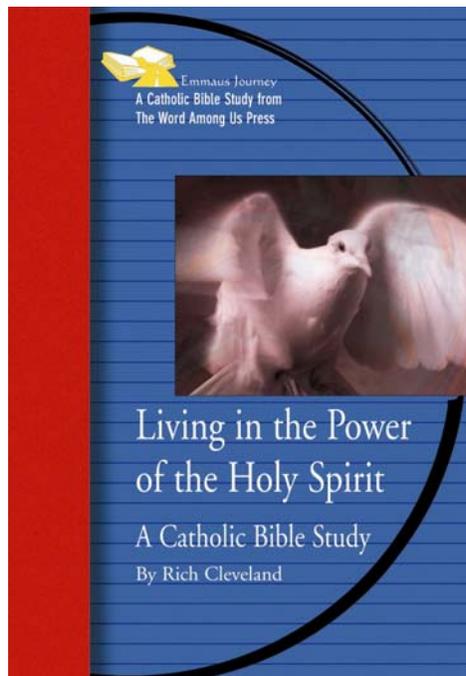


Emmaus Journey

Catholic Evangelization and Discipleship
Through Small Groups

A Small-Group Facilitator's Guide For



A Catholic Bible Study from The Word Among Us Press

This small-group facilitator's guide provides suggestions for leading each aspect of this bible study. In addition it provides helpful small-group dynamics principles which will enhance your group.

Emmaus Journey is committed to encouraging among Catholics, enthusiasm for, and commitment to daily scripture reading and reflection and regular participation in scripture based small groups.



Emmaus Journey
A Catholic Small-Group Bible Discussion Series

PO Box 63587 • Colorado Springs, CO 80962-3587

Contents

Leading <i>Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit</i>	4
Specific Suggestions for Handling Each Chapter	
Suggestions for Session 1	7
Suggestions for Session 2	10
Suggestions for Session 3	13
Suggestions for Session 4	15
Suggestions for Session 5	17
Suggestions for Session 6	19
Suggestions for Session 7	21
Suggestions for Session 8	23
Suggestions for Session 9	25

Leading *Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit*

This study, *Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit*, will be relatively easy to lead, inasmuch as the material is fairly comprehensive, and could technically be led simply by proceeding from question to question. However, because the concepts involved in reflecting on the Holy Spirit's involvement in our lives are very important, it will be helpful to enhance the material by asking probing questions at the right time.

The material can be broken down into four segments for the sake of the discussion. Normally it would be best to plan on a ninety minute discussion; however it could be compacted into sixty minutes if necessary or expanded to two hours. However because the three parts of each session are interspersed you will need to keep the discussion moving at a pace that will insure that you get done without cutting the discussion short. The four segments are:

1. The introductory reflection
2. Important quotations and support material
3. Questions on Scripture passages
4. Closing in prayer together

Normally a session would consist of having participants read aloud the introductory material and taking time to discuss the points that are covered there. This can usually be done by simply asking, "What did you get from this introductory material?" or "What impressed you from reading the introductory material." This material, though succinct, is full of pertinent points and is valuable for setting the stage for the discussion.

The session continues by having the question you are to discuss read aloud, along with the Scripture passage. It is important for people to turn to the passage in their Bible and follow along because you are in fact going to be discussing the content of the verses. After the above has been completed one or more persons should be asked to share their answers. At this point you simply need to decide whether the discussion has been adequate or whether you should use additional questions which you have prepared to drive the discussion to a deeper or more comprehensive level.

The quotes are interspersed to shed light on the material studied and to reflect insight from the Church and respected Catholic leaders. These should also be read aloud and the participants given the opportunity to comment or ask questions.

As the facilitator it is your responsibility to set the pace regarding preparation, attitude, and application. You can do this by being open and honest as you share, and by usually going first to demonstrate what you expect of others.

As we have observed various groups and facilitators, two situations have recurred frequently. The first has to do with the preparation of members of the group. Quite frequently people read the passage provided for a question and write down their reflections on the passage without actually answering the question provided in the lesson. As you know, the Scriptures are filled with an abundance of information, so a host of ideas can come out of a passage. However, as a community, the group is supposed to be reflecting on and answering a specific question on the same passage. So please encourage the participants to make sure they read and understand what the question is asking, before they record their answer.

A second observation is for those who facilitate a group. Frequently, in their desire to be thorough many facilitators feel the need to discuss every question in each lesson. In a ninety minute session, if the discussion is lively, there is no way that every question can be answered thoroughly within that time frame. Consequently, a facilitator should have decided ahead of time which questions are essential to answer to adequately cover the material. With one eye on the clock, as the discussion progresses, the facilitator should move the group through the material

and if necessary omit some of the material that is less pertinent. Keep in mind however, that members of the groups should have an opportunity at the end of the evening to share anything that was particularly important to them which you may not have discussed.

Lastly, in this study the final step of the study is to bring closure through group prayer. The focus of each closing prayer is to ask the Holy Spirit to apply the material using either verses from the *Veni Creator* or from some comparable material. We will give some suggestions within the facilitators guide for doing this, but it is an important part of each session to conclude with community prayer.

Specific Suggestions for Handling Each Chapter

The following information provides some specific ideas on how to handle each section. For an trained facilitator this information will have marginal value, though there will be some suggestions which will be helpful or which will stimulate some ideas of your own. For the person who is new at facilitating a group these suggestions will be helpful ideas that you can immediately incorporate into your plan for leading. In the process you will also find that your creativity will come alive and you will need to rely on these suggestions less and less.

Each chapter includes objectives which we hope to see accomplished through the material. As the facilitator this information both helps you understand what the focus of the chapter is, or could be, as well as provides direction as you pray for your group participants each week.

In addition you will find specific questions, and an occasional comment, that you can use to help move the group into discussion of the material. When you prepare, any ideas you decide to utilize should simply be written into the margin of your book rather than taking the facilitator's guide with you into the discussion group. REMEMBER that though the suggested questions and possible ideas for handling each question are stated strongly, they are only recommendations and ideas, not authoritative instructions on how you must handle the facilitating.

The following is the recommended procedure for preparing to lead *Living in the Power of the Holy Spirit*.

- ✓ Pray for wisdom and insight and then complete the bible study for your own edification. Ideally you should do the study two weeks before the discussion. That way if you need to alert them to some difficulty in the material you will have discovered it the week prior.
- ✓ Review the objectives for the session you will be leading.
- ✓ Review the bible study passages and questions for additional concepts that need to be clarified, emphasized or amplified during the discussion.
- ✓ Review the material on writing focus questions in the *Small-Group Dynamics Facilitators Guide* and begin writing additional focus questions.
 - Record the questions in the margin of your study.
 - You should have approximately one question for at least every two parts of the material
 - Review the suggestions in this facilitators guide to see if the suggestions are useful.
- ✓ The day of the study, preferably the hour before the study, review the material and the questions you developed to refresh you memory.

✓ Of course, throughout the process of preparation you should be praying for wisdom and insight, and for the preparation of the participants.

Suggestions for Session 1

Meditating On God's Word

Objectives:

To lay the foundation for a successful small group.

To kick off the study by having a fun and a thought provoking first session together.

To break the ice and get people interacting

To rethink what it means to meditate, and to become committed to adequately thinking on the Scriptures.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Get acquainted with the others in your group by sharing the answers to these questions:

What is your name?

What is the best gift you ever received?

This first session will set the tone for the entire course. Begin with a positive attitude and graciously welcome those who have come. Hold off passing out the material until the "Get Acquainted" material is finished. If your group has been together for some time, they will know each other quite well, however it will still be a fun exercise to complete the two questions in the getting acquainted exercise above. If you have any new people make sure that you facilitate relationships by pointing out natural connections, such as mentioning others in the group who are employed in the same or similar professions, or who are from the same state, etc.

Distribute the books and review the material on page 7-9 with the group. You can do this by reading aloud the "Introduction." When you come to the "helpful attitudes to keep in mind," have members of the group read each section aloud. Make occasional comments on points that are especially important to you.

The Introductory Material

Explain that this first session is designed to be completed together as a group, but that future sessions they will need to prepare ahead of time.

Have the introductory material read aloud. Explain to the group that one of the ways you are going to handle the introductory material and quotes is to have various participants read portions of the material aloud. Explain that this allows all of the group to refresh their thinking on the material before you discuss it, Begin by your reading the first quote by Jim Downing.

Ask, "What stood out to you in this fable?" You should have one thing to comment on after they share.

Read the next two paragraphs and explain that this study is like the stream in the fable. That in the preparatory material and group discussion you will have ample opportunity to pick up spiritual treasures. Then ask, "What will be the busy-ness of life that will tempt you to pass on quickly without gleaning all the nuggets awaiting you?"

Continue by having the next quote by Downing read aloud.

Ask, "How has this illustration changed your view of meditation?" and/or "How would you define meditation in light of this analogy?"

After having the final two paragraphs read ask, "What are some things we can do to help us dismount and load our lives with spiritual stones?"

Meditation Exercise

Explain that in the remaining part of tonight's session we will experience and learn about three methods of meditation.

Method A

Have Method A read aloud. Give them an example by putting the first phrase into your own words. For example: "This book of the law" could be paraphrased into "These life instructions and principles."

See if the assignment is clear, and give them approximately 5-10 minutes to complete the assignment. Observe the group to see when they are ready to continue.

Have several share their paraphrase.

Follow up the paraphrase by asking a few questions, such as:

What are some ways we can apply this passage?

What do you think the Psalmist meant by "prosper" and "success?"

What is the fruit of meditation?

Method B

Have the explanation of Method B read aloud, including the passage, Psalm 1:1-3. Ask if everyone understands the assignment and clarify if necessary.

Have the participants choose either Question Method 1 or 2 and complete the assignment. Allow approximately 5-10 minutes for the assignment.

In discussing their answers, have all those using Question Method 1 share their insights, and then have those using Question Method 2 share their insight. Have each person share their questions. As appropriate you may want to discuss some of the questions that they came up with.

Remember to affirm the various contributions.

Method C

Often people are not accustomed to praying aloud, or spontaneously. Explain to them that one of the ways they will have a chance to grow in this study is to develop their ability and comfort with praying aloud. Encourage them to not be apprehensive and that you will not suddenly put them on the spot, but that exercises like Method C will give them a chance to slowly grow into praying aloud.

Have Method C read aloud. Afterwards give them time to write out a prayer in their own words. Remind them that prayer is simply talking to God. Give them approximately three minutes to write out their prayer.

When they have completed the assignment have them simply read what they have written. Then explain that after we discuss the assignment for the next session, we will close in prayer and they will have a chance to actually pray their prayer to the Father.

Preparing For Session 2

Have the assignment read aloud.

Point out to them that in Session 2 and at the beginning of each of the other sessions the group will have a brief time sharing from their daily Scripture reading. Encourage them to read the bible

daily and come prepared to share one or more thoughts from their Bible reading. Explain that they can record one or more thoughts they get from their daily reading on the “Notes” pages, so it will be available to share next week.

Encourage them to not simply give the next lesson a “lick and a promise” but to genuinely dismount from their busy schedule and meditate on the passages, and answer the questions comprehensively.

Close in prayer by proceeding around the group with each praying the prayer they wrote. You should be the first to begin, and when the last one is finished simply say “Amen!”

Suggestions for Session 2

Who Is the Holy Spirit and How Does He Work?

Objectives:

To get better acquainted.

To refresh the groups basic understanding of the Holy Spirit.

To increase the groups comfortableness in praying aloud together.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Share insights from your prayer time and daily Bible reading.

This weekly sharing of insights is an integral part of this series. As facilitator you should come ready and eager to share, and be very affirming of those who do share. For this and the next two weeks you should encourage everyone to share, and be attentive to people who are struggling with faithfulness in this discipline. You should talk to them one-on-one to encourage them.

The Introductory Material

Have the opening paragraphs (material prior to the shaded box) read aloud by a couple of people, and open up the material for the 'participants' comments.

Ask, "When you think about the Holy Spirit what comes to your mind?"

Then explain that this study will endeavor to answer the following questions, then read the questions in the shaded box. After reading these questions you could ask, "Are there other questions about the Holy Spirit that come to your mind?" If there are remind them that they probably will be answered in one of the subsequent sessions if not in this one.

Have the remaining material from the introductory paragraphs read by one of the participants.

The Holy Spirit's Actions in People's Lives.

Questions 1, a

Cover this material by having a different member of the group read the appropriate Bible passage and share their answers. Once all of the material has been covered open it up to the group to share any other thoughts or questions they had from these passages.

If you have a large group or one that participates enthusiastically you may have a difficult time answering all of the questions in a 90 minute session. Question 1 could be handled by skipping part "a" and focusing your discussion on part "b."

Question 1, b

Have several share their answer to this question.

The Many Biblical Names of the Holy Spirit

Introduce this section by asking, "What other descriptive names, other than your given name, have you been called?"

Questions 2, a

Have several people share their answer. After they read the passage and share their answer see if anyone else wishes to comment on the same passage.

This is another question where you could simply move to part “b” of the question to save a little time.

Question 2, b

Go around the group and let everyone share their answer to this part of the question. Remember to provide effective verbal and non-verbal affirmation.

The Role of the Third Person of the Trinity

Question 3, a-d

Have question 3, a and the Ephesians passage read aloud. Then have several volunteers read their answers to all four parts of this question. Take additional comments. A follow up questions could be, how does it feel to know that God initiated our salvation?

Other questions to consider:

What does “holy and blameless” mean?

What is the connection between the work of Christ (vs. 7) and God’s purposes for us (vs. 4)?

In these passages how are our responsibilities in salvation described?

What does it mean to you to live to the praise of his glory?

In this passage how did you see the Trinity’s unity in salvation?

Have the quote read aloud.

Question 4, a, b

Have different participants read one of the passages and share their answer. Remember to have the passage read prior to answering the question. Also make sure that the answer shared actually answers the question asked. Ask others to share any additional insights they may have.

Other questions you could use:

1 Corinthians 2:9-16 – What does this passage teach about having confidence in our ability to understand God’s thoughts?

How does the Holy Spirit make known God’s thoughts to us?

How Can We Respond to the Holy Spirit?

Question 5

Have this question handled in much the same manner as you did question 4.

Additional questions:

Ephesians 1:13-14 – What is another word or phrase that could be used for “heard” and for “believe”?

What is the relationship between the faith of Galatians 3 and the obedience of 1 Peter 1?

Have the transition paragraph read aloud and ask for comments or questions. Follow up the material by asking, “Where are you in your journey of faith?”

Question 6

Have the passage read aloud and have several share their insights to parts a-d.

Additional questions:

What do the words righteous and devout convey to you?

How do we and how can we hear the Holy Spirit?

How do we avoid attributing to the Holy Spirit our own natural feelings and inclinations?

Think through on part (d) and draw others out on this question. It is important that we not trivialize the Holy Spirit’s guidance or make it so mysterious that people do not see how to practically receive his guidance.

Question 7

Everyone should share their answer to this question. As the facilitator you should set the pace by going first.

Pray Together

Each week you will have an opportunity to close your time together in prayer. Each week provide a moment to reflect on the prayer's content, then chose from a variety of ways to pray together. You could pray in unison, have one person pray aloud and the others pray silently, have each pray the prayer aloud one after the other, etc.

Also encourage people to pray these same prayers daily during the coming week.

Preparing For Session 3

Have the assignment read aloud.

After reading point 2, explain that in question 2, b in next week's material when the question refers to "what purpose" it means what is the role(s) of the Holy Spirit.

Suggestions for Session 3

The Holy Spirit, God's Greatest Gift to Us.

Objectives:

To increase appreciation of the Holy Spirit.
To discover what hinders his involvement in your lives.
To initiate a fresh start.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Share insights from your daily prayer and Bible reading.

We have not mentioned the importance of opening in prayer yet in this facilitator's guide, however we assume that you recognize its importance and are beginning each session with a brief prayer.

The Introductory Material

Introduce this introductory material by asking, "What is the best non-spiritual gift you have ever received." After several have shared have someone read through these paragraphs aloud. Take comments and questions from the group. Consider asking, "Which of these three gifts do you feel you have appropriated most effectively?"

New Life in the Spirit

Read the two paragraphs and consider asking:
What is your heart response to Pope John Paul II's statement about "new life according to the Spirit?" What does that mean to you?

The Holy Spirit Is God's Gift to Us

Question 1, a-b
Have several share their answers, and then have the quote read aloud.

The Spirit Draws Us Close to the Father and the Son

Question 2, a-c
For part (a) keep going around the group with each person adding a new reason until all the reasons the group came up with has been shared. Encourage the group to compile a master list of all of the reasons mentioned.

Then consider asking, "Which to you is the most important reason?"

Part (b) provides a good opportunity to clarify terms by asking for synonyms for each aspect of the Spirit's purposes.

Part (c) can be answered two ways; how are his purposes being fulfilled personally in an individual, any how are they being fulfilled in the Church collectively.

The Spirit Works in Us to Build the Church

Question 3
Have four individuals read one of the passages and give their answer. Open the discussion for others to share any additional thoughts.

Then consider using one of the following questions:
What are some examples of how the Holy Spirit has done one of these things for you?
Which do you feel is the greatest need currently for the Holy Spirit to do in your life?

Be ready to share first on these questions.

Question 4

Handle these three passages in a similar way as was recommended for question 3.

Question 5

You should have everyone share their answer to this question.

Obstacles to Receiving the Spirit

Question 6

Read and discuss as written.

Consider the following follow-up questions:

What is the difference between grieving the Holy Spirit and quenching the Holy Spirit?

Describe a person who sets their mind on the things of the flesh.

Question 7

After having this question answered and discussed, consider sharing the value of confession as found in the Catechism in section #1423-1424.

Question 8

Each should share their answer to this question. You should go first.

Pray Together

Give people a moment of silence to reflect on these verses and then pray them together. If you desire to also include special intentions of group members you can do so after you pray together collectively.

Preparing For Session 4

Point out that if they do not have a plan for daily Scripture reading they can download a free three month Lectionary Reading Record from the Emmaus Journey web page at

www.emmausjourney.org.

On page 45 the opening paragraph asks participants write a prayer, however space is not provided. Inform the participants that they can write their prayer on the note section on page 47.

Suggestions for Session 4

The Work of the Spirit...

to Bear Fruit for God

Objective:

To develop an understanding of, and create a hunger for the Holy Spirit's fruit in your lives.
To assess the presence and/or absence of your yielded-ness to the Holy Spirit's influence.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Share insights from your daily prayer and Bible reading.

For variety this week why don't you break up into groups of two or three and each share several things that impressed them from this last week's Scripture readings.

Tonight's material is relatively involved. The likelihood of answering every question is slim, consequently you should have a good understanding of those parts of the lesson that you want to cover.

The Introductory Material

Point out that tonight's material and the next four sessions will concentrate on the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Have the first two paragraphs of the introductory material read aloud. Ask for comments and questions and consider asking, "What new qualities and characteristics would you like to see strengthened in your life."

The Fruits of the Spirit Are Available to All of Us

Have each part of the remainder of the introductory material read aloud by several participants. Regarding the quote ask, "Pope John Paul II makes a pretty strong statement regarding fruitfulness. How do these comments affect you?"

Abiding in Christ: The Key to Bearing Fruit

Question 1, a-c

This question is pretty meaty on its own. Have several share their answers to parts a-c, and open the discussion for additional comments from the participants. If the words "heat" and "drought" are not clarified in the normal progress of the discussion, ask participants to provide some synonyms to clarify their meaning.

Question 2, a-c

What are the benefits of abiding?

What Affects Our Ability to Bear Fruit

Question 3, a-c

Have verses 16-21 read prior to answering parts a-b, then have verses 22-25 read prior to answering part c-d

Question 4

What does it mean to hate your life?

How did you feel when you read this passage?

Explain and give an example of what Jesus meant by loving and losing your life, and hating and finding your life.

Facing Those Areas That Prevent Us From Bearing Fruit

Question 5

This exercise can be very helpful, but also emotional as participants honestly evaluate their growth in holiness. Begin the discussion of this questions by asking, "Did you find this exercise helpful?"

Be the first to be vulnerable and share some insights from your own evaluation. After sharing then ask, "Would some of you be willing to share what you learned through this question?"

The conclusion of this exercise asks the participants to write a brief prayer asking God to help you yield to the Holy Spirit's influence. Ask, "How many of you wrote a prayer? How helpful was that as part of the process?"

Quote

Read the quote aloud.

Question 6

Take several suggestions, especially reinforcing those that you think are very helpful.

Question 7

This question could perhaps be omitted if you are running short of time.

Pray Together

Give people a chance to reflect on the closing prayer, and the prayer they wrote. Allow time for people to pray the prayer they wrote, if they so desire, and then close by praying together the verses from *Veni Creator*.

Remind people to use these verses from *Veni Creator* to pray daily, and to remember to dismount and gather the treasures God has for them.

Preparing For Session 5

Have the assignment read aloud.

Point out that question 1, b, in next weeks lesson is a two part question, so make sure that both parts are answered.

Suggestions for Session 5

The Fruits of the Spirit Are Love and Joy

Objective:

To recognize what love is and to evaluate the degree of our love and its practical ramifications.

To raise your expectation level for being joyous.

To understand the internal and external effects of being joyous.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Share insights from your daily prayer and Bible reading.

The Introductory Material

Read aloud without comment the material down to “The Fruit of the Spirit is Love.” Then have several participants read the remainder of the introductory material. Ask, “How have key people in your past accurately communicated to you what love is?” Also, “How accurately have you in turn communicated real love to others?”

What did you learn about real love from the definition by Barclay?

Jesus’ Example of Love

Question 1

Have several share their answers to parts a-b.

Question 2

This is a very important question, take adequate time to thoroughly explore the participants answer’s to this question.

Quote

Have the quote read aloud. Ask, “Do you agree or disagree with St. Theresa? Why?”

How Am I Bearing the Fruit of Love

Question 3

Be sure to go first reading your answer, then have several share their answers also.

Quote

After reading the quote ask, “What difference does it make to know that God’s love is not conditional on our performance?”

The Fruit of the Spirit Is Joy

Have the material read aloud and take people’s comments.

What Gives Us a Deep and Lasting Joy?

Question 4

What is meant by the term, “to view earthly realities in the light of a heavenly perspective”?

For the remainder of the question have a different participant read each of the Scripture passages aloud and then share their answer to the question. After the five passages have been answered open the material to the group for additional insights.

Joy Even in Suffering

Question 5

How does knowing that Jesus suffered dispel the myth that suffering is due to a person's sinfulness?

Handle these passages as you did in question 4. Referring to the phrase referred to in the opening material, ask, "What is the 'eternal perspective' in these three passages?"

Quote

Have the quote by Fanny Crosby read without comment.

Question 6

Practically how can we keep the Lord before us?

Who has successfully used music to lift their spirits? Have there been any songs that have been particularly helpful?

Pray Together

Read the verses, reflect for a few moments, and then pray together.

Preparing For Session 6

Read the assignment aloud.

Point out that on page 64 participants are asked to write a note to themselves. Encourage them to use page 70 to record their note.

Suggestions for Session 6

The Fruit of the Spirit Are Peace and Patience

Objective:

To understand how peace and patience are interrelated.

To understand the source of peace.

To discern the degree of peace and patience in your lives and make any needed adjustments.

To understand how your response to injustice can become the seed of redemption in those who perpetrate and those who observe the injustice.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Share insights from your daily prayer and Bible reading.

The Introductory Material

You should read aloud the material down through the shaded box. Then have several take turns reading the introductory paragraphs aloud,

The Source of Our Peace

Question 1, a

In your opinion which dimension of peace is most elusive for the average Catholic? For you?

Question 1, b

How do you feel about participating regularly in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Inner Peace

Question 2

For Isaiah 26:3—How do you think a person expresses trust in God?

For Philippians 4:6-9—These verses talk about a spiritually disciplined way of thinking. What have you found that helps you to think this way?

When is your mind the least disciplined in its thinking?

Question 3

This is a good time to bring to light and air some of the fears in our lives. Go first in the sharing and take adequate time for people to discuss their fears.

Peace with Others

Question 4, a

Read and discuss as written.

What are some current issues we face that could be stumbling blocks for people?

Question 4, b

People should answer this question based on the context of verses 13-18.

Question 4, c

People should be reminded not to mention the names of people involved in difficult situations lest confidences be inadvertently betrayed.

Quote

Have the quote read and then ask, "How difficult do you find it to abide in Christ's peace?"

Question 5

Ask, "Did everyone answer? Would anyone be willing to share their assessment?"

The Fruit of the Spirit Is Patience (Long-suffering)

Read the introductory paragraphs and consider asking, "Would you consider yourself a vengeful person? What philosophy of life and values drives a person to get even?"

God's Patience with Us

Question 6

What elements of Jesus' suffering do you think apply to our long-suffering of others?

Where do you see yourself in this account of Israel's history?

Quote

After having the quote read aloud, you might explain that when we get angry and lose our temper the person who is the object of our wrath is also the person who has taken control of our spirit.

Suffering Patiently Makes Us More Like Jesus

Question 7

This passage is terrific for bringing together the many practical aspects of these characteristics of the Spirit's fruit.

Part (b)—What is the difference between making a defense and being defensive?

Part (c)—How could this type of behavior bring a person to God?

Pray Together

Pray this prayer meditatively, pausing between the parts of each phrase. For example, "Where there is hatred (pause) let me sow love."

Remind them to pray this prayer daily.

You also might purchase a St. Francis Prayer Card to give to each.

Preparing For Session 7:

Have the assignment read aloud.

Suggestions for Session 7

The Fruits of the Spirit Are Kindness and Goodness

Objective:

To cultivate a desire to be kind and good.

To recognize that kindness and goodness comes from strength not weakness.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Share insights from your daily prayer and Bible reading.

The Introductory Material

Read the introductory material on page 73 and take any comments or questions.

Kindness...More than Words

Read the paragraph and ask for comments or questions.

Question 1, b

Which reason most affects your willingness or unwillingness to become involved?

Reflecting on God's Kindness toward Us

Question 2

Describe some situations where we are faced with the choice between showing kindness and making judgement.

"Putting on" the Clothing of Kindness

Question 3, a

How does this passage reinforce the concept that kindness is a fruit?

Question 3, b

Point out that trying to live holy lives when we chose to maintain unholy attitudes and behavior is what creates such tension in our lives.

The Fruit of the Spirit Is Goodness

Have the paragraphs read and take participants comments.

The Spiritual Fruit of Goodness in Jesus and St. Paul

Question 4

How was Jesus' admonishment to Martha helpful to her, and the others observing this scene, and not simply critical?

Question 5

Do you envision any present day situation where a comparable expression of goodness should be expressed?

Question 6 & 7

After having these questions answered by the participants have them review the examples in questions 5-7 and answer the question:

Which of these examples best illustrates the characteristics of goodness? Why?

Growing in the Fruit of Goodness

Question 8 - 9

These questions explore the practical application of putting off the old behavior and putting on the new. Take adequate time to talk about becoming more full of goodness. Complete the discussion of these questions by reading aloud the quote on page 78.

Pray Together

Have the group think of a person or situation where kindness and goodness is needed. Then lead them through this prayer together.

Preparing For Session 8

Have the Assignment read aloud.

Suggestions for Session 8

The Fruits of the Spirit Are Faithfulness, Meekness, and Temperance

Objective:

To call us to a life of thoughtful choices and away from a life of uncontrolled desires.
To recognize that meekness is not equal to weakness but comes from strength.
To highlight the importance of self-control, even in the little things.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Share insights from your daily prayer and Bible reading.

The Introductory Material

Introduce this material by asking, "What do you feel when words and phrases like self-control, faithfulness, and control of passions are mentioned, especially in respect to religion?"

Read the opening paragraphs yourself.

We Are Called to Be Faithful like Jesus

Ask someone to read the material, taking participants comments and questions. You yourself should be ready to share something that stood out to you.

Question 1

What are the ingredients of Jesus' prayer?
How important do you feel prayer is to perseverance?

Question 2

Handle normally.

Question 3

Have several people share their answers to this question.
What are some of the things "that belong to another" for which we should be faithful?

Question 4

Have several people share their answers.

Quote

Have the quote read, then ask, "What are the top five little things about which we need to be faithful?"

Meekness Is Not Being Weak

Have the introductory paragraphs read aloud.
How do you respond to this insight regarding meekness?
The definition refers to "teachable-ness." Describe what teachable-ness looks like in a life.

Question 5

If you were Pilate, knowing what Jesus had been through up to this point, what would be going through your mind when you observed Jesus' assured response?

Question 6

What synonymous phrase could you use for "inherit the earth"?

Question 7

Of the action words and phrases mentioned in verses 13-17, which one would be the easiest/hardest for you to put into practice?

Temperance: Controlling Our Passions

Perhaps before reading these introductory paragraphs you should read Colossians 2:20-23. Have the material read and then point out that temperance is not being against something, but controlling your passions to be for something.

Question 8

Explain and/or give an example of how the lack of self-control makes us defenseless.

Questions 9-11

After having these passages read and the questions answered consider discussing :
How does a person learn temperance as an adult?

What do these passages say about a person who has not learned to be temperate?

Pray Together

Consider praying together in silence this week, and then having one person pray aloud for the group using this prayer from *The Liturgy of the Hours*.

Preparing For Session 9

Have the Assignment read aloud.

Point out that next week is the final session. Consider whether you should plan a congratulatory potluck the following week. If you do have a potluck in conjunction with Session 9 usually that means that the material will not be thoroughly discussed. This would result in the group not ending on a high note of accomplishment. So perhaps it would be better to have the potluck the following week.

Also consider whether the group would like to continue meeting in the future.

Suggestions for Session 9

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Objectives:

To recognize the differing nature of spiritual gifts
To acknowledge that God has gifted each person individually as members of his Church
To understand and assume responsibility for discovering and using your gifts to serve his Church

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Share insights from your daily prayer and Bible reading.

The Introductory Material

Tonight instead of reading the introductory material aloud, ask people to look over the introduction and identify what they feel is the most important concept conveyed there.

Come, Holy Spirit

Read the opening paragraphs aloud.

A Variety of Gifts

Question 1

Have several share their observations. Be ready to share one of your observations as well. Afterwards consider asking, "Would someone explain in their own words, the difference between virtue gifts and charism gifts."

The Isaiah Gifts or Virtues

Have the Catechism quote read without comment as a means of introducing question 2.

Question 2

Have several share their answers to question 2.

Have the description of the gifts on page 95 and 96 read aloud. Perhaps with a different person reading each definition. Consider discussing which of the seven gifts mentioned do they feel is most absent in society as they have experienced it.

Give an example of how you see these gifts manifested in your life or in the life of someone you know.

Question 3

After having each of the participants share their answer to parts a and b of question 3, suggest that since there are seven gifts and seven days of the week perhaps they should pray for one of the gifts to be developed and manifested in their lives or the life of someone they know.

The Corinthian or Charismatic Gifts

Read the Catechism quote without comment to introduce question 4

Question 4, a

You will not want to read this passage aloud since it involves 21 verses. Instead have everyone turn to the passage in their Bible so they can refer to the passage. Then open the discussion up to the whole group.

Question 4, b

What happens when we compare our gifts with another's gifts?

Question 4, c

Have several share to see if they conclude that if we were all the same we would be pretty boring and ineffective.

Gifts of Leadership

Question 5, a

The point to discover in this section that in addition to virtue gifts, and charism gifts, God has also gifted the Church with leader gifts.

Question 5, b and c

Two additional concepts to explore:

What is meant by maturity? Or What is the opposite of maturity?

Make sure the group identifies that God's intention is that everyone comes to maturity, and that everyone engages in the work of the ministry.

Unity and Diversity

Question 6

Help the group to understand which is the cause and which is the affect when it comes to unity and diversity.

Question 7

Have several share.

Praying for the Gifts

Question 8

Give everyone a chance to reflect on their prayer, and then ask for volunteers to share what they wrote. You should go first.

Pray Together

As you close in prayer ask each of the group to pray/read the prayer they wrote aloud. When the last one has shared then collectively pray the verses of *Veni Creator*.

Conclusion

As the facilitator, read the congratulations message aloud and with emphasis adding your own affirmation for the group's efforts.

Pray and thank the Father for all that the Holy Spirit has shown the group about living and ministering in his power.

You may want to take some time and discuss whether the group should continue to meet to discuss another study, or whether some should branch out and begin a group of their own.

God bless you for conscientiously facilitating this group.