



Small Group Leader Guide



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Welcome

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a leader for the *Living the Eucharist* small group meetings. God will reward you for your generosity. You will need this Leader Guide and the *Living the Eucharist* Small Group Participant Booklet as you prepare for and lead the meetings.

The small group meetings are an integral part of the parish *Living the Eucharist* experience. This Lent may be the first time that some parishioners have participated in this type of educational and faith-sharing group. Others will be veterans. Also, your parish may have made efforts to invite inactive Catholics to participate in the *Living the Eucharist* small groups. Welcome these participants warmly and answer any questions they may have. Regardless of the makeup of your group, this Leader Guide will equip you to lead the meetings with confidence and competence.

Make a commitment to say the Leader's Prayer to the Holy Spirit on page 3 of this booklet before you lead each meeting. The Spirit, who showers us with gifts of wisdom, understanding, right judgment, and courage, will serve as your principal guide during the meetings.

The format and topics for the meetings are found on page 4 of this Leader Guide. Each meeting has two main parts. The first part presents topics that will help your group understand the Eucharist and participate more fully at Sunday Mass. The questions provided

make the conversation thoughtful and informative. The second part invites group members to pray together by reflecting on a selection from the upcoming Sunday Mass readings using the *lectio divina* method.

Many Catholics are not familiar with *lectio divina*. Fr. Thomas Ryan, CSP, a wise and experienced teacher of this method of prayer, guides you in ways to lead this process during your meetings. Begin by reading his teaching on pages 8-10, titled "Leading the Practice of *Lectio Divina*." You may wish to reread sections of this teaching after Meetings 1 and 2 in order to refresh your memory and deepen your understanding of this ancient and enlightening method of praying with the Scriptures.

This booklet's sections titled "Responsibilities of the Small Group Leader" on page 5 and "Helpful Tips for an Effective Meeting" on pages 6-7 provide detailed information for people who are leading a small group for the first time. Those with more experience in leading groups can read these sections and focus on how they can apply their skills most effectively to achieve the desired outcomes of the *Living the Eucharist* process.

LEADER'S PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

BREATHE ON ME, SPIRIT OF WISDOM,
 THAT I MAY BE AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT
 OF YOUR DIVINE WILL.

GROW IN ME, SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING,
 THAT I MAY KNOW HOW TO SPEAK
 YOUR WORDS.

MOVE WITHIN OUR GROUP, SPIRIT OF RIGHT
 JUDGMENT, THAT OUR DISCUSSIONS MAY
 LEAD US TO KNOW AND DO THE WILL OF GOD.

INSPIRE OUR GROUP, SPIRIT OF COURAGE,
 THAT WE MAY SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

FILL US WITH INSIGHT, SPIRIT OF KNOWLEDGE,
 THAT WE CAN PUT ON THE MIND OF CHRIST.

STAY WITH US, SPIRIT OF REVERENCE,
 THAT WE MAY GROW IN HOLINESS.

BE WITH US, SPIRIT OF WONDER AND AWE—
 IN GOD'S PRESENCE, THAT WE MAY WORSHIP
 AND THANK GOD IN THE EUCHARIST.

GLORY TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON,
 AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, IS NOW,
 AND WILL BE FOR EVER. AMEN.

MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH, PRAY FOR US.

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE, PRAY FOR US.

This Leader Guide provides you with three pages of material for Meeting 1 and two pages of material for Meetings 2-6. They will help you prepare for, conduct, and reflect on the sessions. The pages for Meeting 1 are more detailed and set the pattern for all six meetings. Only the information that is needed in subsequent weeks is given for Meetings 2-6. If you have challenges or difficulties with your group, and cannot resolve them yourself, talk with the parish leadership team small group coordinator. This person is knowledgeable and should be able to help you deal with such challenges, should you encounter any along the way.

After the six Lenten meetings are finished, spend some time filling out the self-evaluation on page 27. This exercise will help you reflect on your experience. No one else will see your answers; the self-evaluation is for your benefit.

Trust that the Spirit of God has inspired each person in your group to participate for a reason. The Spirit will guide some to grow in their love for the Eucharist. Others will find themselves participating more fully at Sunday Mass. Those who were previously inactive Catholics may find they want to participate more intentionally at Mass and in parish life. God knows the graces that each person needs.

Trust, too, that the Holy Spirit will guide you as a group leader. God has called you to serve as a chosen instrument to accomplish the mission of Jesus Christ. Enjoy your experience in the power and strength of the Spirit.

INTRODUCTION

FORMAT OF THE MEETINGS

Your small group meetings will take around 90 minutes. Allow for some flexibility in the times given, while starting and ending on time.

- 8 MIN.** Welcome and Opening Prayer
(Collect Prayer)
- 10 MIN.** Response to the Opening Questions
- 10 MIN.** Presentation
- 30 MIN.** Discussion
- 25 MIN.** Praying with the Sunday Mass readings
using the *lectio divina* method
- 5 MIN.** Closing Prayer
- 2 MIN.** Announcements

Refreshments and social time after the meeting

TOPICS FOR THE MEETINGS

The topics for each week can inform, inspire, and nourish the spiritual lives of the participants.

MEETING 1: Why We Gather for Sunday Eucharist

PREPARING FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

MEETING 2: Who's at the Table?

PREPARING FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

MEETING 3: What Happens at Sunday Mass?

PREPARING FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

MEETING 4: The Dynamic Role of the Holy Spirit

PREPARING FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

MEETING 5: How Do I Respond?

PREPARING FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

MEETING 6: What Changes?

PREPARING FOR PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION
OF THE LORD

IN CHRIST, HEAD OF HIS BODY, THE CHURCH,
ALL CHRISTIANS ARE "A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD,
A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE HE CLAIMS FOR HIS OWN,
TO DECLARE HIS WONDERFUL DEEDS" (1 PETER 2:9).

POPE BENEDICT XVI
THE SACRAMENT OF CHARITY, NO. 79



RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SMALL GROUP LEADER

- 1 ■ Arrange a place for your group to meet: your home, the home of another group member, the parish, or another appropriate place. Having the group meet in the same location for all six sessions is easiest. If your group needs to change locations, be sure to notify the members the week before the meeting.
- 2 ■ After you get a list of your group members from the parish leadership team small group coordinator, visit them in person or call them before the first meeting. Introduce yourself, welcome them to your group, and ask if you can answer any questions. You may need to provide a map with directions if the location of your meeting is difficult to find. Remind people to bring the Small Group Participant's Booklet to all the sessions. If you are unable to reach your group members either in person or by phone, contact them by email.
- 3 ■ Create a list of group members. Include the names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses, and distribute copies during the first meeting. When you contact your members (see number 2 above), be sure to ask if anyone objects to having his or her information on the list.
- 4 ■ Make sure that all participants have rides. If necessary, ask group members before each meeting to pick up anyone who needs transportation.
- 5 ■ Ask someone to serve as host for all six meetings. This person prepares the environment to foster faith sharing and prayer. Arrange the chairs in a circular fashion to promote dialogue. Place in the center of the chairs a low table, tastefully arranged with a Bible, a crucifix, a religious picture, a candle, or other symbols that will remind the group of the presence of God. Be attentive to the lighting, and make sure the temperature is comfortable. The host also arranges for refreshments, with the help of one or two group members each week, and sees to the group's practical needs. Serving in this special role, the host gives the leader the freedom to be thoughtful, organized, collected, and focused on guiding the meeting. The leader should introduce the host at the beginning of the first meeting and then thank this person for his or her service throughout the sessions.
- 6 ■ Lead the six weekly sessions, following the suggestions in this guide.
- 7 ■ Ask someone to watch the time. This person can help you keep the meeting on track.
- 8 ■ Suggest to the group members the possibility of continuing their conversation between the meetings, perhaps using a social networking site. Discuss this option at the end of the first meeting. One person in your group may be particularly skilled in facilitating this communication over the Internet.
- 9 ■ Call people who were not able to attend a meeting. Tell them you, and the group, missed them, and if appropriate invite them again. If you are unable to reach your group members by phone, send an email.
- 10 ■ Set aside a time immediately after each meeting to go over the questions in the section titled "Reflect." You may want to invite a group member to reflect with you as a way of getting fresh insight and perspective.
- 11 ■ Conduct a group evaluation at the end of the sixth meeting. This is different from the self-evaluation mentioned earlier. The parish leadership team small group coordinator will provide you with the evaluation forms. Return these forms to the small group coordinator after your group members complete them.
- 12 ■ Pray for your group members each day.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE MEETING

- 1 ■ Prepare! A list of things to do is provided each week, under the heading “Prepare.” Plan your schedule so you don’t end up doing everything at the last minute.
- 2 ■ Start and end on time. People will appreciate this courtesy. Starting on time rewards those who come early; ending on time allows people to fulfill their commitments afterwards. The first meeting provides a model for the rest.
- 3 ■ After the first meeting, you can delegate as many of the things to do each week as possible. This shared leadership gives group members a sense of ownership and increases their commitment. One person can serve as timekeeper and another as phone-link, calling those who didn’t come. If you wish, you can ask a group member to help you reflect on the experience of each meeting. Every week you will need one person to pray the Collect prayer, one or two people to read the Presentation, and two people to read the Scripture passages during *lectio divina*. One of your roles as group leader is to motivate, coordinate, remind, and make sure the others are ready for the services they have chosen.
- 4 ■ Ask the group to prepare ahead of time in order to participate more fully in the discussion. Everyone will benefit from coming prepared. When you first contact people, ask them to read the material for the first meeting ahead of time. However, also say that if people are busy during a subsequent week and are not able to prepare, they are still most welcome to come to the meeting and will benefit from it.
- 5 ■ Focus on faith sharing. Think of your group as a community of disciples growing in faith. As you begin the first meeting, explain this idea to group members, using the following words to guide you: Faith sharing is not an academic discussion or a test of how much one knows about the topic. Rather it invites people each week to consider the question: “What does this mean to me as a follower of Jesus Christ?” A faith-sharing meeting is not like a business meeting with an efficient, pre-set agenda. The group must allow time for the Holy Spirit to work in the heart of each member and in the group itself.
- 6 ■ After a group member shares an experience, a life story, or a lesson learned, gently remind others, if needed, to avoid judging or criticizing the ideas of others. Ask people to refrain from giving advice and telling others how to “solve their problem.” Short acknowledgments of feelings or comments of support after someone’s sharing are appropriate, as well as prayers for healing or for particular needs. But one-on-one advice is best offered outside the group (if such advice is requested or welcomed).
- 7 ■ Show by your example how to speak “to the center,” that is, to speak to the group rather than to one person in particular. If people tend to look mainly at you and seem to be speaking to you, take your eyes off them and look around at others. This will gently remind them to speak to the group. The center table also functions to focus on the presence of Jesus in the group.
- 8 ■ Help group members to pray in a way that makes them feel comfortable. For example, see the section on page 7 titled “Music as an Option,” about including music as part of your meetings. Or you may have people in your group with the gift of spontaneous prayer of intercession. Encourage this type of prayerful participation in the Closing Prayer after *lectio divina*.
- 9 ■ Be attentive to the interests of the group. You do not have to answer all the questions in the sequence given. Sometimes group members will want to explore

one question in depth or start with a question at the end of the list. Follow their lead and use your judgment. Your goal is to facilitate the group's fruitful dialogue, not necessarily to complete all the questions in order.

10 ■ Encourage everyone to talk. Make this a general agreement of the group: that everyone says something during the meeting. Sometimes you will need to ask someone a direct question to get him or her involved. Always leave the door open for them to decline to answer that question but to touch on another point. Some people freeze when put on the spot, but if there is a quiet moment or a short silence later in the meeting, they may be ready to share. Be aware that some people talk less than others but still are participating fully in the meeting. If the group is attentive to and respects different personalities, all will feel free to be themselves.

11 ■ Encourage people to use the "I" form when they speak. A participant who says, "This is how I see the Scripture applying to my life" and then gives a specific example, is sharing faith. The collective "we," on the other hand, does not contribute to faith sharing. A comment like, "We all tend to be this way" may offend some people in the group if they do not identify with the remark. Good examples of faith sharing are the following statements: "I sometimes feel that God has abandoned me" or "This is a church teaching that means a lot to me."

12 ■ Don't let anyone dominate the group, not even you. Others can tolerate this for a while, but sooner or later they will get irritated. How does the leader resolve this? When necessary, say, "It is someone else's turn to speak now," or "Let's make sure everyone has a chance to speak on this before we share a second time," or change the subject. At a break, talk privately with the dominating person. Gently help the person recognize the problem, and ask him or her to solve it.

13 ■ Be comfortable with silence. Give people time to formulate their responses. As the leader, don't jump in when people are silent. Sit tight, and someone will respond.

14 ■ Mention at the beginning of the first meeting the need for confidentiality. Say something like this: "Whatever is said in the group stays in the group." Confidentiality is essential to building trust within a group.

15 ■ Get help if you need it. If you have problems you can't solve, take them to the parish leadership team small group coordinator.

16 ■ Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God wants the meetings to succeed even more than you do. Trust that if you do your part the Spirit of God will guide you.

MUSIC AS AN OPTION

If you have someone in your group with musical talents (it could be you), consider asking that person to bring song sheets for the group and a musical instrument. As well as opening and closing songs, you can include acclamations, psalms, and other songs from the Sunday liturgy immediately before the Collect prayer and at the end of the meeting. An alternative is to have someone select songs from a CD or an iPod and invite the group to listen or to sing along. If you do not know the musical talents of your group before your first meeting, talk about the importance of music at the close of Meeting 1 and see what musical talents the group members have to offer. Also keep in mind that some groups may prefer no music or singing.

Leading the Practice of Lectio Divina

Before you read this section, be sure that you have read the section titled “*Lectio Divina: A Way to Pray with the Scriptures*” on pages 29 to 33 of the Small Group Participant Booklet. This material gives you, as well as the participants, a basic understanding of the spiritual practice of *lectio divina*. The paragraphs below present some “big picture” considerations that will help you understand more about *lectio divina* before you lead the meeting.

The Reading of the Biblical Text. To prepare for your role as facilitator, take some time prior to the meeting to read carefully the passage that the group will be listening to and working with. During the meeting, you will be reading this passage at the first stage (*lectio*). It even can be beneficial to read it out loud twice at this stage. Ask two members of the group to look at the reading ahead of time as well, to help you with the reading of the text. One person will read the text out loud during the second stage of the process, and the other during the third stage. This way, each time the text is read, the group is hearing it in a different voice. Choose for the person who reads it for the *meditatio* stage a member of the opposite sex from you. Voice tonality, patterns, rhythm, and expression all affect the way a listener hears words read.

Participation. After each reading, and a time of silence, invite people to speak. It isn't necessary to go around the circle in order or require everyone to say something. Extroverted types may respond easily and naturally, while introverted personalities may find it more difficult to put their inner thoughts and feelings “out there.”

Your role is to help create a forum for prayer where everyone feels secure, comfortable, and respected. After the silent periods, members of the group are invited to share their experience if they wish. The sharing is voluntary. What was heard? What insights developed? What response has been called forth?

Time. One of your primary challenges will be to keep things on track time-wise. Twenty-five minutes is not a lot of time for praying with the Word of God in a group setting. You will have to exercise judgment at different points along the way as to what is the greater good: allowing time for the people who seem ready to speak, or moving on in order to respect the overall time frame. You may want to encourage the participants to make the best use of the time available by keeping the time lapse brief between people's sharings.

The Role of the Body in Prayer. By the time you get to this part of the session—praying with the Scriptures for the upcoming Sunday Mass—people will have been sitting for an hour. Given that you are going to be asking them to sit still and quiet for another half-hour,

suggest they stand up and stretch for a moment. This is not a bathroom break or a coffee break, just a simple “stand up and stretch for a moment before we engage with the Word of God.”

GUIDING THE PROCESS

Then, when people are seated again, facilitate their transition from discussion into a time of prayer with instructions along the following lines. The points from here to the end are examples of what you might say at each stage, as well as the time approximations.

TWO MINUTES

Sit in a comfortable and upright position in which you can lightly close your eyes and still remain alert and attentive.

Take a moment to get grounded in your body. Become aware of your body in the chair and the position of your hands and feet.

To quiet the mind, take about thirty seconds to focus your attention on your breathing.

The Word of God is alive and active. Listen to it now, fully expecting that there is a message in these lines that God wants you to hear. Make your prayer that of the prophet Samuel, who said, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:9).

LECTIO

Active Listening for the Gentle Touch of God's Word

THREE MINUTES

Our reading today is from _____.

Read at a thoughtful pace. Pronounce the words carefully. Do not rush. Following the reading, allow a few moments of silence, then:

If there is a word or phrase or verse that touched your heart, that attracted your attention, you are invited to simply speak it out loud.

The lectio step is the shortest stage in the process. There is a simple statement of one or a few words without any elaboration. Do not linger here any longer than necessary, in order to allow more time for the following three phases. When you sense that adequate time has been given for everyone who wants to share to do so, move on to the meditation stage.

MEDITATIO

Meditation: How Christ the Word Speaks to Me

EIGHT MINUTES

We will now listen to the reading a second time. After we have done so, we will take a couple of minutes in silence to reflect on and interact with the particular word or phrase that “spoke” to us. Ask yourself: Where does this word touch my life today? Do I hear or see Christ speaking to me in this text?

The second reader reads the text. After a couple of minutes for silent reflection:

You are invited to briefly share something of your interaction with the word that spoke to you, with the concerns, memories, or thoughts it evokes. How is Christ reaching out to you in and through this text? Please begin your sharing by restating the phrase or verse that you have been reflecting on.

Some people in the group may sit with eyes closed, listening to what is shared by others. Some will open their eyes and look at the person speaking. It is advisable for you as the facilitator to have your eyes open to be aware of what is going on within the group. If no one speaks, be ready to “break the ice” and model what you are inviting them to do with a sharing of your own. When the available time has lapsed:

ORATIO

Prayer: What Christ the Word Invites Me to Do or Become

EIGHT MINUTES

We will now listen to the reading a third time. In the quiet following the reading, we are encouraged to speak with God, wordlessly, as we would with one whom we know loves and accepts us.

The third reader reads the text.

Pray with the word or phrase that God has given you. Let this word transform the thoughts and memories that your pondering on it has awakened. In the silence now, ask what God is calling you to do or to become.

After a few minutes of silence:

You are invited now to briefly give voice to the prayer that has arisen within you, to speak to God from the heart about what God is calling you to do or to become. Make your prayer out loud in petition, thanksgiving, or praise.

Let everyone have the opportunity to give voice to what is in their hearts, then:

CONTEMPLATIO

Contemplation: Resting in God

FOUR MINUTES

If an earlier stage of the process has been shorter than anticipated and more time is available, extend this stage to fill out the time.

We now come to rest in God’s embrace, rejoicing that God is with us in both words and silence, in spiritual activity and in inner receptivity. To anchor your attention on God’s presence, you can gently introduce a sacred word or name of God, such as “Jesus, mercy” or “Jesus, Abba.” Simply pray it silently and interiorly, with faith and love, as you rest in the security of God’s presence.

After three to five minutes of sitting in silence, the leader ends the lectio divina session with a closing prayer, including prayers for healing and intercession and the Our Father. Then complete the prayer with the Prayer after Communion from the upcoming Sunday Mass. A closing song is optional.

Here is an approximate timeline for the *lectio divina* part of the meeting:

ACTIVITY	MINUTES
STAND AND STRETCH	1
SIT AND CENTER	2
FIRST READING	1
RESPONSE	1
SECOND READING	1
SILENT REFLECTION	2
SHARING	5
THIRD READING	1
INTERIOR PRAYER	2
SHARING	5
SILENT RESTING IN GOD	4
TOTAL	25

Why We Gather for Sunday Eucharist

Contrary to the myth of rugged individualism, most people in our society like to belong. We enjoy participating in groups of many kinds. Some are useful, others enjoyable, still others strengthen us in our vocation or reinforce our values. When we make the decision to come to Sunday Eucharist we are opting into something wonderful. What are we doing when we come to Sunday Mass?

BEFORE THE MEETING: PREPARE

1 ■ In the Small Group Participant Booklet, read pages 5 to 8, “Preparing for the First Sunday of Lent.” The content will familiarize you with the material each participant will read for Meeting 1.

- Think about the three opening questions on page 5. Consider how the group will respond to them.
- Reflect on the Presentation on pages 6 to 8. Answer the “Questions for Discussion” on page 8 yourself. Then plan how you will lead the discussion.
- On page 8, read the Scripture verses designated for *lectio divina*.
- On pages 29 to 33, read the teaching on *lectio divina* prepared for group participants.
- Then read the section titled “Guide to the Eucharist: A Companion to Sunday Mass” on pages 34 to 44.

2 ■ In this Leader Guide, read the teaching titled “Leading the Practice of *Lectio Divina*” on pages 8 to 10. Go through the process in your mind to get a sense of the flow of this twenty-five-minute time of prayer.

3 ■ Ask one or two group members to read the Presentation (on pages 6 to 8 of the Participant Booklet) out loud during the meeting. If you ask two people, have one read the first half and the other read the second half of the presentation. Encourage them to practice ahead of time.

4 ■ Ask two people, a man and a woman, to read the Scripture passage out loud during the *lectio divina* session. Again, encourage them to practice ahead of time. You can enter the names of these group members in the “Log of Volunteer Readers for Each Meeting” on page 29 of this guide.

5 ■ Work with your host to ensure that the environment is set up (see item 5 under “Responsibilities of the Small Group Leader” on page 5 of this guide).

DURING THE MEETING: LEAD**8 MIN. Welcome and Opening Prayer**

Since this is the first meeting, follow these steps:

- Welcome everyone, introduce yourself, and have the group members do the same. Ask them to share one interesting or memorable fact about themselves.
- Next, sing the opening song, if your group has chosen this option, and pray the Collect for the First Sunday of Lent, found in the Participant Booklet. As the leader, pray the prayer yourself at this first meeting. You can get others to pray it at subsequent meetings.
- After the prayer, spend a short time talking about the importance of faith sharing and about confidentiality in the group.
- Then give an overview of the flow of the meeting.
- To segue into the topic, draw attention to the paragraph at the top of page 5 in the Participant Book. It is a brief statement of the theme for the first part of your meeting. It's intended to catch people's attention and focus them on the subject they will discuss. You may read it out loud yourself, invite a group member to read it, or ask the group to read it quietly. This should not take more than a minute.

10 MIN. Response to the Opening Questions

Start with Question 1 and invite the group to respond, identifying themselves by name the first time they speak. Then follow the sequence of the questions. This section stimulates feelings, thoughts, and ideas that will prepare the group to listen attentively to the presentation.

The Opening Questions are designed to help the participants tap into some aspect of their own experience before they hear input that may be new to them. These questions should increase the

group's self-knowledge and camaraderie, and get them thinking about the topic concretely. Some of the questions are fun, some serious, and some invite story telling. All of them relate to the subject under consideration. Normally, you will not need to cover all three questions. If there has been a lively exchange over one or two of them in the time allotted, that is enough. This week, however, the third question is an important one. Be sure you get to it, surfacing at least one or two examples from the group. Summarize briefly what you are hearing at the end of this section.

10 MIN. Presentation

The person (or persons) you asked ahead of time reads the entire Presentation out loud. The group members can either listen to the reading and/or follow along in their booklets.

30 MIN. Discussion

Respond to the Discussion Questions, beginning with the first one and following them in sequence. Be attentive to the group's interests, spending enough time on each question and allowing for additional comments or questions. Be sure to keep the conversation on the level of faith sharing. Use your judgment and be flexible if the group wants to spend more time on one question or discuss a question out of sequence.

The first discussion question always gives the participants an opportunity to talk about what they have heard and how they are reacting to what they've heard: i.e. what it means to them. The remaining questions are designed to take the discussion further, applying these insights to concrete actions and decisions. During this discussion, participants may refer back to the Presentation and people's responses to the Opening Questions. The goal of this section is for the

participants to make connections and to integrate what they have heard with their lived experience.

If anyone in the group has not spoken at all during this discussion, you may want to invite this person to offer a response or insight. If they decline, accept their decision gracefully; no one should be pressured to respond. But sometimes the more quiet or introverted participant will appreciate being asked.

To wrap up this discussion, you might summarize briefly or ask one or two participants to do so. Then, if anyone in the group has something to add or to clarify, allow a moment for this.

Take a one-minute stretch break at this point before entering into the *lectio divina* prayer. Ask the group members to stand in place, stretch, and then take their seats. Include this short break in each of the subsequent meetings.

25 MIN. Praying with the Sunday Mass readings using the *lectio divina* method

Follow the sequence that Fr. Ryan discusses on pages 8 to 10 of this guide, "Leading the Practice of *Lectio Divina*." Be attentive to the time allotted for each phase of it.

5 MIN. Closing Prayer

After you finish the twenty-five minutes of *lectio divina*, move right into the Closing Prayer. Begin by inviting the group to offer prayers of intercession and healing. This can be similar to the Prayer of the Faithful at Mass. Then say the Our Father together. Conclude with you reading the Prayer after Communion for the upcoming Sunday Mass, which is found on page 8 of the Participant Booklet. A closing song is optional.

2 MIN. Announcements

- Remind the group to prepare for the next meeting by reading the material for the Second Sunday of Lent, found on pages 9 to 12 of the Participant Booklet.
- Ask for a volunteer to pray the Collect prayer for next week.
- Ask for one or two volunteers to read the Presentation for next week.
- Ask for two volunteers, a man and a woman, to read the Scripture passage during the *lectio divina* session next week.
- Invite the group to read or read again the section on *lectio divina*, on pages 29 to 33 of the Participant Booklet.
- Suggest that everyone read or read again some or all of the section titled "Guide to the Eucharist: A Companion to Sunday Mass" on pages 34 to 44 of the Small Group Participant Booklet.
- If you wanted to include music but were not able to set this up for your first meeting, see the section on page 7 of this guide titled "Music as an Option."

Refreshments and social time after the meeting.

AFTER THE MEETING: REFLECT

Take a few minutes after the meeting has ended and the social time is over to reflect on your experience. You may do this alone or with another group member if you prefer to dialogue. Use the questions below to guide you.

- 1 ■ Looking back on the meeting, which question in the discussions seemed to engage people the most? Why?

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- 2 ■ What happened during the *lectio divina* time of the meeting? Is there anything that you could do differently at the next meeting to enhance this prayer experience?
- 3 ■ Which part(s) of the meeting, if any, seemed to drag or not work well? Why? Can you think of a way to correct this situation?
- 4 ■ Are there any challenges or issues that you cannot resolve yourself and need to discuss with the parish leadership team small group coordinator?
- 5 ■ Other thoughts: