

## Helpful tips for effective Faith Sharing

- Confidentiality must be maintained.
- Start and end on time.
- Focus on **FAITH SHARING**. Remember, Faith sharing is not academic discussion on how much one knows; rather it invites us to ask a question within our hearts:  
*What does this mean to me as I try to follow Jesus today?*
- Avoid giving an opinion on that which others share.
- Avoid giving advice, criticizing or attempting to solve another's problems.
- Avoid dominating the group by sharing excessively.
- Allow everyone the opportunity to share if they desire.
- Allow participant to feel comfortable with not sharing. No one should be forced to share.
- Speak to the group rather than to just the leader.
- Be comfortable with silence.
- Pray often in the silence of your heart for inspiration.



## What is Arise Together in Christ?

Arise Together in Christ is a personal invitation to rediscover Christ and encounter Christ in new ways.

- Arise is an invitation to experience Jesus personally in and through the Scriptures.
- Arise is an invitation to experience Jesus in yourself and in others through Small Faith Sharing Groups.
- Arise is an invitation to enter into personal Prayer as well as deepen one's prayer life.
- Arise is an opportunity to awakens one's faith life.
- Arise moves participants to pursue Intentional Discipleship.
- Arise is instrumental in awakening and empowering one's faith life.
- Arise opens the heart to recognize again, the inspiration and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.
- Arise opens the heart to allow the Holy Spirit to be the center of one's daily living.
- ***Arise Together in Christ*** will support all parishes in our Diocese in focusing on Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master and opening our hearts to the opportunity of Christ giving meaning to our lives once again.

## What is Faith Sharing?

Faith Sharing is sharing some facet of one's relationship with God and connecting a personal event with a passage of Scripture or with an aspect of one's Christian life.

Faith Sharing is rooted in the old Christian Practice of **Lectio Divina** which is Divine Reading or reading under the eyes of God until one's heart is touched or moved. Lectio Divina is not a process of acquiring knowledge (although it may be one of its fruits) but rather encountering God, listening to Gods' word and surrendering to it.

Faith Sharing takes Lectio Divina and brings it one step further, which is sharing the fruits of the Divine reading with others.

### **What Faith sharing is not:**

- A Scripture study or discussion.
- A Show and tell of how much one knows about Scripture or Theology.
- A time to resolve my problems or the problems of others.
- A time to tell my whole faith life story.
- A time to preach to the group.
- A time to complain.
- A time to debate.

### **Faith sharing verses discussion**

- Faith Sharing refers to shared reflection on the action of God in one's life experience as related to specific Scripture passages.
- Faith Sharing is not necessarily discussion, problem solving or Scripture study.
- The Purpose of Faith sharing is to personally encounter Christ.

### **FAITH SHARING:**

- Participants talk about their lived experiences
- Subjective and personal
- No advice or suggestions
- Concern for affirming members
- Relationship oriented
- Response of acceptance
- Becomes personal and moves to depth issues
- Faith Sharing is God-Centered.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- Talks centers around ideas and opinions
- Objective and impersonal
- Offers answers and attempts to fix things
- Concern for correctness and accuracy
- Task oriented
- Response of analysis
- Stays "out there," with inconsequential issues

### **Never forgetting that:**

- Faith sharing is God centered.
- in order to receive God's word and God's grace, one needs to be attentive to the scriptures, to the events of one's life, and to one's relationship with others.
- It is important to be attentive to the insights, calls, challenges and images received in prayer and recognize them as God's.
- One needs to be attentive to the insights others share recognizing them as God's gifts.

### **What is a Small Faith Sharing Group?**

A Small Faith Sharing Group is often referred to as a "Small Church Community." It is a small group of people who come together to share aspects of their lives in conversation with their faith.

### **What are the basics steps of Faith Sharing?**

Faith Sharing always begins with Prayer:

1. We invite God to come into our hearts.

We open our minds, hearts and souls to receive the Word or the message of our divine reading.

We prayerfully read and listen to the text.

We let God speak to us in silence.

2. We observe the words or phrases that touch our hearts, stir something within us, challenge us or correct us.

We ask ourselves: How is my life touched or moved by this Scripture passage?

Is there an invitation in the Scripture passage for me personally or for my life?

3. We share what we have heard in our hearts.

We commit to some action individually or as a group.

It is important that at the end of the session we ask ourselves: "What is God calling me (us) to? How can I respond?"

4. We pray together for God's continual guidance in our life.

### **Important distinctions of Faith Sharing (what it is and what it is not)**

#### **What Faith Sharing is:**

- Rooted in the belief that God is always present and active in our lives.
- Feeling the invitation to articulate this presence and action of God.
- Experiencing God's presence in the moments of silence as well as sharing.
- Experiencing an image of God/Jesus in the Scripture passage shared.
- Recognizing the challenges of seeing God's presence and action in daily life encounters.
- Asking myself: How was I touched, called or challenged by the Scripture passage shared?
- Recognizing a word or phrase which speaks to my heart?
- Understanding the Scripture passage in a new way?
- Feeling personally challenged by God's word?
- Recognizing faith questions which may arise and have no answers but move one to ask for prayer from the Faith Sharing group.