word we experience ourselves as personally loved by God; as the recipients of a word which He gives uniquely to each of us whenever we turn to Him in the Scriptures.

FINALLY, *lectio divina* teaches us about ourselves. In *lectio divina* we discover that there is no place in our hearts, no interior corner or closet that cannot be opened and offered to God. God teaches us in *lectio divina* what it means to be members of His royal priesthood - a people called to consecrate all of our memories, our hopes and our dreams to Christ.

APPENDIX: TWO APPROACHES to GROUP *LECTIO DIVINA*

1. *Lectio Divina Shared in Community*

(A) Listening for the Gentle Touch of Christ the Word (*The Literal Sense*)

1. One person reads aloud (twice) the passage of scripture, as others are attentive to some segment that is especially meaningful to them.
2. **Silence** for 1-2 minutes. Each hears and silently repeats a word or phrase that attracts.
3. Sharing aloud: [A word or phrase that has attracted each person]. A simple statement of one or a few words. **No elaboration**.

(B) How Christ the Word speaks to ME (*The Allegorical Sense*)

4. Second reading of same passage by another person.
5. **Silence** for 2-3 minutes. Reflect on "Where does the content of this reading touch my life today?"
6. Sharing aloud: **Briefly**: "I hear, I see..."

(C) What Christ the Word Invites me to DO (*The Moral Sense*)

7. Third reading by still another person.
8. **Silence** for 2-3 minutes. Reflect on "I believe that God wants me to today/this week."
9. Sharing aloud: at somewhat greater length the results of each one's reflection. [Be especially aware of what is shared by the person to your right.]

10. After full sharing, pray for the person to your right.

Note: Anyone may “pass” at any time. If instead of sharing with the group you prefer to pray silently , simply state this aloud and conclude your silent prayer with *Amen*.

2. *Lectio* on Life: Applying *Lectio Divina* to my personal Salvation History

Purpose: to apply a method of prayerful reflection to a life/work incident (instead of to a scripture passage)

(A) Listening for the Gentle Touch of Christ the Word (*The Literal Sense*)

1. Each person quiets the body and mind: relax, sit comfortably but alert, close eyes, attune to breathing...
2. Each person gently reviews events, situations, sights, encounters that have happened since the beginning of the retreat/or during the last month at work.

(B) Gently Ruminating, Reflecting (*Meditatio - Meditation*)

3. Each person allows the self to focus on one such offering.
 - a) Recollect the setting, sensory details, sequence of events, etc.
 - b) Notice where the greatest energy seemed to be evoked. Was there a turning point or shift?
 - c) In what ways did God seem to be present? To what extent was I aware then? Now?

(C) Prayerful Consecration, Blessing (*Oratio - Prayer*)

4. Use a word or phrase from the Scriptures to inwardly consecrate - to offer up to God in prayer - the incident and interior reflections. Allow God to accept and bless them as your gift.

(D) Accepting Christ's Embrace; Silent Presence to the Lord (*Contemplatio - Contemplation*)

5. Remain in silence for some period.

(E) Sharing our *Lectio* Experience with Each Other (*Operatio - Action; works*)

6. Leader calls the group back into “community.”
 7. All share briefly (or remain in continuing silence).
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This document was last updated on 12/9/05 at 10:30 a.m.

Faith Alive! for the Generations

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?

Faith Alive! for the Generations

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?

Faith Alive! for the Generations

My Resources for Deepening In Faith

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?

Faith Alive! for the Generations

Prayer Experiences Session Seven: Closing Prayer

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

Opening Song: *At Evening* (#759 in the *Gather* hymnal; 2 verses)

Opening Prayer

Leader: O God, come to my assistance.

Response: Lord, make haste to help me.

Reader 1

I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy, and your faces may not blush with shame.

When the afflicted man called out, the Lord heard, and from all his distress he saved him. (Psalm 34:5-7)

Reader 2

When the just cry out, the Lord hears them, and from all their distress he rescues them.

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves.

Many are the troubles of the just man, but out of them all the Lord delivers him...(Psalm 34:18-20)

All Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Prayer

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 Generations of Faith 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 Prayer

All: May the almighty Lord grant us a quiet night and a perfect end. Amen.

Closing Song: *At Evening* (#759 in the *Gather* hymnal; 2 verses)

Needed resources

- *Gather* Hymnals. If this hymnal is not available, it may be necessary to select other, comparable songs from the available hymnals or in accordance with whatever music use licenses are held by the institution putting on this Faith Alive! for the Generations session.
- If the song *At Evening* is not appropriate for the time and place of your gathering, select another song that is more appropriate.
- Copies of the prayers and reading for all participants

Faith Alive! for the Generations

Materials list for Session Seven

For the Gathering and Opening

- Sign-in sheet(s)
- Name tags and markers
- Home Kit
- Food and beverages for the meal
- Waste containers
- Table tents or other means to identify groups

For Prayer Space

- Bowl of Water
- Cruet of oil
- Loaf of bread
- Music Stand
- Cloth
- Bible
- Candles

For the Opening Prayers

- Copies of the Opening Prayer, “Grace in Our Lives,” 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 All Ages Learning Experience

- Flip chart paper for each group.
- One or more water-based markers for each group.
- Tables for the groups or space for a circle of chairs.
- The focus question printed large on a piece of chart paper ready to be posted at the appropriate moment.

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

List of resources for each participant

Computer connected to the internet and a video projector

OR

A computer lab connected to the internet

OR

Copies of four pages from the Living Faith at Work website for each participant

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 Ritual

- *Gather* Hymnals. If this hymnal is not available, it may be necessary to select other, comparable songs from the available hymnals or in accordance with whatever music use licenses are held by the institution putting on this Faith Alive! for the Generations session.
- Copies of the Closing Prayers for all.

Faith Alive! for the Generations

ABOUT HOME KITS

About Home Kits in general

- Motto in preparing home kits, **Simplicity**. Aim for simplicity, not a lot of printed material.
- Categories of materials to consider for inclusion in the home kit
 - A reading or two
 - Table Reflections
 - Prayers
 - Service Project Ideas
 - Family Activities/Family Enrichment
 - Rituals
- There are many suggestions about when and ways to distribute the home kits. Let your knowledge of your participants guide your selection of the distribution and explanation method for each session's home kit.
 - Suggestion: Prepare the materials and put for the home kit together in advance. Give the participants the kits at the beginning of the program, to take with them through the day's program. Then, have the participants take out and use parts of the kit, or refer to specific parts, at different points in the evening.
 - Suggestion: Prepare the materials for the home kit but do not put them together in advance. Give the participants a bag and have them fill it with the home kit contents as they go through the parts of the day's program.
 - Suggestion: Hold the home kit till just before the final prayer. Allow time in the agenda to distribute the kit and explain how to use it.
- The kits' contents must apply to the topic of the day.
- Catholic Updates are a good print resource.
- Look into the various Diocesan offices for materials. Check the offices that are dedicated to the specific topic.
- Bible study can be encouraged by giving/listing a scripture reading for each day between GOF sessions.

- Encouraging daily journaling is a way to encourage daily reflection. The kit could include a small note pad for each member of the household with directions to write one or two sentences each day descriptive of his/her reflections about the topic of the session.
- The contents should foster experiential faith and relationships.
- Application is everything. Avoid assuming that people know “It” already.
- All sessions of the day’s program should make a connection to the home kit of the day.

About Home Kits for *Faith Alive! for the Generations*, Session Seven

- Using construction paper or a heavy stock of copy paper, cut strips about an inch wide and 8.5” long for constructing a chain. At the family/household meal of the day, family members can write on a strip one of the times they reached out for or activated a grace in support of their living out our faith in their daily life, one occasion to a strip. The chains could be constructed on an individual basis or on a total household basis.
- Members of the household can review the list of resources and add other resources that they use but which are not on the list. As they add items to the list they would explain how the item affects them.
- Once a week at a family/household meal the family members could identify one resource from the list of resources that they plan to use or do in the following week. During the week, they can write a brief journal daily recording their efforts and the results of those efforts. At a family/household meal the following week, they can report on their efforts and the results of those efforts. Then choose another resource (or even the same one) for the next week.
- The household could collect or buy a sack of small stones (say between ½” and ¾” in size). Keep the stones in a visible place, perhaps near the family dining area or beside the television. Next to the sack, place a glass bowl that is large enough to hold all of the stones. During each day, household members can transfer one stone from the sack to the bowl by telling at least one other household member of an instance in the day when they used one of the resources for grace on the family list. When all the stones are transferred or when a pre-determined line on the bowl is reached, the household would reward itself with a treat that is special to the household. This could be a special activity, a special meal, or whatever the household members find desirable and agreeable. The household could use many other things in place of the stones if desired. For example, members could use acorns, buckeyes, hard candy, coins, etc.

- The sack of stones and glass bowl could be done on an individual basis, if desired. Just use a smaller bowl. There could be one sack of stones for the whole household or one for each individual.
- Any of the above activities could be done with a focus on help or graces given as opposed to graces activated or reached out for. In the paper chain, the help or graces given could be a different color and put into one chain with the graces reached out for or activated. In the stones, different colored stones or larger stones could be used for help or graces given.
- Once a week or every other week, the members of the household can pause together and recall the commitments they made during the session on Resources. Each can report on his/her progress in keeping the commitments and the difficulties that have developed. All can offer suggestions and support to each other for the time until they next review their progress.
- Once or twice a week the household could pray using the *lectio divina* method. Members could take turns selecting the text to be used and leading the process. See the brief explanation of *lectio divina* included in this Home Kit. A guide to *lectio divina* for children can be found on the internet at <http://living-word.org> by clicking on “Printed Materials” and then on “English version” for Refleksyon Bib la pou Timoun (Biblical Reflections for Children).
- Prepare to be God’s ambassador. At each household gathering have one of the members describe a situation that he/she expects to face in as he/she does his/her work and that he/she would like to handle very well. Members of the household volunteer or are assigned to play the role of people who will be involved in the situation. Then all act out the situation allowing the household member to try out various ways to deal with the situation. Also, others could take the role of the household member and have the member take the role of the person at work who is the most difficult to deal with in the given situation.
- Could include materials to create or enhance a home prayer space—picture, icon, cross, other religious symbols, materials to create their own symbols for the household.
- Identify and include appropriate readings from the seasonal liturgies with reflection questions.
- Encourage further exploration of the Living Faith at Work concepts by including the Living Faith at Work website flyer. The website is at <http://www.livingfaithatwork.org>.
- Include an abstract of the teaching talk, *On a Mission to Do Jesus’ Work*.

Reading: Holy Life

The Practice of Lectio Divina

Establish a quietness of 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. The person selected to lead the household in *lectio divina* should have selected a scripture passage. A good source would be the readings for the next Sunday liturgy, particularly the psalms. If children younger than 11 or 12 will be participating, short, straightforward passages or parable passages would work best. For example, 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.

1. **Reading:** We read the passage slowly and prayerfully several times. After the first reading, we ask God to help us up learn the meaning of the text. Individually and silently we focus on a word or phrase that grabs our attention. We pay attention to what the word or phrase brings to mind. We seek to understand it.
2. **Meditation:**(Reflection) We repeat (or, if alone, re-read) to ourselves the word or phrase that grabbed our attention. Now, we listen as the text is re-read, we listen as if the Scripture were being addressed to us personally, with "our name" as the greeting of a letter. We allow our imagination to place us 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?" We ponder its personal message to us.
3. **Prayer:** (Respond) We re-read this passage again. We let it form our words for a loving prayer, our response to the Father. After some reflection on what we have heard, we speak a prayer of love, using the words and images of this passage to engage the God Who has spoken to us.
4. **Contemplation:** (Rest) We re-read the text a final time and allow ourselves to "fall into" the "mystery" of God that is made real in this Word, in our heart, in this moment. Silence is observed until distraction calls us to move along.

Faith Alive! for the Generations

Resources: Support for Our Mission

Abstract

1. We humans are each unique and differ in the graces we need and the graces/help we can give to others.
2. Public Worship and Devotions.
 - a. The Church offers opportunities for public, communal prayer and reflection in many ways over the course of time.
 - b. What are the public, communal prayer opportunities in your parish?
3. Personal/private prayer practices: there are many forms and styles of personal prayer. Which do you use regularly? Which do you use rarely?
 - a. Blessing and Adoration
 - b. Petition
 - c. Intercession
 - d. Thanksgiving
 - e. Praise
4. 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?
5. Explore the internet. Explore the Living Faith at Work website (www.livingfaithatwork.org)
6. Check out the resources list shared during the session.
7. Set out to be a grace or resource to others.
8. 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.
- A list of suggested readings.
- A PowerPoint slide show about Living Your Faith at Work.
- 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>