

And You Shall Be My Witnesses

Acts 1:8

**ACTS II:
CONVERSION, PROCLAMATION,
COMMUNITY**

**PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM
POLICY MANUAL**



**Coordinator's & Small Group Leader's
Handbook**

**Community of the New Covenant
Private Association of the Christian Faithful**

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CONVERSION, PROCLAMATION,
COMMUNITY**

**PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM
POLICY MANUAL**

By
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To all those who have contributed to our growth in the faith, Our families, friends, theology professors, students, and from All whom we have learned in so many different ways, this "work of love" is most gratefully dedicated.

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Foreword

This particular Evangelizer's Handbook is one of an Evangelistic Series for ACTS II: Conversion, Proclamation, Community, a parish-based evangelization process of conversion and training in evangelization.

The ACTS II Process is a comprehensive training that has as its purpose the long-term goal of facilitating the formation of an evangelizing community of the parish. The means to accomplishing this is the Parish Small Group System: the networking of small groups whose primary purpose is evangelistic outreach. The Parish Small Group System is a way of life, a process of conversion, proclamation, community.

ACTS II: Conversion, Proclamation, Community is a total package of parish training in evangelization. It is divided into two parts:

- Part 1: Leadership Training, given by a CETC team, for the laity, those who will take leadership roles within their parish for this evangelization effort.

- Part 2: Evangelization Training of the Parishioners given by those trained in Part 1.

ACTS II is a process. It unfolds according to a specific dynamic which accomplishes far more than the materials alone can do. Throughout the unfolding of this process of life-giving events, the Holy Spirit is able to do what He alone can do: bring about the ever-deepening conversion of the parishioner.

Within the ACTS II Process, the parishioner, the trainee in evangelization, is equipped with the tools and skills to reach out and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to the unchurched and the alienated/inactive Catholic, and bring them into the Church through the Parish Small Group System.

If you wish more information about this process, please visit our website: www.sncweb.org

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Preface

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved youYou did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. This I command you, to love one another" (John 15:12,16f).

The Lord's desire for his people is that there be a genuine concern for one another, that each person becomes a caring, bearing, sharing person. Love is more than warm feelings that tend to disappear when inconvenient demands are being asked. Rather, love is the deliberate decision to serve those in need.

Exodus 18:13-22 clearly shows the need for pastoral care to be shared. Both Moses and the people were being worn out because the burden of caring for all the people was too heavy for Moses. In our parishes today, there is a similar situation. The pastor is expected to carry the burden of all the parish families. A crying need for capable people willing to take pastoral responsibility for their brother and sister parishioners is being felt.

Many Catholics have become inactive because they do not experience a caring community within the parish. Very few people reach out to those they do not know. The result is many lonely people. If a simple introduction within the Mass is so difficult to do, how is it going to be possible for real caring to take place?

The Parish Small Group System of ACTS II is an effort to make caring for one another a reality. As more and more parishioners are evangelized and become evangelizers, the parish will become an evangelizing community of people who know how to care for one another, and how to reach out to those who do not know Jesus, and bring them into this community of the Church. This is made possible through the parish small group networking system.

The responsibility of caring belongs not just to one person or to a few, but to everyone. In this, the whole parish can "endure and be at peace" (Exodus 18:21-23).

In **Numbers 11:16-17**, we see again that one person cannot bear the burden alone. A team of people is needed. Because it is a team effort, parishes need some organizational structure to assure that everyone is cared for by good small group leaders.

If we reflect on the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, chapters one to four, we see what happened to the disciples when the Holy Spirit came upon them on Pentecost. They were no longer afraid or concerned for themselves. Filled with the boldness of the Holy Spirit, they reached out to the people telling them about Jesus and caring for their needs. The numbers of those who believed in Jesus increased. And there was no needy person among them because everyone shared what they had (Acts 4:34f; 2:45).

The Parish Small Group System is an effort to shoulder responsibility for one another and to relieve the pastor of the entire burden. Shared responsibility is what the Lord calls his people to undertake. The Holy Spirit is the one who equips each for serving, for caring (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

Parishes will be renewed and become evangelistic in nature when the people of God are themselves evangelized, and learn to call on the Holy Spirit to inspire them to care, enable them to share, and empower them to bear one another's burdens.

* * * * *

PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM

POLICY MANUAL

PART 1

WHY THE PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM

- A. The need for small groups with their intimacy, mutual care, support, and discipline is absolutely essential if the Christian is to survive in a post-Christian society.
1. A personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior must be tied to a covenant commitment to the body of Christ.
 2. Believers must be ready to take some agreed responsibility for their own lives and for the lives of their brothers and sisters in the faith.
 3. Commitment to Christ, no matter how sincere, has a way of evaporating with time, if not tied to and reinforced by specific commitments and disciplines which under gird the corporate experience of the Christian community. This kind of commitment is necessary if the body of Christ is to live and maintain the values of the kingdom of God within an antagonistic cultural environment.
- B. Only a covenant community has the sociological strength to be a Christian counterculture in a deteriorating hedonistic society.
- C. The Parish Small Group System is heavily based on three principles that form the foundation for its existence and success:
1. Evangelization (conversion, proclamation, community).
 2. Prayer and fasting.
 - a) All leaders and small group members are expected to spend at least one hour per week before the Blessed Sacrament.
 - b) All leaders and small group members, who are able, fast on a weekly basis.
 3. Tithing.

All leaders and small group members are expected to be stewardship members of the parish, tithing 5% of their income to the parish and 5% to their favorite charities (one of them is the Association).

D. There are two special small groups within the Parish Small Group System: the Servant Group and the Coordinators' Team.

1. The Servant Group, made up of the following people:

-the Coordinators (one of whom is the Director and another a Co-Director),

-the Area Leaders, and a

-Secretary,

is responsible for overseeing the unfolding and well being of the Parish Small Group System within the parish. They meet weekly to pray and to plan.

a) The Area Leaders are men and women who have been successful in their professions and now bring to the community and to church ministry their expertise in business.

b) Each week the Area Leader brings to this meeting his/her feedback from the small group leaders under his/her jurisdiction. The role of the Area Leader is weekly visitation of the Small Group Home Gatherings.

2. The Coordinators: the other special small group within the Parish Small Group System is that of the Coordinators. They oversee the ACTS II Process which culminates in the Parish Small Group System.

a) They hold their small group meeting weekly and basically follow the same format as all small groups with some modification.

b) The Coordinators function as a team in taking overall responsibility for the progress and well being of ACTS II in the parish.

c) They meet as well to evaluate and report on the progress of the

ACTS II Process which they share with the Servant Group.

- d) The Coordinators are accountable to the Pastor through their Director and Co-Director.

- E. Experience has shown that the Parish Small Group System does work but those involved must be 100% committed to it. It is not a program but a "way of life".
 - 1. A great effort must be made to rekindle the spirit of evangelization within our Catholic people -- a spirit that has too long been buried.

 - 2. This spirit of evangelization needs to be recovered so that a viable living organism, the Church, can be present on every block.

 - 3. The 'evangelized' must become the 'evangelizers'.

* * * * *

THE PURPOSE OF THE PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM*

A. The main purpose of the Parish Small Group System is to be an evangelistic outreach community. It's very reason for existence is to enable its members:

1. To be drawn to love the Lord Jesus Christ ever more deeply:
2. To grow in love and appreciation of one another.
3. To reach out and share Jesus with others.
4. To grow in sensitivity to the needs of others, and in one's ability to minister to these needs within the body of Christ.
5. To grow in how to give and to receive love and support.
6. To raise up new leaders for the Church.
7. To grow in its Catholic identity as Church.

B. These purposes are read at the beginning of each weekly meeting.

*(For more on this topic, see: 6AA, Session Two, VII, The Purpose of the Parish Small Group System; Community Handbook, Part 2, Appendix 5, Part 1, F).

PART 2

GENERAL FORMAT FOR THE SMALL GROUP HOME GATHERING

The General Format is an overview of the format used in the Small Group Home Gatherings. This format varies somewhat each week. The variations are given on following pages.

A. Song and Praise	10 Minutes
B. Praying and Sharing Scripture (Lectio Divina)	60 Minutes
C. Personal Testimony and Witness	20 Minutes
D. Business	5 Minutes
E. Intercessory Prayer	10 Minutes
F. Special Prayer for Healing	10 Minutes
G. Closing Song	5 Minutes
<hr/>	
Maximum Time (and must not exceed this):	120 Minutes

**FORMAT FOR THE SMALL GROUP HOME GATHERING
FOR
WEEKS 1, 3 AND 5**

A. Song and Praise	10 Minutes
B. Praying and Sharing Scripture (Lectio Divina)	60 Minutes
<p>1. See Appendix: <u>Principles to be used for Communal Scriptural Prayer</u>, and</p> <p>2. See Book, 6C: <u>Scriptures for Communal Scriptural Prayer</u> for schedule of weekly Scripture passages to be used in the Small Group Home Gathering.</p>	
C. Personal Testimony and Witness	20 Minutes
<p>Two people are to be appointed each week by the small group leader to come prepared for one to give a <u>personal testimony</u> and the other to give a <u>witness</u>.</p>	
D. Business	5 Minutes
E. Intercessory Prayer	10 Minutes
F. Special Prayer for Healing	10 Minutes
G. Closing Song	5 Minutes
<hr/>	
Maximum Time (and must not exceed this):	120 Minutes

**FORMAT FOR THE SMALL GROUP HOME GATHERING
FOR
WEEK 2**

A. Song and Praise	10 Minutes
B. Praying and Sharing Scripture (Lectio Divina)	55 Minutes
<p>1. See Appendix: <u>Principles to be Used for Communal Scriptural Prayer</u>, and</p> <p>2. See Book, 6C: <u>Scriptures for Communal Scriptural Prayer</u> for schedule of weekly Scripture passages to be used in the Small Group Home Gathering.</p>	
C. Discussion of one of the following two questions	30 Minutes
<p>Small Group Leader determines which question applies more to the Scripture just prayed over.</p> <p>1. What will it cost me to live out this scripture passage?</p> <p>2. What social justice action does this scripture passage call me to take? Can I carry it out? If not, why not?</p>	
D. Journaling	5 Minutes
E. Business	5 Minutes
F. Intercessory Prayer	10 Minutes
G. Closing Song	5 Minutes
Maximum Time (and must not exceed this):	<hr/> 120 Minutes

**FORMAT FOR THE SMALL GROUP HOME GATHERING
FOR
WEEK 4**

A. Song and Praise	10 Minutes
B. Teaching on Christian Living	
1. Small group listens to the practical teaching from the Christian Living Series for this week.	20 Minutes
Small Group Leader, please take note of the following:	
a) You are to listen to this teaching and study it some time <u>prior</u> to the small group listening to it together.	
b) This will enable you to better facilitate the small group discussion about the questions that accompany the teaching.	
c) If the tapes are not available, then the Small Group Leader would give the weekly teaching from the Christian Living Series Handbook.	
2. Discussion follows using the discussion questions for the teaching.	55 Minutes
C. Journaling	5 Minutes
D. Business	5 Minutes
E. Intercessory Prayer	10 Minutes
F. Special Prayer for Healing	10 Minutes
G. Closing Song	5 Minutes
Maximum Time (and must not exceed this):	<hr/> 120 Minutes

A FULLER DISCUSSION OF THE FORMAT OF THE SMALL GROUP HOME GATHERING

A. Song and praise.

1. This time of song and praise helps to bring us into worship of the Lord. It is to be a time of vibrant worship.

Appropriate songs of praise need to be chosen, beginning with a faster song or songs and moving to a slower song that leads people into deeper worship of the Lord present in their midst.

2. The songs are to move the group into a period of powerful joy-filled expressions of praise and thanksgiving of the Lord.

This time of worship sets the atmosphere of prayer and reverence in which all that follows must be rooted.

3. When the members of the small group are in deep worship of the Lord, the Small Group Leader brings this segment to a close with a prayer of thanksgiving which makes the transition to the next segment of the format which is: Praying the Scriptures (Lectio Divina).

B. Praying and sharing the Scriptures.

1. The scripture passage used for praying the Scriptures is found in 6C, Scriptures for Communal Scriptural Prayer.
2. The purpose of this time of communal scriptural prayer is to teach each person how to pray the Scriptures, how to listen to what the Lord Jesus Christ is saying to each one personally, and then being obedient to the Word by giving a response of action.
3. It is a time spent looking at the Word of God in relation to its call to each person to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ more intimately, love Him more deeply, and follow Him more closely.

4. The Appendix gives the "Principles for Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering" that you are to use in praying and sharing the Scriptures.

C. **Personal testimony and witness.**

1. A **personal testimony** is concerned with sharing how one's life has changed because of coming to know Jesus Christ in a more personal, experiential way.

When given in a small group, this testimony should take no more than **3 minutes** at the most; the 100 word testimony is used allowing for the anticipated questions after the testimony.

- a) The personal testimony is highly recommended especially when newly evangelized persons have been invited to attend the Small Group Home Gathering.

If there are no new people in the small group, the personal testimony would not be given and another witness would take its place.

- b) Personal testimonies must be rooted in the principles given in the Handbook: Be An Evangelizer? Me? Always keep in mind the ABC's of a good personal testimony.

Only those who have received the evangelization training are to give a personal testimony.

2. A **witness** is concerned about sharing how Jesus Christ has worked in your life during this past week and is not longer than **a minute or two**.

The witness takes place on a weekly basis so that all might become better equipped to see the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ at work in their daily lives.

D. **Business.**

The business aspect of the small group home meetings is concerned with:

1. Reminders about the need for good order in the meeting (e.g. no moving around or getting a drink etc. during the scripture sharing);
2. An information sheet being filled out by each small group leader on a weekly basis;
3. Any announcements concerning parish activities, etc.

E. **Intercessory prayer.**

The Small Group Leader introduces this time of prayer and then models how this is done by actually praying for a particular concern.

1. **Principle One:** the key is to pray to the Lord about the concern rather than share requests.
 - a) It is important to model well how this prayer is done because the others will follow the example given.
 - b) This type of prayer is conversational prayer in which we speak with God the concern that is in our heart about a particular person or matter.
2. **Principle Two:** stay with one topic at a time rather than moving on from one thing to another.
 - a) Someone might pray about a person who is sick and another can remain with this concern, by praying for courage and strength for the person to be able to bear under the situation.
 - i) Someone else might pray concerning the financial needs of the family during this period of sickness.
 - ii) A time of silence might follow, and then another person might change the topic for intercessory prayer.
 - iii) One person might pray for help in prioritizing his/her day in such a way as to have consistent time with the Lord.

iv) Another might pray that that time be very meaningful for the individual.

v) Another might pray that (s)he be faithful to a daily meditation on the Scriptures.

b) The concern here is that this time of intercessory prayer, be a time in which all agree together concerning the requests at hand.

c) All need to be united in mind, heart, and spirit concerning the intention for which all are interceding. It is not a disjointed effort but a united concern. That is the heart of intercession.

3. **Principle Three:** the request prayed about should be kept brief.

a) A person can do this if (s)he prays about one aspect of the concern. That way those who wish to pray about other aspects of the request are able to do so.

b) Interceding in this way allows each person to pray sooner and more often as the case may be.

c) Keeping this principle in mind keeps every person alert and involved in the intercessory concerns.

4. **Principle Four:** intercessory prayer should be spontaneous.

a) Everyone does not pray in sequence going around the circle. Rather, the freedom should be there for each one to pray or not pray depending on who is moved by the Spirit to pray for this intention.

b) With conversational prayer, there is always the freedom to pray about those concerns that one is moved to pray about.

F. **Special prayer for healing.**

This is a special time of experiencing God's love by those in need of prayers

for healing.

1. The Small Group Leader asks everyone to join hands. The persons on either side of the person requesting healing prayer can lay hands gently on this person.
2. The Small Group Leader leads this prayer, inserting the person's name where indicated, modeling for others how to pray for healing.

The Small Group Leader leads the healing prayer and everyone repeats after the Small Group Leader each phrase (the asterisk is the pause that allows everyone to repeat the phrase that the Small Group Leader has just prayed):

Heavenly Father, * I ask, in the Name of your Son,
Jesus Christ, * that you heal (name) * of all sicknesses
and ailments, * diseases and conditions, * whether of
mind or body. * And especially, Lord, * heal (name) of
(disease/condition). * Thank you, Father, * for healing
(name) * in the Name of Jesus Christ. * Amen!

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus * Jesus, Lord Jesus * Jesus, Lord
Jesus * Jesus, Lord Jesus * Jesus, have mercy * Jesus,
have mercy * Jesus, have mercy * Jesus, we thank you
* Jesus, we thank you * Jesus, we thank you * Jesus,
we praise you * Jesus, we praise you * Jesus, we praise
you * Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

In the Name of Jesus Christ, * I pray against, * I resist
the root cause * of every sickness and ailment, * every
disease and condition * that is in (name) body, * whether
it's physical, spiritual or emotional. * I command every
root cause, * leave now, * never come back, * in the
Name of Jesus Christ. * I command the root cause of
this (disease/condition), * leave now, * never come back,
* in the Name of Jesus Christ. * And I say to this area of
(name) body, * that has been damaged or diseased, *
receive healing, * receive nourishment, * be restored, *
in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus * Jesus, Lord Jesus * Jesus, Lord
Jesus * Jesus, Lord Jesus * Jesus, have mercy * Jesus,
have mercy * Jesus, have mercy * Jesus, we thank you

* Jesus, we thank you * Jesus, we thank you * Jesus,
we praise you * Jesus, we praise you * Jesus, we praise
you * Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

G. Closing song.

TIMES FOR THE GENERAL FORMAT

- 7:30 P.M. Song and praise.
- 7:40 P.M. Praying the Scriptures.
- 8:35 P.M. Journaling of: "What the Lord has said to me personally through praying this scripture passage and through the others in the small group."
- 8:40 P.M. Personal testimony: 100 word testimony.
- 8:45 P.M. Questions from those in the small group regarding the testimony.
- 8:55 P.M. Witness given as to "How the Lord has worked in my life this past week".
- 9:00 P.M. Business.
- 9:05 P.M. Intercessory prayer.
- 9:15 P.M. Healing prayer.
- 9:25 P.M. Closing song.
- 9:30 P.M. Simple refreshments (coffee, tea, lemonade, cookies), and fellowship.

-Members of the small group are free to leave when the small group finishes. However, some community fellowship is highly encouraged after the small group finishes.

* * * * *

PART 3

THE THRUST OF THE PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM

The whole purpose of the ACTS II Process is to facilitate the formation of the parish into an evangelizing community, a long-term goal.

- A. The parish evangelizers, in response to the call of the Lord, are to reach out in love to the people in their everyday life, to those in their neighborhoods, initially evangelize them, and invite them into their small groups.

- B. When the initially evangelized come into loving small groups, they see the power of the Gospel at work through the genuine caring, bearing, and sharing of the members of the small groups.

- C. Those initially evangelized may be:
 - 1. **Active Catholics or Protestants** seeking a deeper relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

 - 2. **Alienated Catholics** wanting to become reconciled with the Church. They are to be directed to the re-membering process in the parish.

 - 3. **Unchurched or non-practicing Christians of other Churches** who may decide they want to become Catholic. The small group would then help them be initiated into the **R.C.I.A.** in the parish at the appropriate time.

 - 4. **Protestants** who decide they should return to their own Church. The small group leader or someone from the small group could bring them to their Protestant pastor and help them rejoin their Church.

* * * * *

THE ACTS II PROCESS AND THE R.C.I.A.

The ACTS II Process is an evangelization process of conversion and training in evangelization. It has been designed to fit into the R.C.I.A. through the first and last periods of the R.C.I.A.

A. The **Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate**, the first period of the R.C.I.A., is taken care of by the ACTS II Process in the following way. Trained active Catholics, evangelizers, reach out to the unchurched and the alienated/inactive Catholics.

1. The unchurched experience the following.

a) A home visitation by the evangelization teams.

b) After being initially evangelized and led to make a commitment to Christ, the unchurched person is invited to attend the weekly Small Group Home Gatherings of ACTS II for ongoing evangelization.

c) The unchurched continue going to the weekly Small Group Home Gatherings until such time that those eligible decide to enter the Catechumenate of the R.C.I.A.

-When the unchurched are ready, they will be required to attend the inquiry sessions of the Precatechumenate of the R.C.I.A., and then, through the **Rite of Becoming a Catechumen**, enter the Catechumenate.

d) When they become catechumens, they:

i) attend the Liturgy of the Word on Sunday.

ii) are dismissed after the homily each Sunday to meet in small groups to study the scripture readings of that Sunday.

iii) continue to attend the weekly Small Group Home Gatherings of ACTS II, if at all possible.

2. The alienated/inactive experience the following.

- a) A home visitation by the evangelization teams.
- b) After being initially evangelized and led to make a commitment/recommitment to Christ, the alienated/inactive are invited to attend the weekly Small Group Home Gatherings of ACTS II for ongoing evangelization.
- c) The alienated/inactive continue going to the weekly Small Group Home Gatherings of ACTS II until such time that they wish to be re-membered into the Church.
- d) One way in which the alienated/inactive can be re-membered into the Church is through the ACTS II Process, a process of conversion and training in evangelization.

B. The **Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis and Mystagogy**, the last period of the R.C.I.A., may be taken care of by the ACTS II Process in the following way.

- 1. After having received the sacraments of initiation, those initiated into the Church are now called neophytes. They are very enthusiastic and filled with zeal, and are in need of a faith-community where they can receive ongoing support and continue to grow.
- 2. The neophytes return to the weekly Small Group Home Gatherings until the ACTS II Evangelization Training begins again. At that time, the neophytes enter the ACTS II Evangelization Training to receive the skills and tools of how to evangelize.
- 3. Through the ACTS II Process, the neophytes continue to grow and are equipped to evangelize the unchurched and the alienated/inactive and bring them into the Church, the parish, through the R.C.I.A. or through a re-membering process.

C. And the ACTS II Process begins again!

* * * * *

CHARACTERISTICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM

A. Characteristics of the small groups.

1. The Servant Group oversees the well-being of the small groups.
2. Small groups are **"household/marketplace" related**: that is they reach out to their family, relatives, neighborhood, co-workers, etc.
3. Small groups are **multiplying groups**. There is a natural changing of members within the small groups.
 - a) For example, women have babies and have to drop out of the small group for awhile; men's working hours change and so they end up going to another small group.
 - b) But **the goal of the small group** is to reach out and evangelize, bringing people to the small group only after they have committed/recommitted to Christ.
 - c) The small group is to grow and multiply.
4. The **PSGS is a way of life** and not a program alongside other things.
 - a) Small groups work to build an evangelizing community of the parish.
 - b) Small groups strive and grow towards becoming expanding groups rather than settling into cozy small groups.
 - c) The small group grows in numbers, divides and multiplies.
5. Small groups are **highly evangelistic in nature**. Persons are not invited into the small groups unless they have committed/recommitted to Christ.
6. The small groups are **discipline structured**. They start on time, end on time, and adhere to the format of the small group.

7. Small groups **require ongoing training of small group leaders**. Because the goal is to divide and multiply, it is important that small group leaders are continually trained and assistant small group leaders are identified and trained.

B. Accountability.

The Parish Small Group System, which is a networking of small groups, has been designed to ensure responsibility and accountability.

There is an order of relatedness within the PSGS: a structure of reporting, support, and authority which is demonstrated in the following way.

1. **Small groups are accountable.** The Small Group Leader turns in the Weekly Small Group Report to the Area/District Leader (See: Appendix).
2. **Area Leaders are accountable.** They make weekly visitations of the small groups within the Parish Small Group System. The Area Leader turns in the Area/District Leader Evaluation of the Small Group Home Gathering to the Secretary of the Servant Group (See: Appendix).
3. **The Coordinators are accountable.** They evaluate and report on the progress of each component of the ACTS II Process to the Pastor through their Director and Co-Director.

When all four components of the ACTS II Process are in existence, it is the **Servant Group that is accountable** to the Pastor through the Director and Co-Director.

4. **The Secretary is accountable.** Minutes are taken of the Servant Group meeting and typed up. Copies are made of:

- the Weekly Small Group Report;
- the Area/District Leader Evaluation of the Small Group Home Gathering;
- each of the Coordinators Reports, and
- the Servant Group Meeting Minutes

for each member of the Servant Group and one for the Servant Group Minutes Book.

THE SUCCESS OF THE PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM

A. The success of the Parish Small Group System depends on the following.

1. **Each person undergoes a personal conversion experience.** Through this conversion experience, the person comes to an experiential awareness of God's love and realizes that the Holy Spirit is the moving power in his or her life.
2. **The small group does not quench the Spirit (1 Thes. 5:16-22)** but allows people the freedom to praise the Lord in the way that each is most comfortable.
3. **Vibrant worship and music in the small group.** Songs of praise and thanksgiving and prayers of praise and thanksgiving are offered to the Lord -- an interior response of reverential awe for the Lord Jesus Christ under the power of the Holy Spirit to the glory of the Father.
4. **Communal scriptural prayer.** This is a very central part of the small group format. The purpose is to help each person learn how to pray over the Scriptures; how to listen to what the Lord is saying to each one personally; and how to be obedient to the Word that the Lord is speaking by giving a response of action.
5. **Adherence to the structure of the small groups** allows people the freedom to respond to the Holy Spirit at work in the small groups.
6. **Consistent prayer.** The commitment of each person to daily personal prayer, and daily celebration of the Eucharist, if at all possible.
7. **Commitment to fasting each week.** Encourage fasting on Wednesdays or Fridays, if at all possible.
8. **Evangelistic outreach.** This is key to the longevity of the small groups. Each small group reaches out and brings those initially evangelized to the small group where ongoing evangelization can take place. Each small

group always looks to the time when it can divide and multiply.

9. **Ministry for all.** Everyone in the small group has a service to give to each other within the small group and within the larger parish community.
 10. **Tithing.** Each member of the small group is helped to move into tithing to the parish, to favorite charities, and into almsgiving.
 11. **Hospitality.** A spirit of hospitality exists within the small group and within the larger parish community.
 12. **Subsidiarity.** The principle of subsidiarity is at work within the PSGS. In other words, those matters that can be taken care of at one level of authority are not taken to the next level of authority.
 - a) The **Small Group Leader** has the authority and responsibility to deal with situations that arise in the small group and to take those situations of greater concern to the District Leader.
 - b) The **District Leader** handles what he or she can and takes those situations of greater concern to the Area Leader.
 - c) The **Area Leader** handles what he or she can and takes those situations of greater concern to the Coordinators.
 - d) The **Coordinators** handle what they can and take those situations of greater concern to the Director.
 - e) The **Director** handles what he or she can and takes those situations of greater concern to the Staff Person.
 - f) The **Staff Person** handles what he or she can and takes those situations of greater concern to the Pastor or Administrator.
- B. All those who make up the small groups work together to bring about vibrant small Christian communities that radiate love for one another and for others.

WHO CAN COME TO THE SMALL GROUP HOME GATHERING

- A. A person is **invited** to come to the small group **only after** that person has been **led to make a commitment/recommitment to the Lord Jesus Christ**.
1. There are several ways that parish evangelizers can carry out the mission of evangelization:
 - a) Through door-to-door outreach to the unchurched and alienated/inactive (E.N. 50-53);
 - b) Through their "household/marketplace" environment.
 2. To evangelize their "household/marketplace" environment is what the parish evangelizers are strongly urged to do. They are to evangelize right where they are planted: their families, their neighborhoods, those with whom they interact throughout the week, those with whom they work, and those with whom they celebrate the liturgy in their parish.
 3. This way of evangelization is the natural way of reaching out to others. It is the way of building upon what is already known and experienced. The sources of ones contacts are far reaching. To have twenty people in a small group is to have potentially 400 contacts through the "household/marketplace" environment of these people.
 4. Evangelizing this way means to "evangelize as you go" instead of "go to evangelize". This is not to negate door-to-door evangelization because this must be done as well.
 5. The purpose of the small group, then, is twofold:
 - a) Evangelistic outreach, and
 - b) Growth for the newly evangelized by providing them with the opportunity for evangelizing their own "household/marketplace" environment.
- B. **REMEMBER:** A person is **invited** to come to the small group **only after** (s)he has been **led to make a commitment/recommitment** to the Lord Jesus Christ.

SIZE OF THE SMALL GROUP

- A. When the small group reaches **14** or more in **regular weekly attendance**, the small group leader must seriously consider dividing in order to multiply.

- B. Everyone in the small group should aim toward the day when it will multiply. This is the vital sign of a healthy small group -- it multiplies.

- C. The small groups must never meet longer than two hours. This is a vital discipline that is adhered to.
 - 1. A time must be set and adhered to so that members know they are free to leave at a specified time.

 - 2. People have baby sitters or other pressing matters to which they must attend.

- D. Each small group begins with **a core** of trained parish evangelizers who commit to meet weekly.

They are asked to invite others that they know in their "household/market-place" environment to attend the small group home gathering **only after** they have **committed/recommitted to Christ**.

- E. **Remember!** The key to small group growth is evangelize and invite. Evangelize and invite. Evangelize and invite.

SMALL GROUP LEADERS OF THE SMALL GROUP HOME GATHERINGS

Who should be a small group leader?

A. Small group leaders should be men and women who are Spirit-filled in the true sense of the word, that is, people who have attuned themselves to listening to the Holy Spirit as He speaks to them through the:

-Scriptures.

-Magisterium of the Church.

-Pastor.

-Legitimate authority placed over them.

-Faith-witness of others.

1. Small group leaders speak the same language as those in their small groups so that there is order and not chaos and confusion. The language they speak is the language of Christ. It is Catholic.
2. Small group leaders foster unity and not disunity.
 - a) Small group leaders are submissive to the authority placed over them. It is not just trusting the authority that counts but it is trusting in the God who appointed the authority.
 - b) Small group leaders are being given authority over their small groups. Their submission to authority provides the foundation for others submitting to their authority.
3. A small group leader is one who sees the small group as his/her primary ministry.

- a) He or she must be willing to drop all other activities both inside and outside the parish so that (s)he can be free to minister to his/her small group.
 - b) This ministry will cost the small group leader time and energy. If the small group leader is serious about ministry for Christ, and within the context of the small group, then (s)he is to get uncluttered and free for this ministry. Small group leadership can be very demanding.
4. Small group leaders believe that they have been called by God for this ministry.
- a) It is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who sustains all in their task. It is He who has called each one to have a heart for evangelization, to touch lives and to be disciples.
 - b) There is nothing that is more challenging or frustrating then ministering by building friendships and relationships.
 - c) All are wounded healers and through this ministry all become even more vulnerable. But the Lord is there to give strength.
5. The small group leader is one who has been tested in ministry.
- a) This testing is very important. Testing the commitment of one desiring to serve as a small group leader can take place as an assistant small group leader.
 - b) Testing can come through any other ministry that a person has participated in within the parish, to which time and energy have been dedicated; testing can come about also as a result of participating in the ACTS II Evangelization Training.
 - c) Scripture warns against trusting spiritual authority to those who are untested. This is so important because small group leaders will be responsible for those who come to their small groups.
6. Leadership training is mandatory for small group leaders before they can lead a small group.

It is important to understand everything about the dynamics of the small group:

-how it functions.

-what is expected of the small group.

-what is expected of the small group leader.

7. Small group leaders participate in the stewardship program of the parish.

a) As disciples of Christ, small group leaders give good example here.

b) The tithe given allows all to stand up and be counted among those who fully adhere to the scriptural principle of tithing back to God by tithing to the parish and to their favorite charities.

c) Jesus says in Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

8. Small group leaders are not gossips.

a) The **principle of confidentiality** is observed. What takes place in the small group remains in the small group.

b) Only that information which the small group leader believes requires special attention is discussed with the area/district leader.

c) Keep in mind that the small group leader is not a counselor. Many will come for guidance and prayer but bring serious problems to the area/district leader. And (s)he will refer the situation to the proper authority. The best discernment will be used in how to respond to the situation.

9. One of the first concerns of the small group leader is to select an assistant small group leader.

a) Once that person is identified, his/her name is submitted to the area/district leader prior to discussing leadership with that person.

- b) After the Servant Group has made their decision about the person that has been selected, the small group leader is notified.

-That person is then approached and asked if (s)he would assume the role of assistant small group leader.

B. Some of the qualities small group leaders are to have:

1. **Enthusiasm:** New Christians, those who have completed the R.C.I.A., for example, often make very good small group leaders because they have just come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Their enthusiasm is infectious.
2. **Personal Testimony:** Evangelizers who have a clear, powerful testimony of what the Lord has done for them are living proofs that the Gospel does work today. Such evangelizers show, through their lifestyle, the reality of Jesus at work within them and others are drawn to them.
3. **Dedication:** Faithful and given to the task undertaken. The best small group leaders, as a rule, are those who have their lives in order: right priorities are in place with God, family, others, and with the world; such persons have time for prayer and scripture study.
4. **Docility:** a willingness to be taught.

These four characteristics distinguish small group leaders.

C. The role of small group leaders:

1. Help oversee the spiritual growth of the members in their small groups.
2. Model and encourage their small groups in becoming a caring, bearing, sharing fellowship and to reach out and evangelize those in their household/marketplace environment.
3. Never to meddle in the personal affairs of the members of their small groups; those in their small groups are not to become dependent on them.

D. The duties of small group leaders:

1. Lead the weekly small groups.
2. Attend meetings with their area/district leaders.
 - a) These monthly meetings provide a forum to share victories, pray over struggles, and receive ongoing affirmation.
 - b) Such meetings provide inspiration and motivation to remain unified in direction and free from discouragement.
3. Care for the persons in their small groups by calling them and meeting with them at other times besides the small group meeting.
4. Develop relationships with their assistant small group leaders.
5. Turn in the "Weekly Small Group Report" to the area/district leaders.
6. Develop a lifestyle of ministry.
7. Meet with and evangelize those persons whom the initially evangelized in the small group want to bring to the small group.
8. Are willing to be inconvenienced.
9. Are good listeners.

* * * * *

THE VISION AND GOAL OF THE ACTS II PROCESS

- A. The vision and goal of the ACTS II Process is to facilitate the formation of an evangelizing parish community: a caring, bearing, sharing evangelizing community.
1. The means to accomplishing this vision is the Parish Small Group System: the networking of small home groups, small Christian Communities, whose primary purpose is evangelistic outreach.
 2. The Parish Small Group System is a strategy of action for evangelization that provides persons who have been initially evangelized with small group follow-up.
- B. The purpose of the ACTS II Process is twofold:
1. To provide a training that will evangelize active Catholics by creating an environment and a process that will lead them to experience:
 - inner healing,
 - reconciliation,
 - personal conversion,
 - empowerment and support, andenable them to live out their Christian mission to witness and disciple others for the Lord Jesus Christ under the power of the Holy Spirit.
 2. Secondly, to provide an evangelistic outreach that will not only evangelize others, but will offer regular small group follow-up -- ongoing evangelization for the initially evangelized -- through the Small Group Home Gatherings (PSGS).

By means of this twofold process, active Catholics will be enabled and empowered for community and for mission in their parishes.

C. That is the vision, goal, and purpose of the ACTS II Process.

D. The reason the small groups are composed only of women and only of men is to have like minister to like:

-women ministering to women, and

-men ministering to men.

E. What is to be kept uppermost in your mind is this vision and goal of the ACTS II Process:

1. Trained evangelizers who work to facilitate the long-term goal of transforming the parish into an evangelizing community through the networking of small Christian communities, the Parish Small Group System.

2. Central to the Parish Small Group System are the small groups whose very reason for existence is to evangelize:

-to invite those initially evangelized into their small groups for ongoing evangelization and eventually into the ACTS II Evangelization Training;

-to see the division and multiplication of these small groups;

-to see the multiplication of small group leaders and assistant small group leaders who take a concern for those in their small groups, so that everyone in the parish can be enabled and empowered for community and for mission.

* * * * *

COMPANIONS

- A. Companions are married, widowed, and single people, practicing Catholics in good standing with the Catholic Church, loyal to the Holy Father and faithful to the official teaching of the Church's magisterium.
- B. The Companions have come into existence in response to the Holy Father's call for a NEW evangelization -- new in its METHOD, EXPRESSION, and FERVOR -- a new impetus in the Church that would be so dynamic that it would lead many to bring Jesus to all men and women throughout the world.
- C. The purpose of the Companions is to carry out the Church's mission of evangelization using ACTS II which is rooted in the Scriptures and the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is a process of evangelization unique to the Sisters of the New Covenant, Private Association of the Christian Faithful.

Companions have the opportunity to carry out the mission of evangelization in a collaborative way locally and internationally. They support one another in carrying out this mission and work together with the Sisters of the New Covenant.

- D. The Sisters of the New Covenant are consecrated laywomen given to a two-fold service: one primary and the other secondary.
 - 1. The primary service the Sisters give is simply to be women of faith and prayer who live genuinely the vows of obedience, celibate chastity, simplicity of lifestyle and compassion.

This basic service of living the faith, and thereby helping others to believe, is a service they give in any profession.

- 2. Their secondary emphasis, very closely related to the first, is the mission of direct evangelization, taking the full Gospel directly to the people in order to bring them into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- E. The Companions form their members to realize their responsibility for the spiritual, social and political well-being of their society at all levels. Companions

are called to be a leaven for Christ in the marketplace by evangelizing at all levels of society

F. The goal of the Companions is twofold:

1. To foster growth in holiness of life in its members through a deeper commitment to the Gospel.
2. To bring about the renewal of parish life, the evangelization of families and the society in which they find themselves.

* * * * *

APPENDIX

PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNAL SCRIPTURAL PRAYER IN THE SMALL GROUP HOME GATHERING

Refer to the Handbook: Scriptures for Communal Scriptural Prayer (6C) for the scripture passage to be used.

- A. Whenever the small group has twenty people present, the small group leader could divide the small group into two groups if this would facilitate the communal scriptural prayer time.
- B. The assistant small group leader would lead the communal scriptural prayer for the second group. When the communal scriptural prayer is finished, the two groups would come back together for the rest of the activities.

COMMUNAL SCRIPTURAL PRAYER*

- A. The purpose of the communal scriptural prayer time is to teach each person how to pray over the Scriptures:
 - 1. How to listen to what the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking to each one personally, and
 - 2. To be obedient to the word that he is speaking by a response of action.
- B. The Word of the Lord is a word that convicts, that calls for ongoing conversion, that calls for obedience.
 - 1. If a person really allows that word to enter his or her heart, he or she will be changed, he or she will become more and more like Jesus, taking on his heart, mind and spirit, his value system.
 - 2. The power of the Word of the Lord brings about community: a caring, bearing, sharing community.
- C. Communal scriptural prayer is risky business and something people want to avoid, for it forces one to be confronted by the Word which calls for ongoing conversion.

People would rather discuss than face the two-edged sword of the Word of God, *"piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do"* (Hebrews 4:12b-13).

How To Proceed

- A. After the song and praise, the small group leader invites those present to listen carefully to God's Word and reminds them of Jesus' assurance:

"Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

- B. Begins with a short prayer.
- C. States that they will break open the Word of God, allowing him to speak to each one of them personally. Each one is to enter into the passage and hear what the Lord is saying to him or her personally. They are to quiet themselves so that they can hear the Word that the Lord has for each one of them.
- D. Announces which scripture passage they will pray over.
- E. The small group leader reads the passage aloud very slowly and distinctly, with pauses so that each phrase can sink in. The small group leader shares first.
- F. After the reading, each states what the passage said to him or her personally as each is moved. For example, "I felt this" or "I heard this" or "This struck me" or "To me it said or meant"
1. Each person is to keep contributions very short, personal, and they are to use: "I, me, or my" and not "we, they or them."
 2. Each person is to be honest, simple, not preachy, not applying lessons to others. That will kill the prayer experience.
 3. Each person is to peacefully, humbly, sensitively listen to God's Word and simply state what it says and means to him or her personally.
 4. If all do not express what the passage is saying to them personally, that is all right because freedom is to be given to each one present to state his or her insights or not. The important point here is that all are praying whether one's insights are given or not.
 5. It is to be made clear to those in the small group that they are not to feel uneasy during silent gaps between readings or comments. Those silent moments are golden and afford rare opportunities of letting God's message resonate and slowly deepen in them. They are to relax and savor his words during the silences.
- G. At the appropriate time, the small group leader again reads the same passage slowly.
1. It is a richer listening experience this time because the remarks of each one have enriched the passage for everyone.
 2. A second round of insights are shared following the second reading which are usually richer than the first.

- H. The same passage is read slowly a third and last time.
- I. After the third reading, only spontaneous prayers are spoken directly to God the Father, or to Jesus, or to the Holy Spirit, or to our Blessed Mother. For example, "Thank you, Jesus, for speaking to us. Help me be more aware of your presence in me and in others."
1. This is to be done by those who feel free enough to do so.
 2. Make it very clear that if a person does not wish to pray spontaneously, that is fine. Those who do not pray spontaneously but remain quiet during this time are praying.
- J. After those who wish to pray spontaneously have done so, the small group leader invites all to write in their journal what the Lord's personal message was for him or her from the Word and from the insights given by the other members in the group. Give five minutes for this, which is part of the 60 minutes allowed for the communal scriptural prayer.
- a) One way of doing this: Focus on Jesus and let him speak to you personally as you journal. Write down what he is already speaking to you from within. Write Jesus' response to you. It may be one word, a phrase, or a sentence.

You can be certain that whatever you write which draws you more closely to Jesus, and helps you realize that you are loved, is not just coming from you but is definitely what Jesus is saying to you.
 - b) Another way to journal: Simply speak to Jesus what is in your heart concerning the passage you have just prayed over.

How To Express The Above Dynamics Of Communal Scriptural Prayer

- A. The small group leader can express all of the above dynamics for communal scriptural prayer in the following way:
1. The scripture passage that we will pray over is _____.
 2. Please listen carefully to the instructions that I am going to give.
 - a) When I have finished reading the scripture passage, there will be a short period of silence so that we can reflect on the passage.
 - b) Then I will share first what the Lord is saying to me personally.
 - > I will say something like this: "I felt this" or "I heard this" or "This struck me" or "To me it said or meant"
 - > And then anyone who feels free can share what this passage is saying to you personally.
 - > When you share, keep your sharing on the passage very short, personal, and please use: "I, me, or my" and not "we, they, or them."

- > Each person is to be honest, simple, not preachy, not applying lessons to others. That will kill the prayer experience.
 - > Each person is to peacefully, humbly, sensitively listen to God's Word and simply state what it says and means to you personally.
 - > If all do not express what the passage is saying to them personally, that is all right, because freedom is to be given to each one present to state his or her insights or not.
- c) There will be times of silence. Do not feel uneasy during these silent moments between readings or comments.
- > Those silent moments are golden and afford rare opportunities of letting God's message resonate and slowly deepen within us. So relax. Savor his Words during these silences.
- d) After each one who wishes to share has shared, I will read the passage for the second time very slowly.
- > After a short period of silence, I will share first what the Lord is saying to me personally this time.
 - > Those who feel free can share again what the Lord is saying to each of them personally this time.
- e) When each one who wishes to share has shared, I will read the passage again for the third and last time.
- > Only this time, after a short period of silence, I will pray spontaneously, that is, in my own words, to God the Father, or to Jesus, or to the Holy Spirit, or to the Blessed Mother.

For example, "Thank you, Jesus, for speaking to us. Help me to be more aware of your presence in me and in others."

- > And again, anyone who wishes to pray spontaneously, is invited to pray in a similar way. And if you do not want to pray spontaneously, that is okay.

B. Let us begin. I will lead the dynamics of the communal scriptural prayer as I just explained. The scripture passage that we will pray over is _____. I will pray a brief prayer to the Holy Spirit first.

1. Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and our hearts to hear and to understand what you wish to speak to each one of us. Help us to listen carefully to your Word.
2. Let's place ourselves in the presence of the Lord Jesus who is here in our midst. He has told us, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20).
3. We are going to break open the Word of God now and allow him to speak

to each one of us personally. Each of us needs to put ourselves into the passage and hear what the Lord is saying to each one of us personally.

> We need to quiet ourselves so that we are able to hear the Word that the Lord has for each one of us.

> And now, I am going to read the passage very slowly . . . etc.

C. At the end of the communal scriptural prayer, the small group leader says:

1. I would like for each one of us to journal in our notebooks what the Lord has spoken personally to each one of us.

2. You can do this in one of two ways:

> One way of doing this: Focus on Jesus and let Him speak to you personally as you journal. Write down what He is already speaking to you from within. Write Jesus' response to you. It may be one word, a phrase, or a sentence.

You can be certain that whatever you write which draws you more closely to Jesus, and helps you realize that you are loved, is not just coming from you but is definitely what Jesus is saying to you.

> Another way to journal: Simply speak to Jesus what is in your heart concerning the passage you have just prayed over.

D. The real test of whether a person is truly hearing the Lord Jesus, as he or she prays over his Word, is whether he or she is moved to reach out to the poor and the needy and serve them in some way (Read: Matthew 25:31-46).

E. The number one pastoral benefit to the parish is the formation of the small group home gatherings, small Christian communities (PSGS). These small Christian communities meet together at fixed times to:

1. Pray over the Scriptures together.
2. Share their love for Jesus.
3. Intercede for the needs of others.
4. Help one another when difficulties arise.
5. Feast together.
6. Mourn together.
7. Reach out and evangelize.

* This method of praying the Scriptures together is an adaptation of "Prayer--A Personal Response to God's Presence," by Armand M. Nigro, S.J.

PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM
WEEKLY SMALL GROUP REPORT
CONT'D

	WK 1	WK 2	WK 3	WK 4	WK 5
This weekly small group report is for the week ending on the date to the right :					
Number of those faithfully attending every week					
Number of newly invited attending every week:					
Total Number in Attendance:					

COMMENTS ON SMALL GROUP PROGRESS

1. Meeting format: Is the Small Group Format held within the allotted time?
 Yes ___ No ___ If not, please explain.

2. Briefly comment on the quality of the:

-Opening Time of Worship: Is it a vibrant time of praise and thanksgiving?
 Yes ___ No ___ If not, how can it be improved?

-Communal Scriptural Prayer: Briefly comment on the quality of this time of communal scriptural prayer.

-Personal Testimony and the Witness: If either of these need to be improved, how are you addressing it? Please explain.

-the Intercessory Prayer and the Prayer for Healing: Is there need for improvement? If there is, what are you doing about it?

PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM
WEEKLY SMALL GROUP REPORT
CONT'D

3. What referrals are being made in terms of specific needs: Is anyone a possible candidate for the R.C.I.A. (Catechumenate)? Those needing their marriage fixed? Baptisms needed? Wounds needing healing (divorce, reconciliation, widows or widowers, etc.)? Sick desiring healing ministry, etc.?

4. What efforts are being made by your small group to grow through: group efforts to reach out (e.g. to nursing homes, shut-ins, feeding the poor, prisons, etc).

-What efforts are being made by individual members to reach out?

5. Is there anything needing specific attention and why? Be specific yet discreet.

6. Any additional comments?

7. Was there eye contact, not only with the small group leader, but also with the others in the small group when the personal testimony and witness were given? Explain.

8. How well was the "Intercessory Prayer" done and was it done in accord with the suggested principles? Explain.

9. How well was the "Special Prayer for Healing" done and was it done in accord with the suggested principles? Explain.

10. Did the small group leader give good directions to those in the small group? Explain.

11. Are there any areas that need improvement for this small group? Explain.

12. Were the refreshments kept simple? And did fellowship take place? Explain.

B. Evaluation of Small Group Leader

The Area/District Leader is to be of assistance to the Small Group Leader in regard to the developing Parish Small Group System. The Area/District Leader discusses with the Small Group Leader the following:

A. Growth of the Small Group Leader in:

1. Leading the small group home gathering. Explain.

2. Keeping the small group to the schedule. Explain.

3. Helping the small group members grow in praying over the Scriptures (Lectio Divina). Explain.

4. Assisting the small group members in becoming more proficient in giving their personal testimony. Explain.

5. Assisting the small group members in becoming more proficient in giving weekly witness to the action of the Lord in their personal lives. Explain.

6. Helping the small group members grow in their ability to listen to the Word of God and to one another. Explain.

7. Zeal and availability to those coming to the small group home gathering by

meeting with them at other times besides the weekly small group gathering. Explain.

B. Fidelity of the Small Group Leader in:

1. Meeting with friends or acquaintances of his or her small group members who are in need of being initially evangelized before they can be invited to the small group home gathering (or having one of the other trained evangelizers in the small group do so). Explain.
2. Meeting with his or her Assistant Small Group Leader to pray a little before the small group meeting actually begins and to evaluate the small group meeting when everyone has gone. Explain.

C. Health of the parish small group home gathering with regard to the following questions:

1. Is the size of the small group increasing because the trained evangelizers are truly zealous, having as their goal to divide and multiply because evangelization is for them a way of life? Explain
2. Are the unchurched being initially evangelized, ministered to and appropriately directed to the catechumenate when the time is right? Explain.
3. Are the alienated/inactive being initially evangelized, ministered to and appropriately encouraged to be re-membered into the Church through the ACTS II Evangelization Training when the time is right? Explain.

CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

Mary, most holy Virgin, you are God's Mother and mine. In the temple you consecrated yourself entirely to God. In the Mystery of the Incarnation, you dedicated yourself to the welfare of mankind. Thus, you became God's helper in the work of Redemption. I acknowledge you and I honor you as the Perfect Model. In your heart, you constantly kept and pondered the words of your Divine Son and His exhortations to perfection. I know that I owe to your heart, the "channel of all graces", the grace of my vocation. Therefore, I consecrate to your Immaculate Heart my family and myself. Since through you I regained the life of grace that had been lost, I entrust to you my family and all that I do, so that, under your protection and the guidance of your motherly heart, hidden in Christ Jesus, I may daily grow and be strengthened in fervor and be fruitful in every good deed.

Let me imitate perfectly the virtues of your heart, namely, humility and obedience and, above all, a burning love of God and for my neighbor.

Give me always the blessing of your motherly heart. May your blessing enable me to remain faithful to my calling, and ever strive that Christ's kingdom be confirmed and spread throughout the world.

May the kingdom of your Immaculate Heart come to us, I beseech you, dearest Mother, so that soon, also, there may come to us the kingdom of the Sacred Heart of your Son, Jesus Christ, to whom may praise, honor and glory be given, now and in eternity. Amen.

(An adaptation of the prayer of Pope Pius XII, 1950)

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