

And You Shall Be My Witnesses

Acts 1:8

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

**LEADER'S
EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE**

**PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM
POLICY MANUAL**



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

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

And You Shall Be My Witnesses

Acts 1:8

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

**LEADER'S
EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE**

**PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM
POLICY MANUAL**

By
Sr. Angeline Bukowiecki, S.N.C

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.

Imprimatur: Rt. Rev. Anthony O. Gbuji, Bishop of Enugu
Nigeria, Africa, September 30, 1998

Nihil obstat: Rev. Fidelis Igwenwanne, Coordinator
Emmaus School of Evangelization
Diocese of Issele-Uku, Nigeria, Africa
September 30, 1998

Copyright © 1988
Revised Edition © 2001, 2005

by
Sisters of the New Covenant, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN 0-924333-50-2

Published by
Sisters of the New Covenant, Inc.
16440 Grays Way,
Broomfield, Colorado 80023

Ph. 303-469-3227

Web Address: www.sncweb.org

Scripture quotes taken from the Revised Standard Version,
Catholic Edition of the Bible

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

Introduction

The purpose of this Training is twofold: to give those parishioners who are completing the ACTS II Evangelization Training a very practical experience and in-depth understanding of the Parish Small Group System and an in-depth understanding of the vision of the ACTS II Process.

If those who are trained in the ACTS II Process are going to run with this vision, they must know and understand the vision, know and understand where they are going and how they are going to get there.

Having this understanding, trained evangelizers within the parish are able to run with zeal and conviction to accomplish the vision, goal and purpose of the ACTS II Process for the parish.

The training in the Parish Small Group System, Policy Manual, 6AA, is a two-day training:

Day One: Given on the Saturday before the Supervised Outreach begins (See: 8A, "Sample Schedule of Dates and Content of Training", April 9).

Day Two: Given on a Saturday, the last day of the ACTS II Evangelization Training (See: 8A, "Sample Schedule of Dates and Content of Training", June 18).

The Parish Small Group System, Policy Manual, 6AA, the Coordinators Training Handbook, has been designed, developed and tested for training evangelizers. Every effort has been made to make it authentic and realistic. The possibility may arise that someone will question something about this training. If such a situation arises, please ask him or her to accept the training as given on the merit of each one's faith. If at all possible, avoid lengthy debates.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Schedule: Two-Day Training in the Parish Small Group System

SESSION ONE: The Format of the Small Group Home Gatherings within the Parish Small Group System	1
Introduction	3
The purpose of the Parish Small Group System	4
The format of the Small Group Home Gatherings within the Parish Small Group System	5
• Song and Praise	5
• Praying the Scriptures (Lectio Divina)	7
• Personal Testimony	16
• Witness	18
• Business	20
• Intercessory Prayer	20
• Special Prayer for Healing	26
Practice of the entire format of the Small Group Home Gathering	28
• The General Format for the Small Group Home Gatherings	29
Variations of the General Format	32
Questions and Study Guide	35
SESSION TWO: The Parish Small Group System	37
Introduction	38
The place of the Parish Small Group System within the ACTS II Process	39
Why the Parish Small Group System	39
The need for pastoral care to be shared	41
The Parish Small Group System is heavily based on three principles that form the foundation for its existence and success	44

• Evangelization	44
• Prayer and Fasting	44
• Tithing	45
Two special small groups within the Parish Small Group System	45
• The Servant Group	46
• The Coordinators	47
The purpose of the Parish Small Group System	49
The thrust of the Parish Small Group System	51
The ACTS II Process and the R.C.I.A.	52
Questions and Study Guide	55
SESSION THREE: Factors that Contribute to the Effectiveness and Success of the Parish Small Group System, Part 1	59
Characteristics and accountability of the Parish Small Group System	60
Characteristics of the small groups:	
• The Servant Group oversees the well-being of the small groups	60
• The small groups are "household/marketplace" related	60
• Small groups are multiplying groups	61
• The Parish Small Group System (PSGS) is a way of life	61
• Small groups are highly evangelistic in nature	62
• The small groups are discipline structured	62
• Small groups require ongoing training of small group leaders	63
Accountability:	
• Small groups are accountable	64
• Area/district leaders are accountable	64
• The Coordinators are accountable	65
• The Secretary is accountable	65
The success of the Parish Small Group System	66
Success depends on:	

• Each person undergoes a personal conversion experience	66
• The small group does not quench the Spirit	67
• Vibrant worship and music in the small group	67
• Small group centered on communal scriptural prayer (Lectio Divina)	68
• Adherence to the structure of the small group	70
• Consistent prayer encouraged in the lives of those who come to the small groups	71
• Commitment to fasting each week	71
• Evangelistic outreach by the small group	71
• Ministry for all	72
• Tithing by all	73
• Hospitality	73
• Principle of subsidiarity	74
Who can come to the Small Group Home Gathering?	76
Size of the small group	78
Questions and Study Guide	80
SESSION FOUR: • Factors that Contribute to the Effectiveness and Success of the Parish Small Group System, Part 2	
• Vision and Goal of the ACTS II Process	
• Association: Community of the New Covenant	82
Small Group Leaders of the Small Group Home Gatherings: Who should be a small group leader?	84
Small group leaders are Spirit-filled:	
• Small group leaders speak the same language as those in their small groups	84
• Small group leaders foster unity and not disunity	85
• Small groups primary ministry of small group leaders	85
• Small group leaders called by God for this ministry	86
• Small group leaders are those who have been tested in ministry	86
• Small group leaders participate in the stewardship program of the parish	88
• Small group leaders are not gossips	89
• Small group leaders select an assistant small group leader	90
Some qualities that characterize small group leaders	91
• Enthusiasm	91

• Personal Testimony	91
• Dedication	91
• Docility	91
Role of the small group leaders	92
Duties of the small group leaders	93
Parish Small Group System: Weekly Small Group Report	95
Area/District Leader Evaluation of the Small Group Home Gathering	95
• Area leaders are to be of assistance to the small group leaders	96
The Vision and Goal of the ACTS II Process	97
Questions and Study Guide	100
Association: Community of the New Covenant	100

APPENDIX

Principles for Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering
Prayer for Healing

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SCHEDULE

PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM

FIRST DAY

9:00 A.M.	Session One & Break	135 Minutes
11:15 A.M.	Session One Cont'd & Lunch	140 Minutes
1:35 P.M.	Session One Cont'd & Break	135 Minutes
3:50 P.M.	Session One Cont'd	15 Minutes
4:05 P.M.	Dismissal	

SECOND DAY

9:00 A.M.	Session Two & Break	95 Minutes
10:35 A.M.	Session Three, Break & Lunch	170 Minutes
1:25 P.M.	Session Four	70 Minutes
2:35 P.M.	Dismissal	

Please Take Note

The First Day: With regard to the activity of praying over the Scriptures on p. 15, n. 24, the time given is 60 minutes. That 60 minutes would apply to a small group having at least 10 members or more. A smaller number of persons in a small group would require less time to pray over the Scriptures. What is important is that there be sufficient time to pray the Scriptures during this training.

The same is true regarding the activity of doing the entire format of the small group on p. 31, n. 10. Praying the Scriptures here would require less time than the 60 minutes stated on p. 29 if each small group has less than 10 participants.

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SESSION ONE

THE FORMAT OF THE SMALL GROUP HOME GATHERINGS WITHIN THE PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM

OBJECTIVE

To acquire a practical understanding of the format of the Small Group Home Gatherings within the Parish Small Group System (PSGS).

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 2.
3. Have sufficient copies of the following Handbooks:
 - a) Parish Small Group System Policy Manual, 6A and Scriptures for Communal Scriptural Prayer, 6C for the Small Group Leaders.
 - b) Parish Small Group System, 6B for the Trainees.
4. So that the trainees can keep these in their bibles, make copies of (or have printed on separate cards) the following:

- "Principles for Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering" and the "Prayer for Healing" (See: Appendix).
5. All participants are to bring to this session their Be An Evangelizer? Me?, 1B and their Evangelization Outreach Guide, 4B.
6. Pray with training team 20 minutes before session.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 415 Minutes (About 7 hours)

OPENING PRAYER

10 MINS.

1. ASK group to turn to EOH page 26 and stand.
2. SIGNAL for music and prayer leaders to begin.
3. REQUEST Blessing Prayer.
4. THANK group and ask them to be seated.

DISTRIBUTE MATERIALS

5 MINS.

GIVE out the following Handbooks:

1. To the Small Group Leaders the:

-Parish Small Group System, 6A and Scriptures for Communal Scriptural Prayer, 6C.

2. To the trainees the:

-Parish Small Group System, 6B.

BEGIN SESSION

STATE objective:

1. Today, we want to come to a practical understanding of the format of the small groups within the Parish Small Group System (PSGS).
 2. At the end of the training, we will do an in-depth study of the Parish Small Group System.
-

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

105 MINS.

1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:

- I. Introduction.

- II. The purpose of the Parish Small Group System.

- III. The format of the Small Group Home Gatherings within the Parish Small

Group System.

IV. Practice of the entire format of the Small Group Home Gathering.

V. Variations of the General Format.

VI. Questions and Study Guide.

2. TEACH expanded outline of above key points.

I. Introduction.

A. During the supervised outreach, your small groups will be learning a new format, one that needs to be carried out very effectively.

1. Some of you may have experienced this format in the Parish Small Groups you attended before you began this training.
2. Each time the ACTS II Evangelization Training is completed, it may happen that new Parish Small Groups come into existence, or that newly trained evangelizers are added to already existing Parish Small Groups.
3. Whatever the case, the purpose of this day is to help you come to a practical understanding of the new format so that you can participate in it effectively.

B. Throughout the day, you will be given opportunities to do each part of the format.

-This new format is what you will continue doing in your small groups after you complete this training.

C. At the end of the supervised outreach, we will spend additional time giving you an in-depth understanding of the Parish Small Group System.

-Having a clear understanding of the Parish Small Group Sys-

tem is vital since the formation of small Christian communities is one of the primary goals of the ACTS II Process.

II. The purpose of the Parish Small Group System.

- A. Those of you who are Small Group Leaders, please turn to page 4 in your Handbook, 6A. And would the rest of you please turn to page 3 in your Handbook, 6B.

- B. On these pages, you are given the purpose of the Parish Small Group System.

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

- D. Small Group Leaders, please take note of what I am going to say now.

-It is your responsibility, as Small Group Leaders, to read these purposes at the beginning of each weekly meeting to help every-

one remember the reasons for the small group being in existence.

III. The format of the Small Group Home Gatherings within the Parish Small Group System.

To come to an understanding of what happens in the small groups while the supervised outreach is being carried out, I will explain one segment at a time and then have you practice that particular segment. Please take good notes.

-Small Group Leaders can find some of this information on page 9 of their Handbook, 6A.

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. Notice the word 'vibrant'.
2. Vibrant worship is alive and characterized by joy and enthusiasm. That is how our song and praise time is to be when we come together for the small groups. It should never be dull or lack joy and enthusiasm.

-In the Book of Sirach, we are told this. Let's look at Sirach 43:28-30.

-"Where shall we find strength to praise him? For he is greater than all his works. Terrible is the Lord and very great, and marvelous is his power. When you praise the Lord, exalt him as much as you can; for he will surpass even that. When you exalt him, put forth all your strength, and do not grow weary, for you cannot praise him enough."

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

4. The songs should move the group into a time of powerful, joy-filled expressions of praise and thanksgiving of the Lord.
5. This time of worship sets the atmosphere of prayer and reverence in which all that follows is rooted.
6. 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 praise and thanksgiving --

-making the transition to the next segment of the format which is: Praying the Scriptures (Lectio Divina).

7. Activity for the Participants. **(12 Minutes)**

- a) Please get into your small groups.
- b) You are going to practice doing this segment of the format now.
- c) Small Group Leaders, please think for a moment about what kind of songs you would like to sing. The songs you choose are to lead your small group into worship of the Lord.
 - i) You want to begin with a lively song or songs that will free up everyone, causing them to be joyful in the Lord, and leading them into a time of joy-filled expressions of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord.

-It helps if you can model for them through your own joy-filled expressions of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord.

-This is something that you need to do. Step out in faith and model well for those in your small group how to praise the Lord.

- ii) Then you want to move into a slower song that will move the group into a realization of the Lord's presence in their midst and into deeper worship of him.
- iii) When that happens, you are to bring this segment of the format to a close by praying a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord.

-Your prayer is the transition into the next segment of the format which is: Praying the Scriptures. We will be looking at that next.

- iv) So, Small Group Leaders, you have two minutes to think over what I have just said and to decide which songs you will use for this practice.

v) Your time is up.

- d) You have ten minutes now to do this first segment of the format: Song and Praise.

- i) Your Small Group Leader will lead you into worship of the Lord through songs of praise and thanksgiving and through your own expressions of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord.

ii) You may begin.

B. Praying the Scriptures (Lectio Divina).

1. The scripture passage used for Praying the Scriptures is found in your Handbook, 6C, Scriptures for Communal Scriptural Prayer.
2. Let's take a moment to look at 6C. You will notice that the Scripture readings follow the liturgical year.

a) Look at the Table of Contents. Here we are given the

liturgical cycles: Cycles A, B, and C for the Gospel and for the Epistles.

- b) On the next page, we are told why we are using the Scriptures for the liturgical year and how to begin.
- c) I will read the first two paragraphs since all of you do not have copies.
- d) Do you have any questions?
- e) Notice the last paragraph. It states: The Small Group Leader will need a Mass Ordo or a Missalette in order to choose the correct passage at the time a new liturgical season begins or a solemnity occurs.
- f) On the following pages, we are given the Gospel readings for each of the liturgical cycles, followed by the Epistle readings for each of these cycles as well.
- g) Any questions?

3. For those who are Small Group Leaders, please turn to the "Principles for Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering" in your Handbook, 6A.

-The rest of you can turn to that section in your Handbook, 6B. There you will find an introduction to this segment of the format.

4. I will simply read each point of this section and comment on it. If you have any questions about the point being looked at, please feel free to ask them.

-All of you will need to take good notes.

5. 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.

- a) The Assistant Small Group Leader would lead the communal Scriptural prayer for the second group.
 - b) When the communal scriptural prayer is finished, the two groups come back together for the rest of the activities.
6. Praying the Scriptures is learning to see the Word of God in relation to its call to you to come to know the Lord Jesus more intimately, love him more deeply, and follow him more closely.
7. The purpose of the communal scriptural prayer time is to teach each person how to pray over the Scriptures:
- a) How to listen to what the Lord Jesus Christ is saying to you personally, and then to be obedient to the Word by giving a response of action.
 - b) The Word of God is a Word that convicts, that calls for ongoing conversion, that calls for obedience.
 - c) If a person really allows that Word of God to enter his/her heart, (s)he will be changed.

-(S)he will become more and more like Jesus, taking on his heart, mind and spirit, his value system.
 - d) The power of the Word of God brings about community: a caring, bearing, sharing community.
8. Communal scriptural prayer is risky business and something people want to avoid, because it forces a person to be confronted by the Word of God 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).

9. We will now look at how the principles of communal scriptural prayer are to be expressed by the Small Group Leader of the small group.

a) After the time for song and praise is completed, the Small Group Leader invites those present to listen carefully to God's Word and reminds them of Jesus' assurance:

-"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20).

b) "Now, we are going to break open the Word of God, allowing him to speak to each one of us personally. Each of us is to put ourselves into the passage and hear what the Lord is saying personally to each one of us. We need to quiet ourselves so that we can hear the Word that the Lord has for each one of us personally."

c) "The scripture passage that we will look at now is ____."

d) Begins with a short prayer such as, "Come, Holy Spirit. Open our minds and our hearts to hear and to understand what the Lord wishes to speak to each one of us. Help us to listen carefully to the Word."

10. 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.

11. After the reading, each states what the passage said to

him or her personally as each is moved.

a) If all do not express what the passage is saying to them personally, that is all right because freedom should be given to everyone present to state their insights or not.

b) The important point here is that all are praying whether one's insights are given or not.

12. At the appropriate time, the Small Group Leader again reads the same passage slowly. It is a richer listening experience this time because the remarks of each one have enriched the passage for everyone. The Lord speaks to each of us through one another as well.
13. A second round of insights are shared following the second reading which are usually richer than the first.
14. The same passage is read slowly a third and last time.
15. 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.

-This is to be done by those who feel free enough to do so; 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.

16. 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.

17. In conclusion. The Small Group Leader can express all of

what we have looked at in the following way:

- 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:

-"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20).

- b) Begin with a short prayer such as,

- i) "Come Holy Spirit. Open our minds and our hearts to hear and to understand what the Lord wishes to speak to each one of us. Help each one of us to listen carefully to the Word."

- ii) "Now, we are going to break open the Word of God allowing him to speak to each one of us personally. Each of us is to put ourselves into the passage and hear what the Lord is saying personally to each one of us. We need to quiet ourselves so that we can hear the Word that the Lord has for each one of us personally."

- iii) "The scripture passage that we will look at now is _____."

- c) "Let's place ourselves in the presence of the Lord Jesus who is here in our midst. (**Pause**) I am going to read the passage very slowly. When I am finished, there will be a short period of silence for each of us to reflect on the passage."

- i) "Then I will share first what the Lord has said to me personally. I will say something like this: 'I felt this' 'I heard this' 'This struck me' 'To me, it said or meant'"

- ii) "And then anyone who feels free can share what the passage says to you personally."

- iii) "Please, when you share, keep your sharing on the passage very short, personal, and use: 'I, me, or my', and not 'we, they, or them.' Be honest, simple, not preachy, not applying lessons to others. That will kill the prayer experience."

- iv) "Peacefully, humbly, sensitively listen to God's Word and simply state what it says and means to you personally."

- v) "Do not 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 us. Relax. Savor his words during the silences."

- d) "After all those who wish to share have shared, I will read the passage again for the second time very slowly. And again, there will be a short period of silence for each of us to reflect on the passage.

-"Then, I will again share first what the Lord is saying to me personally. And again, anyone who feels free can share what the passage says to you personally."

- e) "When everyone who wishes to share has shared, I will read the passage again for the third time, only this time, after a short period of silence, I will pray spontaneously to God, the Father, or to Jesus, or to the Holy Spirit, or to the Blessed Mother."
 - i) For example, "Thank you, Jesus, for speaking to us. Help me be more aware of your presence in me and in others."

 - ii) "And again, anyone who wishes is invited to pray in a similar way."

- f) "Let us begin now."

- g) Five minutes before the end of the communal scriptural prayer, the Small Group Leader states:

-“Now, I would like for each of us to journal in our notebooks what the Lord has spoken to each one of us personally. You can do this in one of two ways:

- i) “One way of doing this would be to 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 to realize that you are loved is not just coming from you but is definitely what Jesus is saying to you.”

- ii) “Another way you might want to journal is simply to speak to Jesus what is in your heart concerning the passage you have just prayed over.”

18. As you can see, the communal scriptural prayer time and how it is explained flows very smoothly.
19. I have copies of how this can be said at the small group meeting for each one of you (Give out copies).
20. The real test of whether a person is truly hearing the Lord Jesus as (s)he prays over his Word is whether (s)he is moved to reach out to the poor and the needy and serve them in some way.
21. Listen closely as I read what Jesus says in Matthew 25:31-46.
22. The number one pastoral benefit to the parish is the formation of these small groups, small Christian communities.

- a) The small Christian communities meet together at fixed times to:
 - i) Pray over the Scriptures together.
 - ii) Share their love for Jesus.
 - iii) Intercede for the needs of others.
 - iv) Help one another when difficulties arise.
 - v) Feast together.
 - vi) Mourn together.
 - vii) Reach out and evangelize, just like the first Christians did in chapter 2 of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles.

- b) If this isn't happening, then the purpose of the Parish Small Group System is not being fulfilled.

23. Activity for participants. **(15 Minutes)**

- a) Even though each of you is not a Small Group Leader now, hopefully you will be sometime in the future.

- b) So time will be given now for each of you to memorize the "Principles for Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering" that I gave out to you.

-And you can keep it in your Bible and have it whenever you need it.

- c) You have 15 minutes now to memorize the "Principles for Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering" as given on the sheet I gave out to you.

-All of you are to memorize this because hopefully all of you will eventually become Small Group Leaders or Assistant Small Group Leaders.

24. Activity for participants. **(60 Minutes)**

- a) Please move into your small groups now to actually pray the Scriptures in the way that I explained.

- b) The Scripture you are to use for your communal Scriptural prayer is Rm. 13:8-14.
- c) You have 60 minutes to do this. And please remember that five of those 60 minutes is for journaling.
- d) You can begin now.

COMMUNITY BREAK 15 MINS.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT CONT'D **65 MINS.**

C. Personal Testimony and Witness.

Personal Testimony.

As you already know, a personal testimony is concerned with sharing how one's life has changed because of coming to know Jesus in a more personal, experiential way.

1. When given in the small group, the personal testimony should take no more than 3 minutes if that.
2. Use the 100 word testimony you wrote during the training.
 - The time allotted here for Personal Testimony and Witness allows for anticipated questions to take place after the personal testimony has been given.
3. The personal testimony is highly recommended especially when newly evangelized persons have been invited to attend the Small Group Home Gathering.
4. Personal testimony for newly evangelized persons is very helpful to them. It encourages them when they hear how Jesus has worked in your lives and gives them hope for themselves.

5. If there are no new people in the small group, the personal testimony is not given.

-In place of the personal testimony, another witness (or witnesses) is given, remaining within the time frame allotted for this segment.

6. Personal testimonies must be rooted in the principles given in your Handbook, 1B, Be An Evangelizer? Me? Always keep in mind the ABC's of a good personal testimony which are also applicable to good witnessing.

7. As you already know, your personal testimony is to have two parts to it.

- a) A B.C. section -- a "Before Christ" section -- which describes your life before you met Jesus in a personal way; and --
- b) An A.D. section -- an "After I met Christ" section -- which describes the change in your life after coming into a personal relationship with Jesus.
- c) The personal testimony is to be kept strictly to 100 words. No more than that.

-Only those who have received the evangelization training are to give a personal testimony at your Small Group Home Gathering.

- d) However, those in your small groups who have not taken the Training as yet, could give their personal testimony if you, as Small Group Leaders or trained evangelizers, are willing to help them.
 - i) You would need to follow the principles given in 1B in helping them write up their personal testimony, keeping it to 100 words, and writing up their anticipated questions.

ii) Is that clear to everyone?

8. Activity for Participants. **(5 Minutes)**

- a) Quietly go over your own personal testimony and your anticipated questions.
- b) You have 5 minutes now to do this.
- c) All of you memorized your personal testimony earlier in the training. However, it doesn't hurt to make sure you know it by heart.

Witness.

- 1. A witness is different from the personal testimony. It is concerned about sharing how Jesus Christ has worked in your life during the past week.
- 2. As Christians, we are called to be 'seers', able to see in our daily lives, the hand of God at work beneath the surface of things.
 - a) For example, I'm driving around the block looking for a parking spot. It is getting very frustrating for me since I cannot find a space. So, I pray, "Lord Jesus, open up a place for me." And low and behold, I find a space.
 - b) I can witness to this situation. I prayed for a place and the Lord got me one. Praise the Lord.
 - i) That's a witness.
 - ii) It is brief and to the point. It's focus is the Lord Jesus and what he has done for me. And I praise him for that. That's a witness.

3. The witness is to take place on a weekly basis so that all might become better equipped to see the hand of the Lord at work in their lives on a daily basis.
4. The time for witnessing is to take no longer than a minute or two.
5. Always keep in mind the ABC's of a good witness.
 - a) A--Ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
 - b) B--Be brief; be clear and concise.
 - c) C--Be Christ-centered.
6. Again, if there are those in your group who would like to give a witness, you, as Small Group Leaders or trained evangelizers, need to meet with them to help them know how to witness by following the ABC's of good witnessing.

-Is that clear to everyone?

7. Activity for Participants. (**5 Minutes**)

- a) So that you are prepared to give a witness: write out now how the Lord Jesus worked in your life this past week.
 - i) Pick out one instance and share it in the way that I did in the example I just gave.
 - ii) Ask the Holy Spirit; be brief and to the point; and be Christ-centered.
 - iii) You have 5 minutes to do this.
 - iv) Your time is up.

- b) Would the Small Group Leader of each small group please appoint two persons now to do the following:
 - i) One person in your group to be prepared to give his/her personal testimony with anticipated questions ready.
 - ii) And another person to give his or her witness.
- c) You are simply appointing them now because later today, they will be asked to give their personal testimony with anticipated questions ready and their witness from memory.

D. Business.

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

1. Reminders about the need for good order in the meeting (for example, no moving around or getting a drink, etc.).
2. An information sheet, the "Weekly Small Group Report", that the Small Group Leader fills out on a weekly basis. We will look at that report more closely at a later date.
3. Any announcements concerning parish activities, etc.

E. Intercessory Prayer.

For those of you who are Small Group Leaders, what I am going to talk about now is on page 11 in your Handbook, 6A. All of you are to take good notes.

1. Intercessory Prayer is concerned about praying for the needs of others.

2. How do we do intercessory prayer in the Parish Small Group System?
 - a) The Small Group Leader introduces this time of prayer by stating the principles and giving an example for each.
 - b) The Small Group Leader begins the intercessory prayer.
3. The principles for intercessory prayer are as follows:
 - a) **Principle One:** The key is to pray to the Lord about the concern rather than share requests.
 - i) For example, "Lord Jesus, I ask you to touch the baby of John and Mary Smith with your healing love and heal him of his asthma."
 - ii) Do not say: "I want to pray for the baby of John and Mary Smith."
 - iii) You pray directly to the Lord, including the request you are making of the Lord, in your prayer to him.
 - iv) It is important for you, as trained evangelizers within the small groups, to model well how this prayer is done because the others will follow your example.
 - v) This type of prayer is conversational prayer in which you speak directly to God the concern that is in your heart about a particular person, family, or matter.
 - b) **Principle Two:** Stay with one topic at a time rather than moving on from one thing to another.
 - i) Someone might pray about a person who is sick and another can remain with this concern, by praying for courage and strength for this person to be able to bear under the situation.

-For example, "Lord Jesus, I hold up to you my neighbor, Mary, who has the flu and has been home from work now for over a week. Please heal her."

-Another person would stay with this intention for Mary, by praying: "And Lord Jesus, I ask that you give Mary, courage and strength during this time."

- ii) Someone else might pray about the financial needs of Mary's family during this period of sickness.

-For example, "Lord Jesus, I pray that Mary's financial needs will not be affected, that she is covered through sick leave and will not suffer any deductions in her paycheck."

- iii) A time of silence might follow, and then another person might change the topic for intercessory prayer.

- iv) One person might pray for a person who needs help in prioritizing his or her day, in such a way, as to have consistent time with the Lord.

-For example, "Lord Jesus, my friend, John, is having a lot of difficulty organizing his life. Help him, Lord Jesus, to put right order into his life, to be able to prioritize his life, in such a way, that he is able to spend time with you, Lord, on a consistent basis."

-Another might pray that this time be very meaningful for John: "And Lord Jesus, grant that the time John spends with you will be very meaningful to him and a source of ongoing incentive to be with you on a regular basis."

-Another might pray that he be faithful to a daily meditation on the Scriptures: "Grant, Lord Jesus, that John will be drawn to a daily reflection on the Scriptures and that he be able to hear you speaking to him in a personal way."

- v) The concern here is that this time of intercessory prayer be a time in which all agree together concerning the intention at hand.
 - vi) All need to be united in mind, heart, and spirit concerning the intention for which all are interceding.
 - vii) It is not a disjointed effort but a united concern about this particular intention. That is the heart of intercession.
- c) **Principle Three:** The request prayed about should be kept brief.
- i) We can all do intercessory prayer if each of us prays about one aspect of the particular intention, and not try to cover everything about the intention in our prayer.

-For example, "Lord Jesus, I hold up to you my neighbor, John Smith and his family. He is having abdominal surgery tomorrow. Lord, I ask that you guide the surgeon's hand and give John a successful surgery and a speedy recovery."

-Such a prayer can be prayed in less than a minute. It simply states the reason for the prayer.

- ii) That way those who wish to pray about other aspects of the concern are able to do so.

-For example, "And, Lord, I ask that you take away any anxiety John might have. Give him deep trust in you and deep peace."

-Someone else might pray for his wife and children: "Lord, give John's wife and children peace as well. Remove from them all anxiety and worry."

iii) Interceding in this way allows each person to pray sooner and more often, as the case may be, and about different aspects of the one intention.

iv) Interceding in this way does two things for us:

-It makes us more sensitive to the various aspects of a particular need.

-It raises our awareness to the various aspects of a need being prayed about.

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

d) **Principle Four:** Intercessory prayer should be spontaneous.

i) Everyone does not pray in sequence going around the circle.

ii) Rather, freedom is there for each one to pray or not pray, depending on who is moved by the Spirit to pray for this particular intention.

iii) With intercessory prayer, conversational prayer, there is always the freedom to pray about the various aspects of a particular need as a person is moved to do so.

4. Activity for Participants. (10 Minutes)

a) You will have time now to review your notes and make them your own.

b) The Small Group Leaders need to know how to do this well. It is your role to:

- i) Introduce this time of prayer.
 - ii) Explain the principles of intercessory prayer briefly, and give an example for each of the principles, as I did.
 - iii) Begin the time of intercessory prayer by praying first.
- c) The trained evangelizers also need to know how to do this well.

-It is your role to follow the lead of the Small Group Leader by interceding about the intention that the Small Group Leader begins with.

- d) You have 10 minutes now to review your notes, memorize and make them your own.
- e) Your time is up.

5. Activity for Participants. **(10 Minutes)**

- a) Please move into your small groups.
- b) You are going to have a period of time now to intercede for the needs of others, using the principles of intercessory prayer that we just covered.
- c) Your Small Group Leader will:
 - i) Introduce this time of intercessory prayer.
 - ii) Explain the principles for intercessory prayer briefly and give an example for each of the principles.

iii) Begin by introducing a particular intention for intercession.

d) You have 10 minutes now to do this.

F. Special Prayer for Healing.

For those of you who are Small Group Leaders, what I am going to talk about is on page 12 in your Handbook, 6A. All of you are to take good notes.

1. This is a special time of experiencing God's love by those in need of prayers for healing.
2. The Small Group Leader asks everyone to join hands. The persons on either side of the person requesting healing prayer lay hands gently on this person.
3. The Small Group Leader leads this prayer, modeling for others how to pray for healing.
4. For example:
 - a) Mary is requesting prayers for pain in her abdomen.
 - b) Those on either side of her lay hands gently on her head or shoulder.
 - c) 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, Mary, * of all sicknesses and ailments, * diseases and conditions, * whether of mind or body. * And especially, Lord, * heal, Mary, of the pain in

her abdomen. * Thank you, Father, * for healing, Mary, *
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 Mary's body, * whether
it is 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
Mary's 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.

5. You would pray in a similar way for the next person request-
ing prayers for healing.
6. This is a very good way to pray for healing, by praying in the
Name of Jesus. I have copies of this prayer for everyone.
We will go over it again together.
7. Activity for Participants. **(10 Minutes)**
 - a) You have 10 minutes now to review your notes, memorize
and make your own the "Prayer for Healing."

b) Your time is up.

8. Activity for Participants. **(10 Minutes)**

a) Please move into your small groups.

b) You will have 10 minutes now to pray together for healing for those in your small groups who want prayer for healing in the way just described.

c) You may begin now.

LUNCH

75 MINS.

A. ASK one of the trainees to pray a blessing over the lunch.

B. GIVE time for all to get their lunch and to be seated.

C. STATE the following:

During our lunch, we want to get to know one another better and so each of us will share on this question:

- "Now that you have the skills and tools for evangelizing, how has that helped you to better appreciate the Holy Father's call to the whole church to evangelize?"

D. ASK all to help clean up after lunch.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT CONT'D.

125 MINS.

IV. Practice of the entire format of the Small Group Home Gathering.

A. What I'd like to do now is look at the General Format of the Small Group Home Gathering, segment by segment, that will be used in your small groups.

B. Would the Small Group Leaders please turn to page 5 in your Handbook, 6A. All of you are to take good notes.

C. The General Format for the Small Group Home Gatherings.

1. I will put the format outline on the board and we can go through it together.
2. We are simply looking at the format as a whole now.
3. The general format for the Small Group Home Gathering is as follows:

A. Song and Praise	10 Minutes
B. Praying the Scriptures (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

Maximum Time (and must not exceed this): 120 Minutes

4. This is the format that you will be learning and making your own during the supervised outreach.
5. Small Group Leaders, please turn to page 14 of 6A. On this page, you are given a sample of what this looks like using the breakdown of the evening times from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
6. The suggested time for the small groups to meet in the evening is from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. followed by fellowship.

-However, the small groups may meet whenever is best for those in the small group.

7. Whenever the small groups meet, they must start on time and end on time.

- a) That way, people know exactly what to expect and they also know when they are free to leave.
 - b) If someone cannot stay for the fellowship, they are free to leave immediately after the closing song.
8. A word about fellowship. This part is very, very important. The members of the small group should want to stay and fellowship together.
- a) Fellowship helps everyone get to know one another better and brings about community, a community of caring, bearing, and sharing people.
 - b) The Small Group Leaders are to stress the importance of the time for fellowship and encourage everyone to make a concerted effort to stay for the fellowship.
9. Activity for Participants. **(5 Minutes)**
- a) Small Group Leaders, you will now have the opportunity to lead the entire dynamic of the Small Group Home Gathering following the general format on page 5.
 - b) As Small Group Leaders, you will have 5 minutes now to review the general format given on page 5 and the breakdown of times as given on page 14 of your Handbook.
 - i) Please write down for yourself the breakdown of these times.
 - ii) You can write down your breakdown of the times beginning with the time that the small groups will start which will be at _____.
 - c) The rest of you can review your notes.
 - d) Your time is up.

10. Activity for Participants. (115 Minutes)

- a) Please move into your small groups.
- b) You will do the entire format except for the Business portion. There are no business matters to address today.
- c) The Scripture you will use for Praying the Scriptures is: Matthew 25:31-46.
- d) You have 115 minutes to carry out this format instead of 120 minutes since there is no business to address.
 - i) Each Small Group Leader is to watch his or her time for each segment of the format.
 - ii) Please remember your Small Group Leader's Training. When giving instructions, always try to have eye contact with everyone.

-You are to model this well so that when the members of your small group are:

-sharing their insights into the Scripture, or

-giving their personal testimony, or

-giving a witness,

they, too, will have eye contact with everyone in their small group.

-This is so very important to do, because having eye contact with those in your small group when sharing, shows that everyone is important to you.

- iii) You may begin now.

COMMUNITY BREAK

10 MINS.

Trainer: During the community break, put each of the format outlines on pp. 6 through 8 of 6A on the board so that everyone will be able to see them.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT CONT'D

10 MINS.

V. Variations of the General Format.

A. I would like to spend a few more minutes looking at the other formats that are carried out in the small group home gatherings. They vary slightly from the general format that you just did.

1. I have put each of the other format outlines on the board for everyone to see.

2. Small Group Leaders, please look at page 6.

3. This format is the same as the general format except that it gives some directions under points B and C.

a) We have looked at the "Principles to be Used for Communal Scriptural Prayer" and each of you has a copy of how these principles are to be expressed.

b) And we have already discussed how the personal testimony and witness are to be done.

c) Notice under point C, it states that two people are to be appointed each week by the Small Group Leader to come prepared: for one to give the personal testimony and the other to give a witness.

-That means that this particular format is to be done for Week 1 and Week 3 of each month (and Week 5 when there is a week 5).

4. On page 7, we are given the format to be used for Week 2 of each month.
 - a) Notice under point C that the discussion centers around one of the two questions that follows.
 - b) It is for the Small Group Leader to decide in advance of the small group gathering which question applies best to the Scripture that will be prayed over for that week.

5. On page 8, we are given the format to be used for Week 4.
 - a) For this week, instead of praying the Scriptures, a teaching on Christian living is listened to by the small group. Notes are taken by everyone so that they are able to discuss the questions that follow concerning the teaching.
 - b) The Small Group Leader is to listen to and study this teaching some time prior to the small group listening to it together. This will enable the Small Group Leader to better facilitate the small group discussion of the questions that accompany the teaching.

-If the tapes are not available, then the Small Group Leader would give the weekly teaching from the Christian Living Series Handbook.
 - c) This teaching on Christian living usually lasts about 15 to 20 minutes. Fifty-five minutes is allowed for discussion of the questions concerning the teaching.
 - d) These teachings on Christian living are very practical and address the difficult dynamics of living out our faith on a daily basis.
 - i) They are simple teachings but difficult to live out on a daily basis.
 - ii) And so they are very practical.

- iii) Our Catholic Christianity calls us not only to a sacramental life but to a living out of the values of the Gospel on a daily basis.

- iv) This series of 52 teachings unfolds slowly by first looking at faith. Some of the topics covered are:

- What is faith?

- How to grow in faith.

- Steps to grow in faith.

- Knowing God's will.

- The way in which guidance comes.

- Growth in guidance.

- Unconditional Love.

- Community and Fellowship.

- The Problem: the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

- The Christian approach to our emotions.

- The Gospel strategy for handling our emotions.

- Humility versus Timidity.

- Wrongdoing and its repair.

- What is anger?

- How to change problem anger.

- God or Money?

- Tearing down with the tongue.

- Building up with the tongue.

-And the list of talks goes on. But I mention some of these topics to bring home to you the practicality of these teachings.

B. Each of these format outlines are carried out in the small group home gatherings according to the designated week.

1. During the next eight weeks, you will be carrying out the supervised outreach and meeting each week in your small groups following the general format as given on p. 5 of 6A.
2. No one you initially evangelized during the supervised outreach is invited into your small groups because you are learning how to carry out these format outlines.

VI. Questions and Study Guide.

A. Is everything clear about the dynamic of the Small Group Home Gatherings?

B. Do you have any questions about anything we have done today?

C. Study Guide.

1. What I'd like you to do before our next session on the Parish Small Group System, which will be our last session of the Training, is the following:
2. For those of you who are Small Group Leaders, please make your own:
 - a) The Purpose of the Parish Small Group System.
 - b) The formats used for the Small Group Home Gathering.
 - c) A Fuller Discussion of the Format of the Small Group Home Gathering.
 - d) The Principles for Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering.
 - e) Please memorize:

- i) How to express the "Principles for Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering" as they are stated on the handout that I gave you.
- ii) The principles for intercessory prayer and the examples I gave for each principle.
- iii) The "Prayer for Healing" as given on the handout I gave you.

3. For the rest of you, please make your own:

- a) Purpose of the Parish Small Group System.
- b) Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering.
- c) And you are to memorize as well:
 - i) How to express the "Principles for Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering" as they are stated on the handout that I gave you.
 - ii) The principles for intercessory prayer and the examples I gave for each principle.
 - iii) The "Prayer for Healing" as given on the handout I gave you.

CLOSING PRAYER

5 MINS.

- 1. CALL prayer leaders forward.
- 2. ASK group to turn to EOH page 27 and stand.
- 3. SIGNAL music and prayer leaders to begin.
- 4. DISMISS group once prayer time is finished

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SESSION TWO

THE PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM

OBJECTIVE

To acquire an understanding of the dynamic of the Parish Small Group System (PSGS).

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 38.
3. Small Group Leaders are to bring to this session their Parish Small Group System Policy Manual, 6A and Evangelization Outreach Guide, 4B.

-Trainees are to bring their Parish Small Group System, 6B and Evangelization Outreach Guide, 4B.
4. Pray with training team 20 minutes before session.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 95 Minutes

OPENING PRAYER

15 MINS.

1. ASK group to turn to EOH page 28 and stand.
 2. SIGNAL for music and prayer leaders to begin.
 3. REQUEST Blessing Prayer.
 4. THANK group and ask them to be seated.
-

BEGIN SESSION

STATE objective:

During this session and the following sessions, we want to come to an in-depth understanding of the Parish Small Group System (PSGS) -- its dynamic and the various elements that contribute to its success.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

30 MINS.

1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:

I. Introduction.

II. The place of the Parish Small Group System within the ACTS II Process.

III. Why the Parish Small Group System.

IV. The need for pastoral care to be shared.

V. The Parish Small Group System is heavily based on three principles which form the foundation for its existence and success.

VI. Two special small groups within the Parish Small Group System.

VII. The purpose of the Parish Small Group System.

VIII. The thrust of the Parish Small Group System.

IX. The ACTS II Process and the R.C.I.A.

X. Questions and Study Guide.

2. TEACH expanded outline of above key points:

I. Introduction.

A. To have a clear understanding of the Parish Small Group System is vital since the formation of small evangelizing Christian communities is one of the primary goals of the ACTS II Process.

- B. The need for small evangelistic outreach groups with their intimacy, mutual care, support, and discipline is absolutely essential if the Catholic Christian is to survive in a post-Christian society.

-Through this networking of small evangelizing groups, the Parish Small Group System, parishioners will be able to take some agreed responsibility for their own lives and the lives of their brothers and sisters in the Lord.

II. The place of the Parish Small Group System within the ACTS II Process.

- A. The last segment of the nine-month evangelization training is concerned with the Parish Small Group System.
- B. The purpose of this day is to clearly explain the structure, purpose, and thrust of the Parish Small Group System of the ACTS II Process.
 - 1. Having a greater understanding of the parish goal will increase your zeal.
 - 2. It will give you an even greater incentive to work for the formation of an evangelizing parish community, through the networking of these small evangelizing Christian communities, the Parish Small Group System.

III. Why the Parish Small Group System.

- A. As we said in the Small Group Leader's Training, the Lord's desire for his people is that there be a genuine concern for one another, that each person within the parish become a caring, bearing, sharing person.
- B. 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.

- C. Exodus 18:13-23 clearly shows the need for pastoral care to be shared (Read).
1. Both Moses and the people were being worn out because the burden of caring for all the people was too heavy for Moses.
 2. 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.
- D. Many Catholics have become inactive because they do not experience a caring community within their parish.
1. Very few people reach out to those they do not know.
 2. The result is many lonely people.
- E. The Parish Small Group System of ACTS II is an effort to make caring for one another a reality.
1. As more and more parishioners are evangelized and become evangelizers, the parish will become an evangelizing community of people who know how:
 - a) to care for one another, and,
 - b) how to reach out to those who do not know Jesus, evangelize them and provide a caring, nurturing community for them.
 2. 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).
- F. In Numbers 11:16-17, we see again that one person cannot bear the burden of pastoring (Read).

1. A team of people is needed.
 2. Because it is a team effort, parishes need some organizational structure to ensure that everyone is cared for by good small group leaders.
- G. If we reflect on the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, chapters 1 to 4, we see what happened to the disciples when the Holy Spirit came upon them on Pentecost.

1. 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.

2. The numbers of those who believed in Jesus increased. And there was no needy person among them because everyone shared what they had (Read: Acts 2:44-45; Acts 4:32, 34, 35).

- H. The Parish Small Group System is an effort to help parishioners learn how 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 (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). The Holy Spirit is the one who equips each person for serving, for caring.

- I. Parishes will be renewed and will become evangelistic in nature when the parishioners 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.

IV. The need for pastoral care to be shared.

- A. The Scriptures demonstrate that there is a need for pastoral care to be shared.

- B. Small groups make it possible for pastoral care to be shared.

- C. The design of the Parish Small Group System is to ensure that every parishioner experiences being cared for by participating in the small groups.

- D. Why was it designed that way? Because of what is happening to Christianity in our society today.
 - 1. Each one of us needs to realize that we are no longer living in a Christian society. Our society is post-Christian.

 - 2. The ethical and moral values of Christianity are disappearing. And we need to be functioning in our society with this realization.

 - 3. Christianity is not the rule of thumb for our society today. All we have to do is watch TV for awhile and we soon realize that TV offers a different set of values from that of Christianity.

 - 4. Let us wake up to this reality and stop functioning as though we are living in a Christian society. We are not!

- E. That brings us then to the need for small groups (this is found on page 1 of both 6A and 6B). Small groups provide intimacy, mutual care, ongoing nurturing and support.
 - 1. If the Christian is to survive in a post-Christian society, personal discipline is needed.

 - 2. This personal discipline involves an explicit attachment to the person of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, a personal commitment to him that is tied to a covenant commitment to the body of Christ.
 - a) Believers must be ready to take some agreed responsibility for their own lives and the lives of their brothers and sisters in the faith.

- i) That means that each of you must be ready to take responsibility for your own lives, and for the lives of your brothers and sisters in the parish.
 - ii) It means that you are willing to enter into a commitment with your brothers and sisters to be faithful to helping one another live out the values of the Gospel.
 - iii) It means that you are willing to be accountable to one another for living out these Gospel values.
 - iv) It means that you are willing to be accountable for being faithful to your small group so that a community of caring, sharing and bearing can happen among those in your small group.
 - v) This is a must if we are to survive as Christians in this post-Christian society.
- b) How can I say this? We all know how difficult it is to be true to the values of the Gospel on our own. We need to be responsible and accountable to our brothers and sisters in the faith. Small groups make that possible.
- c) Commitment to Christ, no matter how sincere, has a way of evaporating over time, if it is not tied to and reinforced by specific commitments to one another.
- i) Small groups make this possible. Small groups are a means to our becoming strong in the faith. We should not take them for granted.
 - ii) Small groups make pastoral care a shared responsibility.
 - iii) But they require from you the discipline of commitment, the discipline of fidelity to being present each week to your brothers or sisters in your small group.

- d) It is only together, in our commitment to Jesus Christ and to one another, that we will have the sociological strength to be a Christian counterculture in a deteriorating hedonistic society.

V. The Parish Small Group System is heavily based on three principles that form the foundation for its existence and success.

A. Evangelization.

1. Each of you has undergone a conversion experience. Your lives have changed as a result of being evangelized. You have experienced the Lord as loving you personally and calling you more deeply into union with him.
2. You have been given the skills and tools for proclamation. And now you are to put those skills and tools to work by carrying out the ongoing permanent evangelistic outreach of the ACTS II Process within the parish.
3. In your evangelizing efforts, you are to invite those you evangelize into community, the community of the Church through the small groups. Why?
 - a) Because you know full well that commitment to Jesus Christ can easily evaporate over time without the support, encouragement, and ongoing nurturing received from those in the small groups.
 - b) And these small groups are to be communities of fellowship where caring, sharing and bearing takes place. And only you can make this happen. It depends on you.
4. So the first principle upon which the Parish Small Group System rests for its success is that of evangelization: conversion, proclamation, community.

B. The second principle upon which the Parish Small Group System is heavily based for its existence and success is: Prayer and Fasting.

1. As the Lord Jesus Christ stated, some things can only be brought about through prayer and fasting (Mark 9:14-29).
 - a) All leaders and small group members within the ACTS II Process are expected to spend at least one hour per week before the Blessed Sacrament.
 - b) This time before the Blessed Sacrament presupposes that all leaders and small group members spend personal time with the Lord in prayer as well.
2. All leaders and small group members, who are able, fast on a weekly basis.

-For example, for the success of your "evangelizing as you go" and for the success of the weekly evangelistic outreach of the parish, you might decide to do one of the following:

- a) Fast on bread and water every Wednesday;
 - b) Fast by excluding one meal on every Friday;
 - c) Fast by reducing the size of your meals every Wednesday or Friday.
- C. The third principle upon which the Parish Small Group System is heavily based for its existence and success is: tithing.
1. All leaders and small group members are expected to be stewardship members of the parish: tithers, tithing 5% of their income to the parish and 5% to their favorite charities.
 2. Tithing is a scriptural principle to which the ACTS II Process adheres (Read: Genesis 14:20b; Leviticus 27:30; Sirach 35: 9-11; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15).

VI. Two special small groups within the Parish Small Group System.

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

-
-
-
-
- a) Each Area Leader is responsible to visit his or her assigned small groups once each month. So don't be surprised when the Area Leader shows up.

 - b) His or her role is to:
 - i) Participate in the small group.

 - ii) Be of assistance to the Small Group Leader.

 - iii) Bring back his or her feedback concerning the small group to the Servant Group.

 - c) All of this is done to ensure the ongoing health of the Parish Small Group System.

-It is a very positive role that the Area Leaders fulfill and a very positive help to the Small Group Leaders.

- 4. The Servant Group is the first special small group within the Parish Small Group System.

The Coordinators.

- A. 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.

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

1. Although each of the Coordinators is delegated certain areas of responsibility, they do not carry these responsibilities independent of the other Coordinators.
 2. All of the Coordinators are involved in giving the ACTS II Evangelization Training. Two Coordinators take responsibility for the weekly training and each weekend training is assigned to two different Coordinators. In that way, all are involved in the Training in one way or another.
 3. They hold their weekly meeting to hear reports on each area of the ACTS II Process and to evaluate the progress of the ACTS II Process.
 4. They meet as well with the Servant Group to evaluate and report on the progress of the ACTS II Process.
 5. The Coordinators are accountable to the Pastor through their Director and Co-Director.
- C. Experience has shown that the Parish Small Group System does work. But there is a very important underlying factor with regard to its success.
1. For it to work, all those involved in it must be 100% committed to it.
 2. A great effort must be made to rekindle the spirit of evangelization within our Catholic people--a spirit that has too long been buried. And it must begin with each one of you.
 - a) You must be convinced of the need for evangelization and your conviction must be seen through your actions, the way you interact with others and the way your family interacts with others.
 - b) Your families are to become "evangelizing families", "evangelizing as you live and as you go" within your own family, and the families you interact with or reach out to, such as the families in your neighborhood.

- c) People looking at you and at your family should wonder about the way you live and act, asking the questions that Pope Paul VI raised in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelization in the Modern World* --

-How can you be the way that you are? How can you live the way you do? etc.

- 3. This spirit of evangelization needs to be recovered so that a viable living organism, the Church, can be present on every block.
- 4. The 'evangelized' must become the 'evangelizers'.
 - a) Those you evangelize must become the 'evangelizers'.
 - b) You, as evangelizers, are to encourage those you evangelize to become trained as evangelizers.
 - c) You, as Small Group Leaders, are to encourage those who come to your small groups to become trained as evangelizers.

VII. 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. Its very reason for existence is to enable its members:
 - 1. To be drawn to love the Lord Jesus Christ ever more deeply:
 - by their praying over the Scriptures together and striving daily to live out the Gospel values;
 - by their willingness to be accountable to one another for living out these Gospel values;

-- by their willingness to seek help in living out those Gospel values that they find extremely difficult to live out.

2. To grow in love and appreciation of one another by becoming an evangelizing community that knows how to care, bear, and share.

- a) People are lonely and need others.

- b) You are called to become such a vibrant caring, bearing, sharing fellowship that simply draws others into your small group because they see how you love one another.

3. To reach out and share Jesus with others -- by their conviction of the need to "evangelize as they live and as they go" and to "go and evangelize".

4. To grow in sensitivity to the needs of others and in their ability to minister to these needs within the body of Christ --

-especially to grow in sensitivity to the loneliness of others and to their need for companionship; and to reach out to those in your parish in ways that can fill that loneliness.

5. To grow in how to give and to receive love and support -- by inviting those initially evangelized into the small groups where they can receive this ongoing love and support.

-But this calls each of your small groups to be living examples of this love and support in action for one another and others --

-to pray and to act as Jesus -- reaching out with sensitivity to the needs of those around you to the extent you can, as a person, a family, as a small group.

6. To raise up new leaders for the Church -- especially small group leaders -- so that pastoring others can become a

shared responsibility.

a) To raise up new leaders for the Church who are willing to enter into a Master-disciple relationship with others, modeling for them and discipling them in how to be like Jesus.

b) To raise up new leaders for the Church who are willing to lay down their lives for others so that they might come to the fullness of life that Jesus gives.

7. To grow in their Catholic identity as Church -- all making efforts to become imbued with the teachings of the Church and the lives of the saints.

B. Small Group Leaders read these purposes at the beginning of each weekly meeting to help everyone remember the reasons for the small groups being in existence.

VIII. The thrust of the Parish Small Group System.

A. The whole purpose of the ACTS II Process is to facilitate the formation of the parish into an evangelizing community. This, of course, is a long-term goal (this is on page 15 of 6A).

B. The results of the ACTS II Evangelization Training are:

1. Parishioners trained as evangelizers.

2. Those initially evangelized becoming evangelizers.

C. You, as trained evangelizers, are to reach out in love to the people you meet in your everyday life.

1. You are to reach out to those in your neighborhood, initially evangelize them, and invite them into your parish small group.

2. When the initially evangelized come into loving small groups, they see the power of the Gospel at work through your genuine caring, bearing, and sharing.
 - a) Such persons may be active Catholics or Protestants seeking a deeper relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b) They may be alienated Catholics wanting to become reconciled with the Church.
 - i) If they express such a desire, they can be directed to the re-membering process of the parish.
 - ii) Or, they can enter the ACTS II Evangelization Training which is another way of re-membering them into the Church.
3. If they are unchurched persons or non-practicing Christians of other Churches, they may decide to become Catholic.

-The Small Group Leader is to help that person enter the R.C.I.A., the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, in the parish at the appropriate time.
4. If they are Protestants who decide to return to their own Church, the Small Group Leader or some of the small group members may even bring them to their Protestant pastor and help them rejoin their Church.

IX. The ACTS II Process and the R.C.I.A.

- A. Having just talked about the R.C.I.A., it would be good to look at the ACTS II Process and its relationship to the R.C.I.A.
 1. As I stated earlier, the ACTS II Process is an evangelization process of conversion and training in evangelization.
 2. It has been designed to fit into the R.C.I.A., through the first

and last periods of the R.C.I.A.

B. The first period of the R.C.I.A. is the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate.

1. The ACTS II Process carries out this period of the R.C.I.A. through its trained evangelizers who reach out to:

- a) the unchurched, and
- b) the alienated/inactive Catholic.

2. The unchurched experience the following:

- a) A home visitation by a team of trained evangelizers.
- 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 of ACTS II 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.

3. The alienated/inactive experience the following:

- a) A home visitation by a team of trained evangelizers.
- b) After being initially evangelized and led to make a commitment/recommitment to Christ, the alienated/inactive person is invited to attend the weekly Small Group Home Gatherings of ACTS II for ongoing evangelization.
- c) And 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.

C. The ACTS II Process has been designed to fit into the last period of the R.C.I.A., the Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis and Mystagogy, in the following way.

- 1. After having received the sacraments of initiation -- Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist -- those initiated into the Church are now called neophytes.
 - a) As neophytes, they are very enthusiastic and filled with zeal.
 - b) What they need now is the ongoing support and encouragement of a faith-community, the Parish Small Group System, where they can receive ongoing nurturing and can continue to grow.
- 2. It is highly recommended that the neophytes return to:

- a) The weekly Small Group Home Gatherings, the Parish Small Group System of the ACTS II Process, 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.

- b) 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 (E.N. 24).

-In other words, they are equipped to give freely what they themselves have received freely.

3. And the ACTS II Process begins again!

X. Questions and Study Guide.

A. Is everything that we have covered so far clear?

B. Do you have any questions?

C. Study Guide:

1. Small Group Leaders, please make your own the following:

a) The Preface of your Handbook, 6A.

b) Why the Parish Small Group System. And in this section, please pay special attention to points C and D:

Point C. The Parish Small Group System is heavily based on three principles that form the foundation for its existence and success.

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

c) The thrust of the Parish Small Group System.

d) The ACTS II Process and the R.C.I.A.

e) And when we met the last time, you were asked to make your own the following:

i) The Purpose of the Parish Small Group System.

ii) The formats used for the Small Group Home Gathering.

iii) A Fuller Discussion of the Format of the Small Group Home Gathering.

iv) The Principles for Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering.

v) And you were to memorize:

-How to express the "Principles for Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering".

-The principles for intercessory prayer and the examples I gave for each principle.

-And the "Prayer for Healing".

vi) If you did not make these sections your own, you are to do so now.

2. For the rest of you, please make your own the following:

- a) The preface of your Handbook, 6B.
- b) Why the Parish Small Group System. And in this section, please pay special attention to points C and D:

Point C. The Parish Small Group System is heavily based on three principles that form the foundation for its existence and success.

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

- c) The Thrust of the Parish Small Group System.
- d) The ACTS II Process and the R.C.I.A.
- e) When we met the last time, you were asked to make your own the following:
 - i) The Purpose of the Parish Small Group System.
 - ii) Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering.
 - iii) And you were to memorize as well:

-How to express the "Principles for Communal Scriptural Prayer in the Small Group Home Gathering".

-The "Principles for Intercessory Prayer".

-And the "Prayer for Healing".

- f) If you did not make these last sections your own, you are to do so now.

D. You have **35 minutes** now for individual study of these topics.

COMMUNITY BREAK

15 MINS.

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SESSION THREE

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFECTIVENESS AND SUCCESS OF THE PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM, PART 1

OBJECTIVE

To acquire an understanding of the various factors that contribute to the effectiveness and success of the Parish Small Group System.

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 60.
3. Make sufficient copies of the following reports for those who are not Small Group Leaders (See: 6A for these):
 - a) "Parish Small Group System, Weekly Small Group Report".
 - b) "Area/District Leader Evaluation of the Small Group Home Gathering".
4. Pray with training team 20 minutes prior to the session.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 170 Minutes

OPENING SONG

5 MINS.

1. ASK music leaders to determine the song to be sung.
 2. CALL music leaders forward.
 3. REQUEST Blessing Prayer.
 4. THANK group and ask them to be seated.
-

BEGIN SESSION

STATE objective:

During this session, we want to come to an understanding of the various factors that contribute to the effectiveness and success of the Parish Small Group System.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

35 MINS.

1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:

- I. Characteristics and accountability of the Parish Small Group System.
- II. The success of the Parish Small Group System.
- III. Who can come to the Small Group Home Gathering.
- IV. Size of the small group.
- V. Questions and Study Guide.

2. TEACH expanded outline of above key points.

I. Characteristics and accountability of the Parish Small Group System.

A. Characteristics of the small groups (this is on page 18 of 6A).

What I'd like to do now is look at the characteristics of the Parish Small Group System. These characteristics distinguish the Parish Small Group System from any other small groups that may exist in the parish.

- 1. The Servant Group oversees the well-being of the small groups.
- 2. The small groups are "household/marketplace" related: that is, they reach out to family, relatives, neighborhood, co-workers, etc., in order to initially evangelize them and invite them into the small groups for ongoing evangelization.

3. Small groups are multiplying groups. This is key to the Parish Small Group System. The very purpose of the small groups is to evangelize. They exist in order to evangelize.
 - a) There is a natural changing of participants in the small groups. For example:
 - i) Women have babies and have to drop out of the small group for awhile.
 - ii) Men's working hours change and so they end up going to another small group that meets at another time.
 - b) So the small groups may see a change of membership. That should not disturb or discourage the participants of the small groups. That's just the way life is. Isn't it?
 - c) 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.
 - d) The small groups must grow and multiply because they are living organisms. And, like any living organism, they must grow and multiply in a healthy way.
4. The Parish Small Group System (PSGS) is a way of life. It is not a program -- something you go through and complete. It is not something you add on to your life.
 - a) The small groups are working to build an evangelizing community of the parish.
 - b) It is not something that is already accomplished but something that is living and ongoing.
 - c) The small groups must grow in numbers, divide and multiply, and not just become a cozy small group that is turned in on itself.

- d) We need to do away with the idea of getting comfortable because the call to discipleship is not cheap grace but costly grace.

-Costly grace calls us to reach out and bring others to Jesus and into the small groups for ongoing evangelization.

- e) Being comfortable with ourselves is not what the Parish Small Group System is about because it is a way of life and life is not that way. Is it?

5. Small groups are highly evangelistic in nature. Persons are not invited into the small groups unless they have committed/recommitted their lives to Christ.

6. The small groups are discipline structured. This is so important for each of you to understand and keep in mind.

- a) The small groups are to start on time, end on time, and adhere to the format of the small group.

- b) Please keep in mind that one of the goals of the Small Group Leader is to keep the group to the format. The format is a disciplined and structured way of coming together.

- i) As a participant of the small group, your role is to cooperate with the Small Group Leader so that s(he) can fulfill his/her role joyfully.

- ii) Do you remember what Hebrews has to say about this? Let's look at Hebrews 13:17.

- "Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men (and women) who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you."

- iii) This injunction to each one of us is very important to keep in mind.
- iv) So again, the small groups are to start on time, end on time, and adhere to the format of the small group.
- c) The small groups belong to you. It is up to you to make them successful, help them accomplish their purpose, and especially to provide ongoing growth in the Lord for yourselves and those you initially evangelize.
- d) So, then, let us run with zeal to evangelize and to provide a healthy faith community for those you evangelize.
- e) As Hebrews states in 10:24f--

-"and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

7. Small groups require ongoing training of small group leaders.

Because the goal of the small groups is to divide and multiply, it is important that small group leaders are continually trained, and assistant small group leaders identified and trained as well.

B. Accountability.

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

1. The Small Group Leaders are those who take responsibility for the small groups. They are accountable to the Coordinators of the ACTS II Process.

2. The Coordinators are responsible for the entire Process and oversee all the various aspects of the Process. They are accountable to the Pastor of the parish.
3. There is an order of relatedness within the Parish Small Group System: a structure of reporting, support and authority which is demonstrated in the following way:

a) Small Groups are Accountable. The Small Group Leader turns in a Weekly Small Group Report.

- i) This report keeps the Coordinators, and ultimately the Pastor, informed about the health and ongoing growth of the small group.

-Small Group Leaders, you can find this in the Appendix of your 6A. I have copies for the rest of you. We can go through this report now.

- ii) This report is given to the Area/District Leader who then gives it to the Secretary of the Servant Group.

b) Area/District Leaders are Accountable. The Area/District Leaders make weekly visitations of the Small Group Home Gathering.

- i) The purpose of the Area/District Leader is to be of assistance to the Small Group Leader in whatever way that is needed, and to see firsthand the health and well-being of the small group.

- ii) The Small Group Leader and the Area/District Leader function harmoniously together in overseeing the health and well-being of the small group.

- iii) There is a relationship of love and friendship. They realize that together they have been called:

-To ensure that the characteristics of the small group are being lived out.

-To see that the small group is truly functioning as a dynamic living organism that is growing, dividing and multiplying.

- iv) The Area/District Leaders turn in the Area/District Leader Evaluation of the Small Group Home Gathering to the Secretary of the Servant Group.

-Small Group Leaders, you can find this in the Appendix of your 6A. I have copies for the rest of you.

-We can go through this report now.

- c) The Coordinators are Accountable. They evaluate and report on the progress of each component of the ACTS II Process:

- i) The ACTS II Evangelization Training.
- ii) Recruitment into the ACTS II Evangelization Training.
- iii) The Evangelistic Outreach and its results.
- iv) The developing Parish Small Group System.

The Coordinators are accountable 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.

- d) The Secretary is Accountable.

Minutes are taken of the Servant Group Meeting by the secretary and typed up.

- i) The Secretary of the Servant Group makes copies of:

-The Weekly Small Group Report;

-The Area/District Leader Evaluation of the Small Group Home Gathering;

-Each of the Coordinators Reports;

-The Servant Group Meeting Minutes.

ii) All of these reports are given to each member of the Servant Group and the original is kept in the Servant Group Minutes Book.

iii) All reports are completed, copied and ready for the next Servant Group Meeting.

II. The success of the Parish Small Group System.

A. We've addressed the importance of responsibility and accountability within the ACTS II Process. Now, I'd like to spend some time looking at those factors that contribute to the success of the Parish Small Group System.

B. For the Parish Small Group System to be a success, it is important that:

1. Each person undergoes a personal conversion experience in which each person comes to:

a) an experiential awareness of God's love for him/her; and

b) the realization of the Holy Spirit as the moving power within his/her life, that leads to deeper union with the Lord Jesus Christ, to greater holiness of life, to the glory of the Father.

c) That is the purpose of evangelization: this initial change

that gradually leads persons to allow Jesus Christ to become the center of their lives.

- d) That is the privilege that is ours as evangelizers: to lead persons to Jesus Christ. What a gift that has been given to each one of us.

2. The second important factor to the success of the Parish Small Group System is that the small group does not quench the Spirit.

- a) Let's look at 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22. St. Paul tells us here that we are to:

-"Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, but test everything; hold fast what is good, abstain from every form of evil."

- b) That is a powerful word of the Lord to each one of us. We are not to quench the Spirit but allow people the freedom to praise the Lord in the way that each is most comfortable.

- i) What does that mean specifically for each of the small groups? It means that we are to allow the Spirit to flow in our midst.

- ii) During our time of song and praise, we can allow some time, it may be a brief time, but we can allow some time for the Lord to speak to us.

3. The third important factor to the success of the Parish Small Group System is that there be vibrant worship and music in the small group.

- a) The important word here is vibrant.

- b) What is vibrant worship? Sirach, chapter 43, verses 28-30 has something to tell us about that. Let's look at it.

-"Where shall we find strength to praise him? For he is greater than all his works. Terrible is the Lord and very great, and marvelous is his power. When you praise the Lord, exalt him as much as you can; for he will surpass even that. When you exalt him, put forth all your strength, and do not grow weary, for you cannot praise him enough."

- c) Vibrant worship is alive and characterized by joy and enthusiasm. That is how our song and praise time is to be in our small groups. It should never be dull or lack joy and enthusiasm.

- d) 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.

- e) The songs should move the group into a time of powerful, joy-filled expressions of praise and thanksgiving of the Lord followed by a prayer of praise and thanksgiving from the Small Group Leader.

-This prayer is the transition from the segment of Song and Praise to that segment of the format called: Praying the Scriptures (Lectio Divina).

- f) This time of worship sets the tone of prayer and reverence in which all that follows is rooted.

4. The fourth important element to the success of the Parish Small Group System is that it is centered on communal scriptural prayer, praying the Scriptures, Lectio Divina.

- a) The purpose of communal scriptural prayer is to help each person learn:

- i) how to pray over the Scriptures;
 - ii) how to listen to what the Lord Jesus Christ is saying to each one personally; and
 - iii) how to be obedient to the Word that the Lord is speaking by giving a response of action.
- b) Sometimes persons initially evangelized will not return to the small group because they are not ready for change. It's just too difficult. Why?
- i) Because the Word of the Lord is a Word that convicts.
 - ii) It is a Word that calls for ongoing conversion.
 - iii) It is a Word that calls for obedience.
- c) Hebrews 4:12-13 brings this out so well. Let's look at this word. It states:
- "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, 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."
- d) It is for this reason that communal scriptural prayer is risky business and something people want to avoid because it forces a person to be confronted by the Word which calls for ongoing conversion.
- e) However, there are great benefits for each of us if we allow that Word to enter our hearts. What are these benefits?
- i) We will be changed for the better. Our lives will be more complete, filled with hope and consolation, and

we will know peace and joy.

- ii) We will become more and more like Jesus, gradually taking on his heart, mind and spirit, his value system. Let's look at 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 --

-"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

- iii) As we pray over the Scriptures with an open and sincere heart, this is exactly what happens to us.

-We grow in our ability to create an environment of freedom and are gradually changed into the likeness of the Lord.

-His presence begins to shine through us from one degree to another.

- iv) The power of the Word of God brings about community: a caring, bearing, sharing community.

5. The fifth important element to the success of the Parish Small Group System is adherence to the structure of the small group.

- a) The small groups have a specific purpose and the format safeguards that purpose.
- b) Having a format gives people a certain freedom because they know what to expect. They know when to come and when they can leave.
- c) Scripture encourages that all things be done with a certain order. The format gives that order and it calls for respect

of that order.

- d) 1 Corinthians 14:33 states that "God is not a God of confusion but of peace."
6. The sixth important element to the success of the Parish Small Group System is that consistent prayer be encouraged in the lives of those who come to the small groups.
- a) Participants are encouraged to make daily personal prayer a central part of their lives and to attend the Eucharist daily, if at all possible.
 - b) From this wellspring of personal prayer and the daily Eucharist will come an ever deepening communal praying over the Scriptures.
7. The seventh important element to the success of the Parish Small Group System is that there is a commitment to fasting each week, if at all possible.
- a) The Small Group Leaders encourage everyone to fast on Wednesdays or Fridays, if at all possible.
- We talked about this the last time we met.
- b) Such fasting is done for the evangelizing efforts of the parish, for the intentions of the Church, and for one's own intentions, in reparation for one's own sins and the sin of the world.
8. The eighth important element to the success of the Parish Small Group System is that its very purpose for existence is evangelistic outreach.
- a) This is the key to the longevity of the small groups.
 - b) Each small group must reach out and bring initially evangelized persons to the small group where ongoing evan-

gelization can take place.

- c) Because the small group is a living organism, it must grow in size and multiply or it will die.
- d) A healthy small group must always look to the time when it can divide and multiply, just like the living cells in our own body must divide and multiply in a healthy way.

9. The ninth important element to the success of the Parish Small Group System is that everyone is involved in ministry -- ministry for all.

a) Everyone in the small groups has a service to give to one another within their small groups and within the larger parish community.

b) For all of you, your active participation in parish ministry is:

i) the ongoing permanent evangelistic outreach of ACTS II that you will be carrying out on a weekly basis; and

ii) your faithful commitment to being present each week to your small group within the Parish Small Group System so that you can help provide ongoing evangelization of the initially evangelized.

c) For others, who have been trained in the ACTS II Process but whose circumstances do not permit their being involved in the evangelistic outreach or the Parish Small Group System at the present time, their:

-active participation in parish ministry may mean becoming involved in a prayer ministry within the ACTS II Process -- praying for the effectiveness of the evangelizing efforts of the parish and of the Church universal.

10. The tenth important element to the success of the Parish Small Group System is that its members tithe in keeping with the Scriptures.
- a) Each member of the small group is helped to move into tithing to the parish, favorite charities, and into almsgiving.
 - b) The Scriptures have much to say about tithing. Let's look at them.
 - i) Genesis 14:20b.
 - ii) Leviticus 27:30.
 - iii) Sirach 35:9-11.
 - iv) 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.
11. The eleventh important element to the success of the Parish Small Group System is that it is characterized by hospitality.
- a) If the small group is to grow and divide in a healthy way, it must develop an inviting spirit of warmth and hospitality and a genuine concern for one another and for others.
 - b) This must happen within the larger parish community as well.
 - c) What does Scripture have to say about this? Let's look at Philippians 2:1-4. It states:
 - "So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

- d) That is a powerful Word of the Lord to each one of us, calling us to a great reverence for one another.

-It clearly states that we are to count others better than ourselves. How hard that is for us to do and yet we are called to live it out in our lives.

- e) And again in Romans 12:9-13, we are told:

"Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly (sisterly) affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality."

- f) The Scriptures have much to say about widows (Read: Ex. 22:22; Dt. 10:17-18; Is. 1:17; Jer. 7:6f; 22:3; James 1:27; Acts 6:1). This is a group that needs to be targeted by the ACTS II Process.

- i) What can the small groups do to reach out to the widows and widowers to help them get connected and feel welcome within the small groups?
- ii) And if they are unable to come to the small groups, what can we do to help them get connected and involved in some way so that they are not so lonely?

12. The twelfth and last important element to the success of the Parish Small Group System is that it practices the principle of subsidiarity.

- a) What this means is that 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, that is:

-those matters of concern that (s)he is not able to

handle to the next level of authority: the District Leader.

- b) The District Leader handles what (s)he can and takes those situations of greater concern to the Area Leader.
- c) The Area Leader has the authority and responsibility to handle what s(he) 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 of the Coordinators Team.
- e) The Director handles what s(he) can and takes those situations of greater concern to the Pastor.

The principle of subsidiarity can be explained in the following way:

- a) Handle matters at one's own level first and then take those matters of greater concern -- those matters that one is not able to handle -- to the next level of authority.

-That is what is meant by the principle of subsidiarity.

- b) Within the ACTS II Process, this principle eliminates running to the Pastor about everything.
 - i) The Pastor was not meant to be troubled about every little thing.
 - ii) He has enough matters to be concerned about without having everyone run to him about those things which the leadership within the ACTS II Process can handle itself.
- c) The ACTS II Process strives to live out this principle of subsidiarity recommended by the Second Vatican Council.

III. Who can come to the Small Group Home Gathering.

- A. A person is invited to the small group only after (s)he has been led to make a commitment/recommitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.

- B. There are several ways in which parish evangelizers can carry out their mission of evangelization.
 - 1. They can do this by going door-to-door, reaching out to everyone in need of evangelization or re-evangelization: the active Catholic, the unchurched, and the inactive/ alienated (E.N. 50-53).

 - 2. They can do this through their own "household/marketplace" environment.

- C. Evangelizing their "household/marketplace" environment is something that parish evangelizers are strongly urged to do.
 - 1. In other words, they are to evangelize right where they are planted:
 - a) Their families.

 - b) Their neighborhoods.

 - c) Those with whom they interact throughout the week.

 - d) Those they work with.

 - e) Those they celebrate the liturgy with in their parish.

 - 2. This way of evangelizing is the most natural way of reaching out to others. It is the most natural way of building upon what is already known and experienced.
 - a) The sources of everyone's contacts is far reaching.

 - b) To have twenty people in a small group is to have poten-

tially 400 contacts.

i) Those are the statistics.

ii) Each of the twenty people in a small group has at least 20 contacts in their "household/marketplace" environment.

iii) Each of us needs to take those statistics seriously and reach out to our "household/marketplace" environment.

iv) Just imagine what would happen to our small groups if each one of us, as trained evangelizers, did that. Our small groups would definitely grow and multiply.

v) And that is the goal of ACTS II: to initially evangelize, grow in numbers, divide and multiply.

c) Evangelizing in this way means that you "evangelize as you go" instead of only "going to evangelize".

i) Both are needed.

ii) We do the official evangelistic outreach of the ACTS II Process within the parish on a particular day or night which is to "go to evangelize".

iii) But we also "evangelize as we go" on a daily basis.

D. The purpose of the small group, then, is twofold:

1. Evangelistic outreach.

2. Growth for the newly evangelized by providing them with the opportunity for evangelizing their own "household/marketplace" environment.

- a) Everyone initially evangelized can share the good news of what has happened to them.
- b) Those initially evangelized can become a source of new opportunities for evangelization to take place by trained evangelizers.

IV. 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.

1. Remember that preparation for multiplication of a small group begins when the small group begins.
2. That is one of the goals of the Small Group Leader from the very beginning of the small group's existence.
3. The Small Group Leader encourages everyone in the small group to aim for the day when it will divide and multiply.

-Multiplication is the vital sign of a healthy small group.

B. Each small group begins with a core of four trained parish evangelizers, not counting the Small Group Leader and the Assistant Small Group Leader, who are also trained evangelizers.

1. When a small group within the Parish Small Group System is ready to divide, this principle is always maintained.
2. Because this principle is so important for the health and well-being of the small group, the Coordinators keep a careful eye on the composition of each small group within the Parish Small Group System.
 - a) For this reason, when each ACTS II Evangelization Training is completed, the newly trained evangelizers may need

to be added to already existing small groups, rather than becoming a new small group.

- b) The Coordinators ensure that in each small group there are never less than four trained evangelizers, not counting the Small Group Leader and the Assistant Small Group Leader, who are also trained evangelizers.
- C. As the trained evangelizers do ongoing permanent evangelistic outreach, the small groups within the Parish Small Group System will begin to grow in numbers.
- 1. When the number of persons in a small group reaches 14 regular attenders, that small group divides into two small groups.
 - a) The Small Group Leader takes one half of the small group.
 - b) The Assistant Small Group Leader takes the other half of the small group.
 - 2. The one small group has now become two. Each of these small groups will need an Assistant Small Group Leader.
 - a) Each Small Group Leader is to determine who in his or her small group could become an Assistant Small Group Leader.
 - The suggested name of a possible Assistant Small Group Leader is submitted to the Area/District Leader before the person is asked to accept this role.
 - b) After the Servant Group has made their decision about the person that has been selected, the Small Group Leader is notified.
 - c) That person is then approached and asked if (s)he would assume the role of Assistant Small Group Leader.

- D. I'm sure that it has become evident to you that there may be a need to regroup the trained evangelizers after a small group divides.
1. The need to possibly regroup is to make sure that the number of trained evangelizers in each small group is never less than four, not counting the Small Group Leader and the Assistant Small Group Leader.
 2. The best time for this regrouping and division of small groups is after the current ACTS II Evangelization Training is completed.
 3. So don't be surprised if this happens. It is part of the dynamic of the ACTS II Process and you are asked to cooperate with this dynamic.
 - a) It may happen that you are asked to join a different small group.
 - b) The reason for that is because there are not enough trained evangelizers in that small group to function in a healthy and vibrant way.
 4. However, remember: the key to small group growth is: evangelize and invite; evangelize and invite; evangelize and invite.

COMMUNITY BREAK

20 MINS.

V. Questions and Study Guide.

- A. Do you have any questions about anything that I have said?
- B. Small Group Leaders, you are to make the following your own:
 1. Characteristics of the Parish Small Group System.
 2. The success of the Parish Small Group System.

3. Who can come to the Small Group Home Gathering?

4. Size of the small group.

C. For the rest of you, you are to make the following your own:

1. Characteristics of the Parish Small Group System.

2. The success of the Parish Small Group System.

3. Who can come to the Small Group Home Gathering?

D. You have **35 minutes** now for individual study of these topics.

COMMUNITY LUNCH

75 MINS.

A. ASK one of the trainees to pray a blessing over the lunch.

B. GIVE time for all to get their lunch and to be seated.

C. STATE the following:

During our lunch, each of us is to share on this question:

-"What has been the fruit of the ACTS II Evangelization Training in your life?"

* * * * *

LEADER'S EVANGELIZATION TRAINING GUIDE

SESSION FOUR

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFECTIVENESS AND SUCCESS OF THE PARISH SMALL GROUP SYSTEM, PART 2

VISION AND GOAL OF THE ACTS II PROCESS

ASSOCIATION: COMMUNITY OF THE NEW COVENANT

OBJECTIVES

To complete our understanding of the factors that contribute to the effectiveness and success of the Parish Small Group System.

To acquire an understanding of the vision and goal of the ACTS II Process.

To provide information about the Companions and the Sisters of the New Covenant.

REQUIRED PREPARATIONS--TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

1. Plan for and implement personal prayer time.
2. Study instructional content on page 83.
3. Have sufficient copies of:
 - the brochures: Companions of the Community of the New Covenant.
4. Pray with training team 20 minutes prior to the session.

TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PATH

TOTAL TIME: 70 Minutes

OPENING SONG

5 MINS.

1. ASK music leaders to determine the song to be sung.
 2. CALL music leaders forward.
 3. REQUEST Blessing Prayer.
 4. THANK group and ask them to be seated.
-

BEGIN SESSION

STATE objectives:

In this session, we want:

1. To complete our understanding of the factors that contribute to the effectiveness and success of the Parish Small Group System.
 2. To acquire an understanding of the vision and goal of the ACTS II Process.
 3. To provide you with information about the Companions and the Sisters of the New Covenant.
-

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

40 MINS.

1. LOOK OVER key points to be taught:
 - I. Small Group Leaders of the Small Group Home Gatherings: Who should be a small group leader?
 - II. Parish Small Group System: Weekly Small Group Report.
 - III. Area/District Leader Evaluation of the Small Group Home Gathering.
 - IV. The vision and goal of the ACTS II Process.
 - V. Questions and Study Guide.
 - VI. The Association: Community of the New Covenant.

2. TEACH expanded outline of above key points:

I. Small Group Leaders of the Small Group Home Gatherings: Who should be a small group leader?

Small group leaders, please turn to this page in your Handbook, 6A.
All of you are to take good notes.

A. Small group leaders are men and women who are Spirit-filled in the true sense of the word. They are people who have learned how to listen 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.

Being Spirit-filled, small group leaders lead those in their small groups into vibrant worship of the Lord.

1. Small group leaders speak the same language as those in their small groups so that there is order and not chaos and confusion.

a) It is the language of Jesus Christ.

b) It is the language of love, warmth, hospitality, and concern for the well-being of those in their small groups.

c) It is the language of evangelization, helping people to come into a deeper personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

- d) It is Catholic and it is within the authority of the Church.
2. Small group leaders foster unity and not disunity.
- a) Small group leaders are submissive to the authority placed over them: their pastor and the coordinators of the ACTS II Process.
 - b) It is not just trusting the authority that counts but it is trusting in the God who appointed the authority.
 - c) Small group leaders are the appointed authority in their small groups. Their submission to authority provides the foundation for others submitting to their authority.
3. The small groups within the Parish Small Group System are the primary ministry of small group leaders in the parish.
- a) The role of small group leaders is so important that they are asked to drop out of all other ministries, both within and without the parish, so that they are free to minister to those in their small groups.
 - b) Ministering to those in the small groups will cost small group leaders much time and energy.
 - i) It is the role of small group leaders to care for those in their small groups and so it will take a lot of their time. So, for example --
 - if they see that a member of their small group is hurting, it is their responsibility to meet with that person to try to be of help.
 - And if they are not able to help, they can at least be there for that person, and, if possible, be able to refer that person to someone who might be able to help.

- ii) It is their role to keep in touch with the members in their small groups, on a regular basis, through a phone call of friendship, love and care.
 - iii) It is their role to meet with the members of their small group for coffee or lunch, and try to get to know their members better -- to arrange get-togethers of all the members occasionally, outside the weekly gathering.
- c) Small group leaders are serious about their ministry for Christ within the context of the small groups.

-They make it a point of getting their lives uncluttered and free for this ministry because it can be very demanding.

4. Small group leaders believe they have been called by God for this ministry.

- a) It is Jesus who sustains all of us in our various tasks. It is He who calls each one of us to have a heart for evangelization, to touch lives and to be disciples.
- b) Nothing can be more challenging or frustrating then ministering by building friendships and relationships.
- c) All of us are wounded healers. Through this ministry, small group leaders become even more vulnerable. But the Lord is there to give them strength.

5. Small group leaders are those who have been tested in ministry.

- a) Testing the commitment of a person desiring to serve as a small group leader can come as an assistant small group leader. Such testing is very important.
- b) Such testing can also come through a ministry that a person has been involved in, to which time and energy have been dedicated.

- c) Such testing can also come as a result of participating in the ACTS II Evangelization Training.

- d) Questions that we, as coordinators, need to ask ourselves concerning those being suggested as future small group leaders or assistant small group leaders are as follows.
 - i) Was fidelity manifested through a consistent, persevering involvement in a previous ministry?

 - ii) Did that person show a patient, caring, bearing attitude towards others?

 - iii) Did that person go out of his/her way to be of help to others?

 - iv) Was that person faithful to his/her word?

 - v) And other similar questions are raised.

- e) If the answers to these questions do not show fidelity in a previous ministry, it is unlikely that this person is meant to be a small group leader.

- f) Within the ACTS II Evangelization Training, there is a built-in testing of trainees. What I am going to say now is somewhat of a self-examination.
 - i) What kind of fidelity have you shown within the Training?

 - ii) What kind of attitude have you had towards the small group meetings within the Training?

-Have you had an attitude of fidelity, of being on time, and of being of help to the other trainees in your small group?

-Was this shown by you in having your Study Guides well prepared, so that the other trainees could be helped when it was time to share on a particular question?

iii) And similar questions are raised.

g) Testing the commitment of those desiring to serve as small group leaders is of utmost importance.

i) A principle that is followed is this: those responsible and faithful in small matters are to be given responsibility for greater matters.

ii) And the opposite is true.

h) Scripture warns against entrusting spiritual authority to those who are untested.

-Testing then is a requirement of those who become small group leaders (1 Tm. 3:10).

i) This testing is so important because small group leaders will be responsible for those who come to their small group.

6. It is important that small group leaders understand everything about the dynamics of the small group:

-how it functions;

-what is expected of the small group;

-and what is expected of the small group leader.

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

a) As disciples of Jesus Christ, they model what they ask of others.

i) The principle here: do not ask of others what you are not willing to do.

ii) So small group leaders give good example here.

b) The tithe given allows small group leaders 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) They observe the principle of confidentiality. 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 taken to the area/district leader.

i) What is meant by that is that --

-if a family in a small group is going through some financial difficulty; or,

-if they are having some marriage stress or other family stress; problems with children; or,

-if there is some psychological or emotional stress concerning a particular member,

then the area/district leader should be notified.

- ii) Before that can be done, permission to do this is required from the person about whom the matter concerns.

-In this way, confidentiality is safeguarded.

-The point is that whatever is shared is confidential.
And if the matter needs to be referred, permission is given by that person to do so.

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

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

- a) Once that person is identified, his/her name is submitted to the area/district leader who takes it to the Servant Group prior to discussing it with that person.
- b) It is the Servant Group that ultimately decides whether that person is to become an assistant small group leader at this time or not.
- c) 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 qualities that characterize small group leaders.

1. Enthusiasm. Small group leaders are enthusiastic. New Christians, especially those who have completed the R.C.I.A., often make very good small group leaders.

-They have just come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and their enthusiasm is infectious.

2. Personal Testimony. Small group leaders have clear, powerful testimonies of what the Lord has done for them.

- a) Such testimonies are living proofs that the Gospel does work today.

- b) Such evangelizers show, through their lifestyle, the reality of Jesus at work within them, and others are drawn to them.

3. Dedication. Small group leaders are characterized by dedication. They are faithful and given to the task they have undertaken.

- a) 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 the world.

- b) Such persons take time for prayer and scripture study.

4. Docility. Small group leaders live out a spirit of docility. They have a willingness to be taught.

- a) This is a must.

- b) If a person cannot be taught, that person has no business trying to teach others or model for others.

These four characteristics --

- enthusiasm,
- powerful personal testimony,
- dedication, and
- docility

distinguish small group leaders.

C. The role of small group leaders:

1. To help oversee the spiritual growth of the members in their small groups.
2. To model caring, bearing, and sharing and to encourage those in their small groups to become 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.
 - a) Those in their small groups are not to become dependent on them.
 - b) Anything that destroys independence and the individual's personality and responsibility is not of the Lord.
 - i) The Lord gave each one of us a personality that is to be developed, so that we can become interdependent persons, able to work together with others.
 - ii) Each person is to grow into a loving son or daughter

of the Father, living out his/her personal relationship with the Father through his Son, Jesus Christ.

iii) The small groups are designed to promote that kind of relationship.

D. The duties of small group leaders.

1. Small group leaders lead their weekly small groups.
2. They attend monthly meetings with their area/district leaders.
 - a) These monthly meetings provide a forum for small group leaders to share victories, pray over struggles, and receive ongoing affirmation.
 - b) Such meetings provide inspiration and motivation for the small group leaders to remain unified in direction and free from discouragement.
3. Small group leaders care for those in their small groups by calling them and meeting with them at other times besides the small group meeting.
4. They develop good relationships with their assistant small group leaders.
 - a) Assistant small group leaders will have opportunities to lead the small groups.
 - b) Assistant small group leaders prepare to lead the small group by participating in their own small group, and learning from the modeling given by their own small group leader.
 - c) Assistant small group leaders become small group leaders when their particular small group divides and multiplies.

5. Small group leaders turn in the Weekly Small Group Report to their area/district leaders. We looked at that earlier.
6. Small group leaders develop a lifestyle of ministry.
 - a) They are prepared to minister at almost any moment.
 - b) They are sensitive to the needs of others.
7. Small group leaders meet with those persons the initially evangelized want to bring to their small groups.
 - a) Those persons are to be initially evangelized before coming to the small group.
 - b) It is the role of small group leaders to see that this happens.
8. Small group leaders are willing to be inconvenienced. They want those in their small groups to feel free to call them whenever a need arises.
 - a) It means they are willing to put themselves out to meet the needs of their members.
 - b) This is costly grace at work.
 - i) It means that because small group leaders walk the talk and model for their members a caring, bearing, sharing response, they can call their members to do the same.
 - ii) This is what it means to be a small Christian community: a caring, bearing, sharing community.
 - c) They can say with St. Paul:

"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

9. Small group leaders are good listeners.

- a) They make every effort to continually improve their listening skills.
- b) Being a good listener is so important because people who are listened to, frequently come up with their own solutions.

II. Parish Small Group System: Weekly Small Group Report.

- A. Small group leaders, please turn to the Weekly Small Group Report in your Handbook, 6A. And I gave copies of this report to the rest of you earlier today.
- B. We've already looked at this report section by section. But I'd like to make a few more comments about it.
 - 1. As I said before, the area leader turns in this report to the coordinators responsible for the Parish Small Group System.
 - 2. It is the responsibility of the coordinators to analyze these reports to determine the growth and health of the small groups.
 - 3. This analysis is done to determine what helps are needed, if any, to assist the small groups in becoming more effective.
 - 4. This reporting, therefore, is very important to the ongoing health and well-being of the Parish Small Group System.
- C. Do you have any questions about this report?

III. Area/District Leader Evaluation of the Small Group Home Gathering.

- A. Small group leaders, this is in your Handbook, 6A. And I gave copies of this evaluation sheet to the rest of you earlier today.

- B. We've already looked at this evaluation briefly and some remarks were made about the role of the area leaders. But I'd like to make a few more comments about it.

- C. This evaluation is very important to the ongoing growth and well-being of the small group and to the ongoing effectiveness of the small group leader.

- D. The area/district leaders are to be of assistance to the small group leaders, if such assistance is needed.
 - 1. And the area/district leaders are to ensure that the participants are growing in their ability to carry out the dynamic of the small group.

 - 2. Because small group leaders lead the small groups, it is difficult for them to carry out the dynamic of the small group and to evaluate it at the same time.
 - a) We want the small groups to function effectively and the small group leaders to grow in their ability to lead the small groups.

 - b) Area/district leaders are there as objective persons to ensure that this is happening.

 - c) Small group leaders work with the area/district leaders in a very positive and harmonious way.
 - They realize the importance of the presence of the area/district leaders at their small groups each month and appreciate their being present.

- E. This evaluation is very helpful to the coordinators. It assists them in their analysis of the small groups.

IV. The vision and goal of the ACTS II Process.

A. It's very important for each of you to understand the vision and goal of the ACTS II Process. And so I ask all of you to please take good notes.

1. And please do not hesitate to stop me if you have any questions about anything I'm saying.
2. I would rather stop and answer your questions so that you clearly understand what I am saying before going on.

B. 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 (PSGS) is a strategy of action for evangelization that provides persons who have been initially evangelized with small group follow-up.
3. The purpose of the ACTS II Process is twofold:
 - a) First, 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, and

enable them to live out their Christian mission to witness and disciple others for the Lord Jesus Christ under the power of the Holy Spirit.

- b) Secondly, to provide an evangelistic outreach that will not only evangelize others, but will offer regular small group follow-up --

-ongoing evangelization to the initially evangelized --
through the Small Group Home Gatherings (PSGS).

- 4. 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.

- 1. The vision and long-term goal of the ACTS II Process is to facilitate the transformation of the parish into an evangelizing community.

-And this is brought about through the networking of small Christian communities where everyone can experience caring, bearing, and sharing.

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

- a) Women ministering to women,

- b) Men ministering to men.

- 3. These small Christian communities, your small groups, exist to --

- a) reach out and evangelize;

- b) provide ongoing evangelization for those you evangelize;

c) be a place of love and hospitality;

d) provide ongoing nurturing, growth, and encouragement for everyone in the small groups.

D. In conclusion, 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:

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

b) to see the division and multiplication of these small groups;

c) 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.

E. Please make this vision your own. Run with it.

1. If you are going to run with the vision, then you need to understand it. You need to know where you are going and how you are going to get there.

2. Please make this vision your own. Do you have any questions?

3. We highly recommend that all of you pray the Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Star of Evangelization given at the back of each of your Handbooks, 6A and 6B.

V. Questions and Study Guide.

- A. Do you have any questions about what has been covered so far?
- B. You will have **20 minutes** now to go over and make your own:
 1. Small Group Leaders of the Small Group Home Gatherings. Who should be a small group leader? This is so important.
 2. The vision and goal of the ACTS II Process.
- C. And continue making your own the rest of your Handbook and the notes that you took during each session.
- D. Please memorize and internalize what is contained in your Handbooks, 6A or 6B, so that you can be committed to the vision and goal of the ACTS II Process.

VI. The Association: Community of the New Covenant.

What I'd like to do now is say a few words about the Association, Community of the New Covenant, a Private Association of the Christian Faithful, that exists in this parish.

- A. The Community of the New Covenant was brought into existence by the Sisters of the New Covenant 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.
- B. The ACTS II Process, used by the Association, belongs to the Sisters of the New Covenant.

C. This Process is carried out by faithful parishioners in this parish who were invited to be trained in evangelization and to become members of the Association. That is all of you. We are known as Companions of the Community of the New Covenant.

1. 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.
2. As Companions, our purpose is to carry out the Church's mission of evangelization using the ACTS II Process 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.

3. We carry out the mission of evangelization in a collaborative way locally and internationally. We support one another in carrying out this mission and work together with the Sisters of the New Covenant.

D. Who are the Sisters of the New Covenant?

They are consecrated laywomen given to a twofold 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 and, if unchurched, bring them into the Church, when ready, through the R.C.I.A., the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

3. I invite any of the single women here, or single women you might know, who might be interested in consecrated life as a laywoman, to --

-see me and I will give you more information about the Sisters of the New Covenant.

E. Let me explain a little more about the Companions.

1. We form our members to realize their responsibility for the spiritual, social and political well-being of our society at all levels:
 - a) the individual;
 - b) the family;
 - c) the neighborhood;
 - d) the parish;
 - e) place of work;
 - f) professional, business and political circles; and
 - g) local and national organizations.
2. As Companions, we are called to be a leaven for Christ in the marketplace by evangelizing at all levels of society.

F. Our goal is twofold:

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

G. So, as I said earlier, the ACTS II Process is carried out in this parish by Companions who are associates of the Sisters of the

New Covenant.

1. I have a brochure on the Companions that I would like to give you. We will go through it together now.

Trainer: Give out "Companions of the Community of the New Covenant" brochure to each one.

2. Do you have any questions about this?
3. In addition to carrying out the ACTS II Process, we meet once a month to deepen our relationships as a community, to pray together, have fun together, eat together, and receive ongoing formation in the faith.
4. Since you are now part of the ACTS II Process and, therefore, part of the Companions, I would like to invite you to come to our Monthly Community Gathering.

- a) We will be gathering on:

Trainer: Give the date, time and place of the Monthly Gathering.

- b) At this Gathering, the Director of the Companions in this parish will meet with you and answer any questions you might have.
- c) Do you have any questions now that you want to raise?

CLOSING PRAYER

5 MINS.

1. CALL prayer leaders forward.
2. ASK group to turn to EOH page 29 and stand.
3. SIGNAL music and prayer leaders to begin.
4. DISMISS group once prayer time is finished.

APPENDIX

**PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNAL SCRIPTURAL PRAYER
IN THE
SMALL GROUP HOME GATHERING**

1. The Scripture passage that we will pray over is _____.
2. Please listen carefully to the instructions that I am going to give.
 - When I have finished reading the Scriptural passage, there will be a short period of silence so that we can reflect on the passage.
 - Then I will share first what the Lord is saying to me personally.
 - I will say something like this: "I felt this...." "I heard this...."
"This struck me...." "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 sharings on the passage very short, personal, and please use: I, me, or my, and not: we, they, or them.
 - Be honest, simple, not preachy, not applying lessons to others. That will only kill the prayer experience.
 - 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 should be given to everyone present, to state their insights or not.
 - The important point here is that all are praying whether one's insights are shared or not.
 - 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.
 - After every one who wishes to share has shared, I will read the passage again for the second time very slowly.
 - And again, there will be a short period of silence for each of us to reflect on the passage.
 - Then 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.
 - When every 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 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.

-If you do not want to pray spontaneously, that is okay, too.

3. 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 _____ .

- 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.
- 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).
- Now, we are going to break open the Word of God 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 personally to each one of us.

-We need to quiet ourselves so that we can be 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.

4. At the end of the Communal Scriptural Prayer time, the Small Group Leader says:

- I would like for each of us to journal in our notebooks what the Lord has spoken personally to each of us. You can do this in one of two ways.
- One way of doing this would be to 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 to realize that you are loved, is not just coming from you, but is definitely what Jesus is saying to you.

- Another way you might want to journal is simply to speak to Jesus what is in your heart concerning the passage you have just prayed over.

PRAYER FOR HEALING

Introduction

When praying for another, you can pray with total confidence and assurance because the Lord loves this person. It is the Lord who is doing the healing. You are the instrument of his love. Focus your mind and heart on Jesus. One person leads the healing prayer and everyone repeats after each phrase (the asterisk is the pause that allows everyone to repeat the phrase that the leader has just prayed).

Prayer

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.

Side Two

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.

© 2000 Sisters of the New Covenant, Inc.
10620 Livingston Dr., Northglenn, CO 80234 U.S.A.
(303)451-8677
www.sncweb.org

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sister Angeline Bukowiecki, S.N.C. is Co-Foundress of the Sisters of the New Covenant, Private Association of the Christian Faithful, and a 1971 graduate of St. Louis University School of Divinity with an M.A. in Dogmatic/Systematic Theology.

Sister has worked extensively in the development and formation of community among the People of God since 1971.