“Friends in the Lord”

“Abide in me as I abide in you”- John 15:4

Fired by the Ignatian Vision, we imagine that a deep desire shapes and guides our becoming. At the heart of who we are, the passion fuels our yearning for a deep sense of self, connection, and mission. Fullness of life involves harnessing the fire.

CLC, as “school of the heart”, helps to elicit, befriend, and focus this passion. This entails honest and heartfelt conversations with Jesus in prayer and with one another in a dialogue that engages the world in its present circumstances. This education helps us to get the heart of the matter through transparency, vulnerability and trust.

We in CLC@LMU are “Friends in the Lord,” a community that helps one another imagine and pursue a way of life that pursues wholeness and holiness. Together, we seek holistic ways of living that integrate spirituality, community and mission.

Our logo depicts this hope. We strives to be a community of people schooled in the heart, bound by our common familiarity and devotion to the heart of Christ.

“Sent on Christ’s Mission”

In the Western Region Logo, we imagine the letters from the logo of the worldwide movement being surrounded by a contemporized Ignatian outburst. The “P” over the “X” stands for the Greek “Christus”. The inserted “M” illustrates the patronage of Mary, the mother and closest disciple of Jesus. We open ourselves to the spiritual rays of God’s love that shine forth in each person, forming a link among our rich human diversity and signifying our claim to community. The rays reaching outward depict our communal call of a faith that does justice, always in service with and for others.
A CLC Coordinator’s Prayer

God Father, Jesus Brother, Spirit Sanctifier,
grant me reverence for Your presence
in those I serve.
Let me look with Your eyes, to see as You see.
Let me feel with Your heart, to love as You love.

Grant me patient listening,
to respect Your work in people,
to await Your timing,
to get out of Your way.

May I
lead gently,
challenge tenderly,
affirm deeply;
without judging,
without meddling.

Just as You are a mystery,
this person before me
is a mystery.
let my relationship with him or her
be a mystery to be lived out,
rather than a puzzle to be worked out;
a hand to be held,
rather than a mind to be fathomed;
an adventure to be undertaken,
rather than a problem to be solved.

Let me cherish Your mysterious presence in others,
and delight in them as you do.
Before them, before You, I am on holy ground.

Amen.
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Acknowledgements

This CLC Manual is a work in progress, the fruits born from the experience of the CLC@LMU community from 1991-2010.

We are grateful for all those who made this manual possible:
All members and leaders who contributed.
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The Jesuit Community at Loyola Marymount University

This manual is a labor of love waiting to bear fruit within the lives of current and future CLC members and others in the Ignatian family in “helping souls” for the greater glory of God.

As you engage its contents in facilitating that sacred encounter between the Creator and human creatures,
use it as much (or as little) as you find it helpful to others.
Please give concrete feedback and suggestions to enhance its capacity as an instrument of divine love and grace,

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.

CLC@LMU

On the feast of St. Ignatius, July 31st 2010
How to use this CLC Manual

1. Be familiar with the CLC Manual and its content.
   - The manual is divided into 5 main sections. See table of contents for details.

2. Section 1: Leadership Formation & Resources.
   - Contains all of the leadership resources from the Leadership formation gatherings

3. Section 2: Meeting Ideas (Phase 1)
   - This section has 3 parts: Service, Part 1, and Part 2
   - The Service section is meant to be used any time after your group has done service. There are three meetings under each section: two of them are specific to CLC service placement and the third one is for any type of service.
   - Parts 1 & 2: each have about 12 meetings, which cover approximately one semester.

4. Section 3: Meeting Ideas (Phase 2)
   - Same as above

5. Section 4: Appendix
   - Contains all supplemental materials: scripture passages, prayers, stories, songs, etc.

6. Section 5: Misc
   - Contains list, calendar, and your notes.
How to plan a meeting

Step 1: Identify the needs
1. Pray: place yourself in the presence of God.
2. Grace to pray for: to see and cp your members as Jesus sees and cp
   - Jesus’ secret of success is to identify where people at and what their needs are and respond to them. At the same time, he empowers them to grow to where God wants them to be. (See “CLC Cura Personalis: To see and love as Jesus sees and loves” meditation below for details)
   - Ask yourself and your co-leader, “Where is our group at?” and “Where does God invite our group to go?”
   - Once you identify where your group is at and their needs, go to the next step.

Step 2: Respond to the needs
1. Keep in mind the fruits of your prayer while you plan the meetings. Your prayers and planning can take place two levels: (1) the whole semester and (2) week by week.
2. Be familiar with the meetings. Read them carefully and pay special attention to the grace to pray for in each meeting. If you need to, make an outline or highlight key points.
3. The meetings are designed with the members’ needs and desires in mind. It is hoped that members will grow through different phases. Thus, you should be familiar and keep in mind the following: CLC Mission and vision, CLC Formation Phases, CLC Meeting topics and content, CLC Meeting format, etc.
4. If for some reason your prayer result does not seem to fit with the meeting topic in the manual, you should read it again carefully and prayerfully. Then discuss with your co-leader and formation team person. This is where the discernment takes place. You might come to the conclusion that your group needs a different meeting topic, which is totally all right. Ultimately, these meetings are only the means to the end—God.

Step 3: Execute the meetings
1. Execute the plan but be flexible. Sometimes, we plan everything and God takes us in a different direction or goes beyond what we plan. God might surprise us with a different grace. The key is to facilitate with God during the meeting.
2. Check-in: with your group members monthly. Ask them for feedback: Is our group meeting your needs? Helpful? Improved? Etc. Which meeting topics have been helpful? What need to be improved? Etc.

Step 4: Review the meeting
1. Pray and reflect upon your meetings.
   - Did God give us a grace to pray for or something else?
   - How did God work during the meetings? What has been helpful? What needs to be improved?
   - Are there any topics that the group needs to return to?
   - Where does God invite our group to go to?
CLC Cura Personalis: To See and Love as Jesus Sees and Loves

1. Below is an imaginative prayer which can be helpful to foster spiritual growth in yourself or another. It can also help in letting go & trusting God.

2. Take time to be aware of God’s presence through rhythmic breathing (exhaling and inhaling slowly & fully) ……. Ask God for the grace to see with as God “sees” and to feel as God “feels.”

3. Picture the person engaged in a typical activity or set of activities that he or she normally does … … Imagine Jesus being present to the person, perhaps next to the him or her … Notice how Jesus looks at the person, … notice how Jesus sees the person’s unique needs and current struggles … See how Jesus treats the person, … … observe how Jesus cares for the person in his or her present needs and struggles… … notice how he loves the person deeply and freely … (Take 5-7 minutes just to observe Jesus looking at and relating to the person) …

4. Ask Jesus if he wants you to help him directly in caring for and loving the person. (Don’t answer for him. Allow him to respond. Try not to project your own wants) … Ask Jesus how he invites you to concretely cooperate with him in caring for and loving the person. (At times, he may invite you to indirectly love the person from a distance) … Spend time just being with Jesus, resting in him … Thank him for this time of learning to see, care for and love the person as he sees and cares.

5. You can try the same prayer to consider how God might invite you to grow in self-care or spiritual growth. Imagine seeing yourself as Jesus sees and loves you.
I. Identify College Student’s Needs

The U.S. Bishops, in their “Pastoral Plan for Ministry with Young Adults” entitled “Sons and Daughters of the Light,” identify four principal hungers among young adults: 1) healthy personal identity, 2) intimacy in relationships, 3) life-giving spirituality, and 4) meaningful work. They call for ministerial strategies that engage young adults in their hungers and provide a “vision of life based on a faith that calls each of them to holiness, community, and service.”

CLC@LMU commits to responding to these hungers. The following attempts to articulate what CLC aims to accomplish and how it lives out these goals. The description is threefold: mission and vision, goals and objectives, and CLC faith formation phases.

II. CLC’s Mission and Vision

The Mission of CLC is to help one another discover and live out our personal vocations by!

- building a community of friends in the Lord,
- finding God in all things, and
- becoming a person with and for others.

We envision CLC as a way of life, a pathway to God, which integrates the values of community, spirituality, and mission. Thus, we commit to provide a solid faith formation process that challenges all CLC members to live out CLC’s mission and way of life. The formation process consists of 3 growing phases: supporting —> faith sharing —> discerning. Our secret method is “cp” (cura personalis, care of the whole person).

III. CLC’s Goals and Objectives

A/ Goals and Objectives: By the end of 3 or 4 years in CLC, it is hoped that we will experience!

- a community of friends in God,
- God’s unconditional love for us as we are,
- how God calls each one of us to be a person with and for others, and
- the opportunity to consider making a temporary commitment to CLC

B/ 3 requirements for all CLC members: In order to achieve the goals above, all members should commit to three minimum activities:

- attending weekly meetings,
- praying the Ignatian Awareness Examen regularly (3-5 times per week), and
- getting involved in service and social justice.

C/ 3 Phases of faith formation

- Phase 1: Support group—What are you looking for?
- Phase 2: Faith-sharing group—Who is God for you?
- Phase 3: Discernment group—What is your personal vocation?
CLC Spirituality: A Pathway to God

Spirituality can be understood simply as a way of life that involves “getting to the heart of the matter,” “living with integrity,” or “becoming one’s best self.” Rooted in the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, CLC spirituality is a pathway to God that embraces continual conversion of heart, deepening attachment to Christ, and striving to become more fully alive. Seven characteristics outline this journey.

1. “Finding God in All Things”

   This favorite phrase of Ignatius points to an ease of finding God in each concrete situation of life. It presupposes openness to God in any experience, dramatic or dull, vital or trivial, such that we are willing to be shaped by God. It is the posture of seeking meaning in our own daily happenings: “Lord, how are You inviting me through this event?” “What are You trying to tell me through that person?”

2. Intimacy with Jesus

   The Spiritual Exercises is a “school of the heart” which fosters a personal knowing, loving, and following of Jesus. This intimacy with our Brother and Savior brings us to a greater identification with Christ poor and humbled, crucified and Risen. It impels us to collaborate with him in the struggle for the poor, powerless, and rejected – to befriend him in the marginalized. Heartfelt and honest conversations with Jesus in prayer and with others in dialogue ground this intimacy.

3. Following the Spirit / Tracking interior movements

   The desire to become more like Jesus and find God in all things moves us, as both individuals and as a community, to listen and respond creatively to the promptings of the Spirit. This entails attentiveness to the flow of interior moods, desires or feelings and the thoughts that accompany them. It involves both sensitivity to how God is present and acting in our lives as well as vigilance for the forces and influences that takes us away from God through personal vices, people, institutions, and cultural values, etc. Growing in awareness of inner motivations allows us to respond more lovingly to the Spirit at work in our lives.

4. Serving Out of Gratitude

   The Ignatian imagination sees “all as gift.” Our very existence, natural (in)abilities, the people, and experiences that shape who we are becoming are gifts that flow from God’s outpouring love. God who delights in me as “Beloved” labors in all aspects of my life to draw me deeper into loving union and service. The more I grow in gratitude of God’s plentiful love for me and all of creation, the more will I respond fully and generously in service of and with others. Gratitude fuels my striving to love as I have been loved.

5. Ordering Relationships

   Living and choosing in loving collaboration with Jesus inserts us more deeply into right relationships with others. We are called to foster just and loving relationships: to live with integrity in our calling to be “friends in the Lord,” to stand in solidarity with the oppressed, and to extend charity toward all. Such heartfelt and ordered relationships expand to a care for all of God’s creation. Where there is alienation or division, we are called to be reconcilers and peacemakers; where there is suffering and injustice we are called to be healers, bearers of hope, and promoters of justice.
6. Living in True Freedom

Integrating the above ideals cultivates an Ignatian way of living rooted in freedom for which we are created and called. Each of us is entrusted with a unique and particular mission in life, loved into us by God. Living out this passion means living in freedom as children of God and collaborators with Christ in building up the Kingdom. Free from fear, untruth, disordered tendencies and relationships; free to live authentically, lovingly, justly as response to God in every situation of our lives. As Jesus was free with regard to wealth, honor, and power in order to be available for the work of God, so too are we called to be free.

7. Making regular Retreats

As a retreat experience, the Spiritual Exercises are a “school for conversion of heart.” The experience facilitates a rich and powerful encounter of God through reflection, prayer and Scripture that leads a person to true spiritual freedom. This is specifically evident in:

- growing openness to the Spirit
- looking honestly at his/her areas of unfreedom
- discerning and living more fully one’s mission in life

The “full” Exercises can be experienced in two ways. The first format consists of a thirty-day silent prayer and reflection at a retreat house, accompanied by a spiritual director. The other format, commonly called “retreat in daily life” or the “19th Annotations,” takes place over a period of seven to nine months. While living in his/her present environment, the retreatant engages in daily prayer periods, and meets a director weekly (possibly with others on a similar journey). Beyond its “full” form, the Exercises shape the dynamics of other Ignatian retreats, such as five or eight day silent retreats.

In summary, the spirituality of CLC rooted in the Exercises empowers us to encounter God who comes to meet us where we are, draws us to know and love him more faithfully, and enables us to better find him in all things and in every situation of our lives.

It also challenges us to confront ourselves where we are not free, to order relationships through charity and justice, and discover Christ as a personal friend with whom we can listen to the Spirit, collaborate, and love in the least members of our societies.

All this so that we may be truly free – “to love and serve God in all things.”
### CLC Faith Formation Phases: Discovering Our Personal Vocations (updated June 23rd 2010)

**Outcomes/graces received:** By the end of Phase…, it is hoped that we will …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community:</th>
<th>Phase 1: Desire</th>
<th>Phase 2: Choose</th>
<th>Phase 3: Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/ Trust</td>
<td>a sense of home and belonging</td>
<td>building a home in CLC</td>
<td>a community of friends in God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/ Acceptance</td>
<td>1/ share our life experiences</td>
<td>1/ share our thoughts and feelings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/ Care &amp; Empowerment</td>
<td>2/ have a safe space to be ourselves</td>
<td>2/ accept each other’s lights and shadows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/ Wider CLC community</td>
<td>3/ cultivate a genuine concern for each other</td>
<td>3/ affirm and bring out each other’s gifts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/ know CLC’s history and mission</td>
<td>4/ commit to the CLC community both large and small</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spirituality:</th>
<th>Phase 1: Desire</th>
<th>Phase 2: Choose</th>
<th>Phase 3: Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/ Prayers (personal &amp; communal)</td>
<td>a meaningful relationship with God</td>
<td>God as a priority among many commitments</td>
<td>God’s unconditional love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/ Discernment</td>
<td>1/ make space for prayer</td>
<td>1/ pray outside of CLC meetings (personal and communal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/ Experiencing God</td>
<td>2/ be attentive (be aware and be able to describe our experiences)</td>
<td>2/ be reflective (describe what our experiences mean to us)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/ Understanding faith</td>
<td>3/ identify our past experiences of God and who God is for us</td>
<td>3/ reshape our images of God by recognizing God in our daily lives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/ be aware of our past beliefs and experiences of our church</td>
<td>4/ explore what and why we believe; accept our church’s lights and shadows</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission:</th>
<th>Phase 1: Desire</th>
<th>Phase 2: Choose</th>
<th>Phase 3: Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/ Service</td>
<td>to get involved in service activities</td>
<td>services and activities that lead to God</td>
<td>how God calls each one of us to be a person with and for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/ Reflection</td>
<td>1/ try out different types of service</td>
<td>1/ have immersion experiences with the poor and marginalized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/ Education</td>
<td>2/ be aware of our reactions to our servings</td>
<td>2/ see connections between faith and service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/ Living faith</td>
<td>3/ gain knowledge and exposure to social issues in our area</td>
<td>3/ know how to theologically reflect in light of church teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/ be grateful for what we have</td>
<td>4/ choose a lifestyle consistent with our faith</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1/ develop a strong personal prayer life |
2/ be discerning (listen to how God is leading us) |
3/ allow God to love us as we are |
4/ explore our places in the church
### Phase 1: Desire

**Part 1: Come & See**

1. Come and see
2. Becoming one body
3. Recognize God in our daily journey
4. Ignatius & You
5. CLC & You
6. Be still … and listen
7. Our hands, God’s hands
8. Hidden Treasures
9. Semester in Review

**Part 2: Choose**

1. Summer in Review
2. My Covenant w God
3. Who Am I?
4. My Inner Journey
5. I Am Special
6. Me and Myself
7. Me and Others
8. My hands, God’s hands
9. Me and God
10. Am I searching for God?
11. Semester in Review
12. Gratitude and Affirmations

### Phase 2: Choose (con’t)

**Part 3: Encountering Jesus**

1. Summer in Review
2. Who is Jesus for me?
3. Why Jesus?
4. Jesus’ birth and early years
5. Jesus’ hidden years
6. Jesus’ teaching and mission
7. Jesus’ miracles
8. Jesus’ passion and death
9. Jesus’ resurrection and Ascension
10. Am I following Jesus?
11. Year in Review

### Phase 3: Experience

**Part 1: Spiritual Autobiography**

1. Summer in Review
2. Who Am I?
3. My Inner Journey
4. I Am Special
5. Me and Myself
6. Me and Others
7. My hands, God’s hands
8. Am I searching for God?
9. Semester in Review
10. Year in Review

### Part 2: Prayer

1. Review of life
2. My relationship with God
3. My image of God
4. How do I pray?
5. Encounter God in the poor
6. Time w Jesus
7. Examen 1: praising God
8. Examen 2: choosing God
9. Examen 3: planning w God
10. Gratitude
11. Year in review
12. Year in Review (part 1)
13. Examen 3: planning w God
14. Gratitude
15. Year in Review (part 2)

### Part 2: Who is God for me?

1. Review of Life
2. My hopes, God’s Desires
3. Who Is God for Me?
4. Through My Own Life Experiences
5. Through Other People
6. Through Creation
7. Through Creation and justice
8. Through Scripture
9. Through Prayer
10. Through the Church
11. Year in Review (part 1)
12. Year in Review (part 2)

### Part 4: Holy Spirit & the Church

1. Review of Life
2. Your experiences of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost)
3. Discernment of Spirits
4. Your experiences of the Church
5. Church Mission and Identify
6. How to celebrate your faith?
7. How to live out your faith?
8. Can I live fully without church or faith community?
9. Can I live my faith without social justice?
10. Discernment (God reveals our vocation)
11. Year In Review

### Part 2: Discerning My Vocation

1. Review of Life
2. What is Vocation?
3. Discernment of spirits
4. Discerning Heart
5. Discerning my desires
6. Discerning my needs
7. Discerning my talents
8. Principle and Foundation
9. Incarnation
10. Call of the King
11. The CLC way of life
12. Year in Review
CLC Meeting Format

We meet regularly for one hour each week to become closer “friends in the Lord,” to nourish our relationships with God and to develop more discerning hearts toward continuing Christ’s mission in the world. Alternatively, some of our groups meet bimonthly for one to two hours.

Inspired by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, we try to incorporate elements of the Exercises, particularly the Examen in our group meetings.

The format of meetings will vary, but the following are typically included in ongoing groups:

I. OPENING PRAYER (5’): Can include praying for a grace – asking for the gift the group is seeking through the meeting.

II SHORT CHECK-IN (5’): this is meant to be brief. Each person shares how s/he is doing at the moment. S/he will have more opportunities later in each meeting to expand upon what s/he has shared. The following are a few suggested questions for coordinators to choose from. Please choose only one.

- How are you doing right now?
- How do you feel when you come to the meeting?
- How has God been present/active in my life since the last meeting?
- How have I found God (or been found by God) in prayer? In service? In studies?

III FOCUS EXERCISE (40’): includes reflection, extended prayer, activity, and sharing. The sharing usually goes through two rounds: (1) Personal Sharing: members share their prayers during the exercise; (2) Listening deeper: after the first round of sharing, each person briefly reflects back to the group their experiences of the first sharing. This might include reflection on the following questions:

- What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
- How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comforted? Anxious? Curious?
- Is there anything you would like to share after having heard another person share?

IV MOVING FORWARD (5’)

- Wrap Up: thank members for their openness and participation.
- Action: the heart of CLC spirituality is to grow. Every week, we suggest one concrete action for group members to pray about and/or act on.
- Housekeeping: discuss any business
- Announcements: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V CLOSING PRAYER (5’): This could include petitions for each other or special concerns.
Section 2: Meeting Ideas (Phase 1)

Building a Community of Friends in the Lord

Service Reflection
1. Marycrest Manor Reflection
2. Mother of Sorrows Reflection
3. Service & Theological Reflection

Part 1: Come and See
1. Come and see
2. Becoming one body
3. Recognizing God in our daily journey
4. Continuing the Tradition: Ignatius and You
5. Building the tradition: CLC and You
6. Be still…and listen
7. Our hands, God’s hands
8. Hidden treasure
9. Semester in Review

Part 2: Paying Attention to God
1. Review of life
2. My Relationship with God
3. My Image of God
4. How do I pray?
5. Encounter God in the poor
6. Time with Jesus
7. Examen 1: Praising God
8. Examen 2: Choosing God
9. Examen 3: Planning with God
10. Gratitude
11. Year-End in Review
Service Reflection
#1 Marycrest Manor

Service Reflection

**Scripture**

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.” Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’” He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. Jesus said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.” (Mk 5:24b-34)

*Lk 7:11-17* Raising of the Widow’s son  
*Mk 7:25-30* Syrophoenician woman

**Note:** this meeting is meant to be used after a group’s service experience at Marycrest Manor.

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

I. **Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: to discover my true self through service and encounter God in elderly.

Use the grace or the suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: After reading the scripture above, say, “Lord Jesus, when you were living here on earth, you had such a great love and compassion to widows, children, and those who are sick. Grant us your heart of compassion and help us to become instruments of your healing. May our hands touch the wounded hands. May our ears listen to those who are lonely and forgotten. May our eyes see the beauty of the elders. And may we learn from their wisdom. Amen.”

II. **Short Check-In (5’)**

III. **Focus Exercise (40’):**

Materials Needed:

- Introduction:
  1. feel free to use any song to set the tone, e.g., Grandma’s Hands (by Bill Withers)
  2. explain the topic and purpose of the meeting.
Exercise: Ignatian Meditation (15’)

1. Invite members to use Ignatian Meditation to pray with the suggested passage (Mk 5:24b-34). If needed, you can go over its method on page….in their journal booklet. Or you can guide your group through the meditation yourself.
2. Give them a period of silence to meditate the scripture passage. Play some instrumental music during prayer.
3. Invite them to pray and answer the Marycrest Manor Reflection questions on the next page.

Sharing

Listening deeper
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comforted? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after having heard another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: Thank members for their openness and participation.

Action: invite members to research on Elder Neglect and Abuse in America
http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/ncearoot/Main_Site/index.aspx

Announce: Topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Invite members to mention the names of the elders whom they serve out loud and pray for them. Conclude the prayer with the Prayer of Generosity by St. Ignatius of Loyola:

Lord, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
To give and not to count the cost;
To fight and not to heed the wounds;
To toil and not to seek for rest;
To labor and not to ask for reward,
Except to know that I am doing your will.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

We are to become identified with Christ’s mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives…(GP #8). Each of us receives from God a call to make Christ and his saving action present to our surroundings…(GP #8A).

The more I grow in gratitude of God’s plentiful love for me and all of creation, the more will I respond fully and generously in service or and with others. Gratitude fuels my striving to love as I have been loved. (CLC spirituality)
MaryCrest Manor Reflection Questions
Ignatian Meditation (Lectio Divina)

1/ Ponder and reflect on the passage (Mk 5:24b-34). Notice any words, images, or phrases that strike you. Stay there and ruminate on them. Let God’s spirit guide your thinking, imagining, remembering, etc. What words, images, or phrases touch you? Describe.

2/ What were some of your feelings and thoughts that emerged during prayer? What do you think Jesus is saying to you personally?

3/ Recall and describe your service experience: Who were you with? What did you do? What were some of your feelings and thoughts before the service? On the way to service? During the service? After the service?

4/ Were there any moments that you felt a sense of peace, joy, or consolation? Describe.

5/ As you look back to your service experience, how did it affect you? Were there any questions or thoughts that arose within you? How do you see your service experience helping you to live out CLC way of life?
Marycrest Manor

Marycrest Manor is a not-for-profit 57-bed skilled nursing center founded in 1956 by James Francis Cardinal McIntyre for the care of the frail and elderly. Marycrest offers a unique blend of 24-hour skilled nursing care in a tranquil, serene and home-like setting.

The Carmelite Sisters and staff at Marycrest provide loving care which respects and fosters personal dignity and happiness. We provide services which are supported by the richness of the Catholic faith based upon our unswerving commitment to uphold the dignity of each human person. We value the rich wisdom and experience of our elders and believe that the latter years of life are meant to be "lived to each person's fullest capacity.”

The History of Marycrest Manor

Founded in 1956 by Francis Cardinal McIntyre, Marycrest Manor is a skilled nursing facility with the special difference of religious environment and orientation.

The home has operated continuously from 1956 to the present day.

In 1962, Marycrest Manor came under the direction and sponsorship of the Religious Sisters of Charity from Ireland.

In 2002, the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles assumed sponsorship.

Contact Information
Marycrest Manor  10664 St. James Drive, Culver City, CA  90230
310.838.2778
Elder abuse refers to intentional or neglectful acts by a caregiver or trusted individual that lead to, or may lead to, harm of a vulnerable elder.

**What are the types of elder abuse?**
Elder abuse includes physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse as well as financial or material exploitation, neglect, and abandonment.

**How Many Older Americans are Abused?**
- A minimum of 1 in 9 of Americans over age 60 have experienced some form of elder abuse. Some estimates range as high as 5 million elders who are abused each year.
- For every one case of elder abuse reported to authorities, at least five more go unreported.

**Who Commits Elder Abuse?**
- In almost 90% of elder abuse and neglect incidents, the perpetrator is a family member.
- Two thirds of perpetrators are adult children or spouses.

**Who are the Victims?**
- Women and the very old are most likely to be abused.
- Some 14,000 allegations of abuse, neglect or gross negligence are reported in nursing homes.
- Close to 50% of those with dementia experience some form of abuse.
- By 2030, the numbers of older Americans over age 85 – those most at risk for abuse – will more than double. Reported cases of elder abuse are already on the rise.

**What are the Effects of Elder Abuse?**
- Elders who have been abused have a 300% higher risk of death when compared to those who have not been mistreated.
- While likely underreported, elder financial abuse costs older Americans more than $2.6 billion per year.
- Financial abuse accounts for nearly 21% of the allegations of mistreatment investigated by Adult Protective Services. It is the third most common substantiated form, following neglect and emotional/psychological abuse.

**What is the Federal Government’s Current Role in Combating It?**
- Less than 2% of federal abuse prevention dollars go to elder mistreatment efforts. 91% is spent on child abuse and 7% on domestic abuse.
- There are currently federal laws governing domestic violence and child abuse, but none related to elder abuse.
Scripture

And people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.” Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them. (Mk 10:13-16)

Jn 6:9-10 “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, ….”

Note: this meeting is meant to be used after a group’s service experience at Mother of Sorrows.

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to discover my true self through service and encounter God in children.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: After reading the scripture above, say, “Lord Jesus, we thank you for giving us an opportunity to work with these children. Tonight we gather to reflect upon our experiences with them. We recall your word, ‘let the children come to me.’ Help us to bring children to you, give them a sense of hope, and encourage them to grow into the persons they are called to be. May we learn from them a sense of wonder and trust in you. Amen.”

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’):

Materials Needed: journal booklet or handout

Introduction:

1. feel free to use any song to set the tone, e.g., “Greatest Love of All” (by Whitney Houston)
2. explain the topic and purpose of the meeting.
Exercise: Ignatian Meditation (15’)

1. Invite members to use Ignatian Meditation to pray with the suggested passage (Mk 10:13-16). If needed, you can go over its method on page….in their journal booklet. Or you can guide your group through the meditation yourself.
2. Give them a period of silence to meditate the scripture passage. Play some instrumental music during prayer.
3. Invite them to pray and answer “Mother of Sorrows” Reflection questions on the next page.

Sharing

Listening deeper
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comforted? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after having heard another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: Thank members for their openness and participation.

Action: invite members to do research on Education and Poverty

Announce: Topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Invite members to mention the names of the children whom they serve out loud and pray for them. Conclude the prayer with the Prayer of Generosity by St. Ignatius of Loyola:

Lord, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
To give and not to count the cost;
To fight and not to heed the wounds;
To toil and not to seek for rest;
To labor and not to ask for reward,
Except to know that I am doing your will.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

We are to become identified with [Christ’s] mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives…(GP #8). Each of us receives from God a call to make Christ and his saving action present to our surroundings…(GP #8A).

The more I grow in gratitude of God’s plentiful love for me and all of creation, the more will I respond fully and generously in service or and with others. Gratitude fuels my striving to love as I have been loved. (CLC spirituality)
**Mother of Sorrows Reflection Questions**  
*Ignatian Meditation (Lectio Divina)*

1/ Ponder and reflect on the passage (Mk 10:13-16). Notice any words, images, or phrases that strike you. Stay there and ruminate on them. Let God’s spirit guide your thinking, imagining, remembering, etc. What words, images, or phrases that touch you?

2/ What were some of your feelings and thoughts emerged during prayer? What do you think Jesus is saying to you personally?

3/ Recall and describe your service experience: Who were you with? What did you do? What were some of your feelings and thoughts before the service? On the way to service? During the service? After the service?

4/ Were there any moments that you felt a sense of peace, joy, or consolation? Describe.

5/ As you look back to your service experience, how did it affect you? Were there any questions or thoughts that arose within you? How do you see your service experience helping you to discover and live out your truest self?
'Mother of Sorrows has really changed'
The South Los Angeles parochial school almost closed 10 years ago. But with a renovated campus and renewed emphasis on academics, it's attracting attention -and new students.

By R. W. Dellinger

During the late 1990s, Mother of Sorrows School in South Los Angeles certainly lived up to its name. Enrollment had dropped from 250 students in 1994-95 to less than 150 in 1999. Teachers were laid off and those who remained often weren't paid on time. Classes were combined; test scores were low. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur who started the parochial school in 1948 were gone, and there was a constant turnover in administration and faculty. The whole school community seemed to be suffering from the same inner-city malaise that pervaded its gang-plagued neighborhood.

Today, after an extensive summer renovation financed by the John and Dorothy Shea Foundation, Mother of Sorrows has gone from being a nondescript barred-up building at Main Street and 87th Place to a two-toned Carolina blue-and-white academy of urban learning.

Double-paned bullet-proof windows, frosted on the bottom to keep prying eyes from looking into classrooms, were installed, along with a dozen security cameras. Bathrooms were gutted with new plumbing installed, while the entire school was rewired. New whiteboards and bulletin boards went up in brighter freshly-painted classrooms. On a walking tour around the two-story structure - which once housed a convent upstairs that's now vacant - principal Jennifer Beltramo can barely contain herself.

"The reaction of the kids has really been incredible," she reports, with little of her east Tennessee accent left intact. "The students have always had a very strong pride in the school. Now all the renovations have just renewed their pride. They want to tell other people and invite them in. "Parents have started telling their friends and families to bring their kids here, too. We've had at least 10 families come in off the street to enroll their children, which has never happened before. And the older kids have lockers for the first time, which is like heaven for middle school students because it feels like high school. But all the students understand the gifts that have been given to them and really appreciate it."

Enrollment is up to 210 students, with 85 percent being Latino and the remaining 15 percent African American and Belizean. Almost all are poor, qualifying for free or reduced-priced lunches and tuition assistance from the Catholic Education Foundation and other sources. Boys wear black polo shirts and slacks, girls have a more traditional look in their plaid uniforms and white blouses.

Emphasis on academics
But there's something else besides a spruced-up renovated campus that's attracting new students to Mother of Sorrows School, according to Beltramo. And that has to do with a renewed emphasis on academics, from kindergarten through eighth grade, with plans to open a pre-school next year. When the principal came to Mother of Sorrows seven years ago as a student-teacher in the University of Notre Dame's ACE (Alliance for Catholic Education) program, only 20 percent of graduates were going on to Catholic high schools. Last year the figure jumped to 80 percent. She says that's crucial because at the two local public secondary schools, John C. Fremont and Locke high schools, nine-out-of-ten students don't graduate, with only 10 percent going to college.

Beltramo credits the Sisters of Charity, who have sponsored Mother of Sorrows for nearly nine years, for the dramatic turnaround. The religious community has not only sponsored the school, but also supplies a development director, counselor and kindergarten aide today. "The Sisters serve the poorest of the poor, following St. Vincent de Paul's mission," she says. "So they want to make sure that every family, regardless of their income, can find a way to have a quality education for their children. So it's not only helping with scholarships to get into the school, but helping to make sure that the school is able to provide a good education, whether it's through resources or textbooks or teachers."
In fact, this school year Mother of Sorrows has five new teachers. Besides two from ACE, there are two graduates of Loyola Marymount University's PLACE (Partners in Los Angeles Catholic Education) Corps and one from Response Ability, a ministry of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus Sisters. Beltramo stresses that she wanted to put together a strong energetic faculty dedicated to working in the inner city.

'Everything works!'
Robert Parra has taught seventh- and eighth-graders at the school since 1992. When he came to teach algebra and social studies, Mother of Sorrows was so impoverished there wasn't even a planned-out yearly budget. He recalls the principal taking money from his own wallet to buy school supplies, an example Parra and many other teachers followed over the years. The teachers, he maintains, were the ones who really kept Mother of Sorrows going.

"It's a completely different school," the veteran educator observes. "This year is the first year it's ever looked this good. When the kids wrote letters to the benefactors, they said, 'It looks like a real school now. The windows work. The heater and air conditioner work. Everything works!'"

Parra agrees with his current principal that the other big change has been the number of students being able --- with tuition assistance from individuals, the Sisters of Charity, the Catholic Education Foundation and other sources --- to go on to Catholic high schools such as Verbum Dei, St. Mary's Academy, Serra, St. Bernard and Notre Dame Academy.

"We're providing avenues to them for a good high school education," he notes. "We're helping to prep them to pass the high school exams, especially the writing part. That wasn't happening before, but it's happening now. The only thing I wish is that all this had happened 10 or 15 years ago."

Rounding a corner
A schoolyard sampling of students readily concur.

"It's gotten better because the Shea Foundation renovated it and the Sisters of Charity donated a lot of things," reports Jesslin Chacon, a seventh-grader. "Plus we have a new lunch program." The latter especially got the 12-year-old's attention because she wants to go to Bishop Conaty-Our Lady of Loretto High School with the career goal of becoming a gourmet chef.

Classmate Ruby Brione, who's hoping to attend Notre Dame Academy and eventually become a lawyer, was impressed by another change: "I think it's safer, because with the cameras around school now and bullet-proof windows we have more security."

What excites Ivan Veliz, a self-proclaimed computer nerd, is the more advanced computer lab. "And the teachers try to get you more prepared," he points out. The 13-year-old wants to go to Serra High School.

"With the new colors, our school stands out more," says Jose Herrera, 14. "And we've got lockers." The eighth-grader has applied to Verbum Dei and Loyola high schools.

Another eighth grade student, Leon Floyd, also likes the new sharp colors, both inside and outside the building. But he says there's also a new spirit at the parochial school. "Mother of Sorrows has really changed," he reports. "Like from teachers to a new paint job and lockers and new classrooms. A lot of things have happened here."

These comments bring a smile to Jennifer Beltramo's face. "I definitely believe we've rounded a corner," she says. "I still think we have a ways to go. But the entire school is moving forward."
11 Facts about Education and Poverty in America

1. What is the Poverty Line, anyway? According to the U.S. Census Bureau, it's a family of four (two adults, two children) that earns less than $19,157.

2. Still, $35,000 is basic-needs budget for a U.S. family of four (two adults, two children), as calculated in An Atlas of Poverty in America.

3. In 2006, nearly 37 million people Americans lived in poverty; 12.8 million were under the age of 18.

4. In the US, poverty is still tied to race: 33% of black children live below the poverty line while 10% of white children do.

5. School budgets are tied to property taxes. This is why schools in poor neighborhoods get about half as much money per student than schools in affluent neighborhoods.

6. Three-quarters of the nation's schools (almost 60,000) report needing repairs, renovations or modernization in order to reach good condition.

7. Not surprisingly, most schools in bad condition are in cities where at least 70% of students are below the poverty line.

8. Urban students are less likely to graduate than their suburban counterparts. High school graduation rates are 15% lower in the nation’s urban schools when compared with those located in the suburbs.

9. Graduation rates are also lower among certain groups, particularly ethnic minorities and males. In 2004, the graduation rate among African-Americans was 53.4% compared to 76.2% for whites.

10. In 2004, 17 of the nation's 50 largest cities had high school graduation rates lower than 50%, with the lowest rates reported in Detroit (24.9%), Indianapolis (30.5%) and Cleveland (34.1%).

11. Children of poor families are up to six times more likely to drop out than wealthy children.

Are you inspired to make a difference?
Scripture
“Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the LORD. (Isaiah 65:20-25)
1 Cor 9:4,7-10 Do we not have a right to our food and drink?
Matt 5:10-12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

Coordinators Note: This meeting is useful after any service or immersion activity that the group has done together or individually. Invite members to bring pictures or items from the day with them to this meeting to form a reminder of the experience as it is being prayed over.

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)
Grace: To listen for what God is cultivating in me as I have served others, through a service experience or immersion.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Theological Reflection
Materials Needed: prayer journal, pictures from the service or immersion experience

Introduction:
The purpose of this activity is to give us the opportunity to step back and allow the experience we had to sink in. There is a value in doing acts of service. However, in CLC we believe that service is linked to our faith and to the life of our community. Service is not an extra thing that we add on if we have the time, but rather an outgrowth of our relationship with God and one another as a community. By allowing ourselves to be transformed by experiences with the poor and marginalized, we can learn more about who we are, what we are passionate about, and how God is calling us to respond to the needs of the world. It is also a reminder to us that we are a part of one human family created in God’s image and likeness. When one part of the body suffers, we all suffer.
Exercise: Using Theological Reflection to Explore a Service or Immersion Experience

1. Recall the service event or immersion experience. Try to call to mind the people whom you met there—those who were the beneficiaries of the work of the agency, the regular volunteers, the employees. It may be helpful to have pictures from the experience to look at during the meditation and prayer time.

2. Name and describe any feelings that emerge for you as you think about the experience. Was there anger, sadness, frustration, confusion, peace, joy? No feelings are “good” or “bad”. Just allow all possible feelings to come to the group. Keep the focus on emotions rather than on analyzing the process or the events or the emotions themselves.

3. Identify what factors might contribute to these feelings only after the feelings have been named. You may want to think about what factors contribute to the situation - who holds power? What systems are in place or are lacking that allows such a situation to happen? Are there economic or social issues at play? Use the page in your journal Tenants of Catholic Social Teaching to help you identify some of these factors.

4. Spend some time as a group sitting in prayer, asking the question, “God what are you saying to me right now about this situation?” Where was God present? Where did you feel distance or absence from God?

5. Share with the group what you feel at this moment. How are you feeling about the service experiences or immersion now that you have spent time in prayer with them?

6. Pray together as a group. Allow each person to speak a prayer aloud for how they are being invited to respond at this moment. It could be a prayer of surrender, a prayer of petition, a commitment to take action in a certain concrete way, or a decision to learn more about an aspect of the social issues involved.

Listening deeper

1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?

2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comforted? Anxious? Curious?

3. Is there anything you would like to share after having heard another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: Are there any underlying issues that remain unsettled or unresolved?

Action: Is there any concrete action that we feel called to take on personally or communally in response to what has been shared here?

Announce: Topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events. Plan for the next service opportunity.
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Jesus dreamt
Of a world
Of one
Global family
Each person
Relationship
Friendship
And blood family
Being a gift
From his Abba
Attempting to
Overcome the
Barriers of
Race, colour,
Sex and creed.
Locally we
Come together
With our individualities
Our languages
And cultures
Separate and distinct....

But there are
The obstacles
Of not knowing
Each other
And therefore
Experiencing a degree
Of unsureness
And fear.
We pass different ones
Sometimes as shadows ...
Each of us
So tends to
Be centred on self
And yet how
We hunger for
Change, conversion
Of our hearts
And minds.

...adapted by John Veltri from a poem by T. McKillop

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

Living with the poor and sharing their condition, Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity in our human family. (GP #1)

The Community urges us to proclaim the Word of God and to work for the reform of structures in society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims from all sorts of discrimination and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor… Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ. (GP #8c)
Tenants of Catholic Social Teaching

Visit WWW.USCCB.ORG for more information

1. **Life and Dignity of the Human Person:** We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

2. **Call to Family, Community, and Participation:** We work to protect the social structures of families and communities that seek the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor.

3. **Rights and Responsibilities:** Every person has a fundamental right to life and to human decency and we have a responsibility to protect these rights for all members of our society.

4. **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:** Jesus models for us the value of the poor and instructs us to make the most poor and vulnerable a priority and their protection a necessity.

5. **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers:** People are not made to serve the economy. We must protect the dignity and rights of workers and ensure respect, just wages, and the right to organize in ways that protect and promote God’s creation.

6. **Solidarity:** We are members of one body in Christ, brothers and sisters in one human family, regardless of race and creed.

7. **Care for God’s Creation:** We are meant to care for the Earth and show respect for the Creator by our good stewardship. We must also care for the poor who are most affected when we as a society damage the environment.
Part 1:

Come & See
#1 Come and See

Scripture

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. (Jn 1:35-39)

Matt 18:18-20  “Where two or three are gathered.”
Matt 11: 28-31  “Come to me all you who are weary.”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

Introduce yourself and welcome the group. Briefly explain the goal of this meeting; to start to get to know each other.

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: for openness in responding to this invitation from God to come together and form a community based on faith and growth.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: After reading the scripture above, say, “Lord, we thank You for gathering us here. We believe You are here with us, for You promised to be present wherever two or three are gathered in Your name. We ask You to open our hearts to Your love and blessings. Help us to grow in friendship and companionship with one another and with You. Amen.”

II. Short Check-In (5’)

We will do a short “check-in” every meeting. Briefly share how you are feeling right now. The purpose of this part of the meeting is to help the group know how we are feeling at the meeting. We will have more opportunities later in each meeting to expand upon what we have already shared.

III. Focus Exercise (40’): The M&M Game; CLC logo

Materials Needed: M&Ms or other candy, CLC logo sheets and a small colored poster. (The logo sheet is in the CLC manual. Make enough copies for your group accordingly.)
Introduction: We have two activities for this meeting, both will help us share some things about ourselves with each other.

Exercise #1: M&M game (15’)
Have each member grab some M&Ms. It’s up to each person to decide how many to get. Wait until everyone in the group is done. For each piece of candy share something about yourself. (Coordinators should demonstrate first: mention your name, major, year at LMU, where you are from, hobbies or interests, etc.)

Exercise #2: CLC logo sheet (“people” only) (15’)
Pass out copies of the 8.5 x 11 CLC logo sheet. Have every member cut out their own (coordinators too!) and have each person write his/her first name on the face. Invite people to share on these topics as they tape their figure to the poster (see figure to right):
1. Your name: its significance, how your parents came up with it, etc.
2. Why did you come to CLC? What draws you to it?
3. Have you ever experienced any small spiritual support groups at retreats, school, or church?

When each member is done, explain that the poster will be kept for the year as a visual representation of the group. Mention to the group that we’ll do more with it and you will explain more about its meaning next week.

NOTE TO LEADER: Keep the completed poster and bring it back for next week’s exercise (when the logo will be completed and explained).

Listening deeper
Explain this portion of the meeting serves to help us listen to what has been going on within each of us as individuals and as a group. It is not meant to be an evaluation of the meeting, but rather, a way to help us be more attentive to how we have been responding to what has been shared and how God is moving in the group. The questions you might ask in this portion of the meeting will deepen over time and will depend on what has been taking place in each meeting. The following are just suggestions.

1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person?
IV. Moving Forward (10’)

☞ Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

☞ Action: the heart of CLC spirituality is to grow. Every week, we’d like to suggest one thought or action for you to think and pray about or act on. For week one, we invite you to pray over the question Jesus asked his disciples, “What are you looking for?” In this context, for example, what do you hope to get out of CLC? We will be discussing this topic more next week.

☞ Housekeeping: discuss the following (add more as needed).
   1. Meeting time, location, length, and stress CONFIDENTIALITY
   2. Meeting format: discuss in general the CLC format of opening prayer, checking-in, focus exercise, and prayer. Do not go into too many details. Give an overview.
   3. Meeting content: ask if there are particular themes or challenges members would like to discuss over the semester or year.
   4. Group contact person: ask for a volunteer to help coordinate events, reminders, etc.

☞ Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer: (5’)

*The tradition of CLC calls us to form communities of faith, trust, and growth. “Our Community is made up of Christians: men and women, youth and adults, of all social conditions.” (General Principles 4). As we close our time together tonight we remember that we are a part of a larger community of faith here at our school, in the CLC community, in our faith and in the world. We will close by praying in thanksgiving for each one of us here. Please join me in saying the name of the person to your left as we pray together.*

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**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*Members come together on a regular basis in a stable local community (GP #11).*

*Our community is made up of Christians: men and women, youth and adults, of all social conditions (GP #4).*

*Truly it is a retreat in everyday life (SpEx #19).*
Scripture

I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one. In them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. (Jn 17:20-24)

I Cor 12:12-25  “We were all baptized into one body...and we are all given to drink of one Spirit.”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

If you have any new members, introduce yourself to them and have them introduce themselves. Briefly have the other group members share their names and something short about themselves. Explain the purpose of this meeting: to get to know each other and our hopes for CLC.

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: for openness of heart and willingness to give of oneself in building a faith community of trust and love in Christ

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below:

After reading the scripture above, say, “Lord, we thank you for all those gathered here. We believe You are here with us, for You promised to be present wherever two or three are gathered in your name. We ask You to open our hearts to Your love and blessings. Help us to become one with You and each other. Amen.”

II. Short Check-In (5’)

(If needed, re-explain this: We will do a short “check-in” every meeting. Just briefly share how you are doing right now. The point of this part of the meeting is to help us know how we each are feeling when we come to the meeting. We will have more opportunities later in each meeting to expand upon what we have shared.)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): The Cross Puzzle {CLC logo (part 2)}

Materials needed: snacks, the cross puzzle (in your manual) and poster from last week

Introduction: last week, we started to share some things about ourselves. This week, we will continue sharing, specifically by completing last week’s exercise in order to help us learn more about what CLC and each other’s hopes in CLC.
Exercise: the cross Puzzle {CLC Logo (part 2)}
1. **The Cross**: cut it into pieces according to the number of people in your group and give each person a piece.
2. **Write hopes and concerns**: on the front of the paper, ask each person write a word or phrase that captures his/her hopes for CLC. On the back, have each member write a word or phrase that expresses their concerns or reservations about CLC.
3. **Tape all the pieces together** into the shape of a cross. Tape the entire cross in the center of the poster from last week (just as the CLC logo depicts). Make sure all the hopes are on one side and the concerns on the other.

Sharing
1. Let everyone take a minute to look at the picture in silence.
2. Ask: “What do you see?” (Allow each member to share. Listen to responses carefully and repeat key words or phrases).
3. If necessary, ask questions to deepen the discussion, such as, “Are there any commonalities in what we’ve written or shared?”
4. Explain the cross puzzle symbolizes that we each bring our hopes and concerns to this community and to Christ. By bringing what is in our hearts to this community, we can become one in our relationship with God.
5. **The Heart**: write common hopes and concerns on the heart at the center of the cross. Explain that Christ cares for and guides each of us individually and also as a group.
6. **Explain the meaning of the CLC logo as follows.** You paraphrase the explanation

*CLC is a “school of the heart.” Don’t we all long for a safe place where we speak honestly about what’s going on in our lives? Without fear, without judgment? Together, we can help each other get to the “heart of the matter” through transparency, vulnerability and trust. When we share from the heart, it goes to the heart. Everything you share stays in this group. Remind them about confidentiality.*

*CLC involves becoming “Friends in the Lord” As our mission statement claims, “CLC is a community that helps one another to discover and live out our personal vocations. The CLC community strives to imagine a way of life that pursues wholeness and holiness. Together, we seek holistic ways of living that integrate the three values of community, spirituality and mission.*

*The CLC logo depicts this hope. We strive to be a community of people schooled in the heart, bound by our common familiarity and devotion to the heart of Christ. Being connected to Christ is the glue that binds each of us in strong and deep ways. This will take time, of course, but with God’s grace and our openness, it can become a reality.*

*Preview: We will continue getting to know one another and what CLC is about in the next few weeks.*
Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you listened to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling during the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after having listened to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action: reach out to the lonely.
Explanation: Since tonight we talked about our hopes and desires to connect, to belong, and to become one body in union with Christ, for this week we invite everyone to reach out to someone who might be lonely or feel marginalized. Help them to feel connected with Christ’s body.

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer: (5’)

Encourage everyone to pray in thanksgiving for each other by praying for the person to their left.

(Coordinator should begin first) I would like to pray in thanksgiving for...

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Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

…we assembly in community those feel a more urgent need to unite their human life in all its dimensions with the fullness of their Christian faith… (GP #4).

As a primary means of formation and continuing growth, members come together on a regular basis in a stable local community, to assure a deep sharing of their faith and human life, a true community atmosphere and a strong commitment to mission and service (GP#11).

The Spirit-inspired love respects the uniqueness of each personal vocation and enables us to be open and free, always at the disposal of God (GP#2).
#3 Recognizing God in Our Life Experiences

## Scripture

I raise my eyes toward the mountains. From where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. God will not allow your foot to slip; your guardian does not sleep. Truly, the guardian of Israel never slumbers nor sleeps. The Lord is your guardian; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. By day the sun cannot harm you, nor the moon by night. The Lord will guard you from all evil, will always guard your life. The Lord will guard your coming and going both now and forever. (Psalm 121)

*Rom 8: 18-27*  
“The Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness...:*

*Lk 12:22-31*  
“Do not worry...your Father knows [what] you need.”

## Introduction & Welcome (1’)

If you have a new members, briefly go through introductions. I always thank each member for coming to the meeting. Briefly explain the purpose of this meeting: to recognize God in our life experiences.

### I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to look honestly at how God has challenged and strengthened us in order to better recognize the Spirit’s presence and action in our daily activities.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer.

### II. Short Check-In (5’)

(If needed, explain this again: We will do a short “check-in” every meeting. Just briefly share how you are feeling right now. The point of this exercise is to help us know how we feel at the start of the meeting. We will have more opportunities later in each meeting to expand upon what we have shared.)

### III. Focus Exercise (40’): Mountain Motif

**Materials Needed:** snacks, Awareness Examen bookmarks, CLC Commitment handout blank pieces of paper for Mountain motif.
Introduction (paraphrase)

One hallmark of our CLC spirituality is to find God in all things. We all hunger to feel and experience God’s presence and action in all aspects of our daily lives, not just in Sunday worship, CLC meetings or specific “religious” activities. One way to recognize God’s presence in our daily lives is to pay attention to our life experiences. Ignatius’ Awareness Examen helps us to do so. Now, we will go through a sort of Awareness Examen using an exercise called the Mountain Motif. (Explain that they can also use any image that speaks to them instead of a mountain: the ocean, a freeway, a path, etc….)

Exercise: Mountain Motif

Instructions: using the provided markers, draw a mountain or other image.
1. On the face of the mountain: write the names of people who have affected your life in a positive way and have helped you with life’s obstacles, even if you are still struggling with these particular challenges.
2. On the uphill slope of the mountain: briefly jot down the different obstacles you have had to overcome.
3. On the top of the mountain: write the different lessons you have learned as a result of the obstacles you have overcome. What do you think God is saying to you through these people and obstacles?

Sharing:
1. Allow the group to look at and silently reflect on the mountain for a moment.
2. Invite members to share what they wrote. Remind the group that everything shared in CLC is confidential. It should not be shared outside the group.
3. At the end of the sharing, encourage each member to thank the people that helped them on their journeys. Point out that times of trials may draw out of us greater strength and growth that we may not realize we have or undergone.
4. Ask if these painful experiences may reveal specific invitations to deepen our spiritual growth.

Listening deeper
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling during the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening another person share?
IV. Moving Forward (10’)

❖ Wrap Up: over the next few weeks we will continue to explore the idea of the Awareness Examen and how it is a helpful tool in forging a way of life that integrates spirituality and our life experiences. You can continue to practice using the steps of the Examen (see handouts/ bookmarks) as a way of recognizing God in each day. This is a exercise that you can adapt to your own needs. The mountain is one means of self reflection, there are many others.

1. Thank them for attending the first 3 meetings. Let them know they are free to stop if CLC is not for them. Remind them that you are available to talk one-on-one if they would like to discuss what they are thinking or feeling about the group, etc.
2. Pass out the Examen bookmarks and CLC Commitment handout (encourage them to pray over it and be ready to make a commitment for the rest of the year after the 5th meeting).

❖ Action: spend 5 minutes with God (possibly using the Examen)

❖ Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer: (5)

God loves us more in deeds than in words. The Examen is an awareness exercise about how God is present and active in our concrete life experiences. Please close your eyes and recall how you felt throughout the meeting. What emotions have arisen, what thoughts and feelings do you feel called to address more deeply or continue to explore in prayer? (pause)

If you have any special intentions which you wish to voice aloud, please do so.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

Spiritual Consolation may be defined as moments when we find ourselves so on fire with the love of God that we can freely give ourselves over to God and there is no competition with any human person or any created thing. Rather we begin to see everything and everyone in the context of God, the Creator and Giver of all good gifts (SpEx. #316a).

By faith, we know that God is always with us in the strength and power of grace…(SpEx. #320)

This law of love, which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts, expresses itself anew in each situation of our daily lives,…respects the uniqueness of each personal vocation,…enables us to be open and free…[and] challenges us to see our responsibilities…and seek progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and dignity for all (GP #2)
What does it mean for me to commit to CLC?

The mission of CLC is help one another discover and live out our personal vocations by building a community of friends in the Lord, finding God in all things, and becoming a person with and for others.

I. Community: Building a Community of “Friends in the Lord”

I will try to open my heart to my small CLC group by:

- Trust – I will share with members in my group honestly what is happening in my life.
- Openness – I will receive and accept as gifts the things that my group members share, respect different points of view and actively listen to everyone.
- Confidentiality – I will keep what others share within the group and trust what I share will also be kept in confidence.
- Regular attendance – I will attend all group meetings; and/or notify the Coordinator(s) whenever I cannot attend to a meeting.
- Building Community - I will try to participate in campus wide CLC monthly and special events (such as Taize, CLC Retreat, CLC Barbeques, etc)

II. Spirituality: Finding God in all things

I will be attentive to my relationship with God/Christ. This means taking the time:

- to pray Ignatian Awareness Examen on a regular basis.
- to attend Sunday Worship.
- to attend a spiritual retreat once a year (as a retreatant).
- to grow in knowledge of Ignatian spirituality as the heart of the CLC charism

III. Mission: Becoming a Person with and for Others

I will strive to give of myself, in order to deepen my spirituality of being sent. This can be done through the following:

- regular service/outreach to others, especially those most in need;
- raise greater awareness of justice issues locally, nationally and worldwide;
- reach out, at least once a semester with my group, to serve and stand in solidarity with the poor, marginalized, or outcast.

Belong. Believe. Become
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<td>1. I ask for the light of the Holy Spirit to see through God’s eyes &amp; feel with God’s heart</td>
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<td>2. What gifts have I received today that I can be thankful for?</td>
<td>2. What gifts have I received today that I can be thankful for?</td>
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<td>3. Which experiences give me life today? Which experiences are draining? How has God loved me today?</td>
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<td>5. How might I be invited to respond more fully or be more attentive to God?</td>
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#4 Continuing the Tradition: 
St. Ignatius and You

Scripture

Then Jesus said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself? (Lk 9:23-25)

*Heb 13:1-8*  
"…..Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

*Jer 29:11-14*  
“For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord...”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to grow closer to God and one another through the Life of St. Ignatius

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below:

*Loving God,* thank you for gathering us these weeks, for drawing us closer to you and to one another. *Help us through this meeting to become friends in the Lord, people who are willing to trust one another and grow in intimacy as we support one another on our daily journeys. Help us to listen to what moves us about the story of your beloved friend Ignatius and how you likewise seek our friendship.*

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): The “Ignatius Grab-bag Game”

Materials Needed: “The Life of Ignatius” handout (with enough copies for each member), picture of St. Ignatius, “Ignatius Grab-bag Game” (cards or beach ball or other item with game questions written on it, cut out the cards or prepare the item beforehand); Optional: slideshow of pictures capturing his life (make your own and need to preare this before the meeting) and a laptop.

网投 Introduction: CLC is rooted in the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order and the patron saint of LMU and all the Jesuit Universities. In order to better understand and see how CLC can be a place to grow in our own spiritual journey, we are going to spend some time this meeting learning about St. Ignatius. We’re going to briefly look at some of the main events of his life, and play a game that will help us share about our own lives in relationship to St. Ignatius.
Exercise: “Ignatius Grab-bag Game” (or “Getting to Know Ignatius Game,” etc.)
1. Place the picture of St. Ignatius in the center of the room or glue it to the paper bag so all the members can see the photo.
2. Go over the handout by verbally highlighting key points and possibly show a slideshow presentation of Ignatius (OR have members prayerfully read the “Life of Ignatius” hand out in silence.)
3. Have members take turns pulling out game cards from the paper bag (or tossing the item with the questions). It is up to you how the game progresses (i.e. answer the question you pull from the bag or that faces you as you catch the item; ask it of another member, etc.).

Sharing: the initial sharing for this meeting takes place as each person answers a question during the game. Encourage members to elaborate and not just give one-word answers.

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling during the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (10’)

Wrap Up: thank members for attending the meeting. Remind them that next week will be an opportunity to attend a meeting with other small groups and get a better sense of CLC on a wider level.

Action:
1. Continue to reflect on the CLC Commitment handout during the week.
2. Pay attention to building-names, statues and any other elements of campus related to the story of St. Ignatius and the Jesuits.

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Lord, teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, save that of knowing that I do your will.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

The most important qualities in the person who enters into these exercises are openness, generosity and courage (SpEx #5).

The Exercises are, above all, a time of intimate contact between God and the retreatant…(SpEx #2).

The purpose of the Exercises is to help us discover our real name or “personal vocation”. (Herbert Alphonso, S.J.).
Ignatius: Saint or Sinner?
We often see or hear about this great figure in the Church as a saint or a great man. We do not usually first think or hear about his addictions and struggle to find God. This short article attempts to describe his journey to find himself and his purpose in life and how God helped him to do so. Hopefully, his story can help inspire you to walk your own path to do the same.

Early Life
Ignatius was born in Spain in 1491, a year before the discovery of America. He was the youngest of 13 children and was known as Inigo. His parents died before he was sixteen, at which point he went to live with a family friend. There, he was frequently at court and became addicted to gambling, dueling, and women. Eventually, he became a Spanish soldier. During a battle against the French, a cannon ball wounded one of his legs and broke the other. He returned home to heal from his injury.

Dreamer
During the long months of his recuperation, Ignatius asked for romance novels and chivalry books to pass time, but there were none available. His home had only a copy of the life of Christ and a collection of saints’ lives. Desperately, he began to read them. The more he read, the more he daydreamed to be like them, which made him feel peaceful and satisfied. At the same time, he continued daydreaming about winning a noble lady’s heart in court, which left him restless and unsatisfied. This experience was not only the beginning of his conversion but also the beginning of his “discernment of spirits,” a prayerful decision-making process that he began to develop.

Seeker
After regaining his health, Ignatius decided to go on a journey for his spiritual growth and explore his dream. He left Loyola and went to Montserrat, where he spent three days writing down all his sins and went to confession. He knelt praying all night in vigil, left his sword and knife at the altar to symbolize giving up his old life, gave away his fine clothes to a poor man, and dressed himself in rough clothes with sandals and a staff. At daybreak, he continued his journey towards Barcelona but stopped along the river Cardoner at a town called Manresa. There he spent the next ten months.

Prayer
Ignatius’ first months at Manresa were filled with profound spiritual consolation, a sense of peace and God’s love for him. He volunteered to help the sick in a hospital, begged for food, and slept wherever he could. Each day Ignatius spent seven hours in prayer and read his favorite book, The Imitation of Christ. Whenever he experienced consolation and gained some insights about God, he wrote it down in his spiritual journal.
Tortured Soul

After months of consolation, Ignatius began to experience desolation. He felt that God was totally absent from his life. The whole idea of conversion and the desire to turn his life over to God seemed impossible. Ignatius tried to pray and fast more to regain the joy and consolation that he once had experienced. But, it was all in vain! He was on the brink of desperation and suicide. Fortunately, he did not give in to this dark period. Slowly, he again began to experience the comfort of grace.

Mystic

When peace returned to his tortured soul, Ignatius had some mystical experiences. When the church bells rang, he felt like his soul soared skyward like an eagle. Everyday objects and experiences became images and symbols of God’s presence for him. On one occasion, he clearly saw how Jesus Christ was present in the Eucharist. Once during prayer, he had a powerful vision of the humanity of Christ. These experiences strengthened his faith so much so that he said that if there were no Bible, he would still be convinced of God’s existence and love for him.

Transformed Person

One September afternoon, while he was walking along the Cardoner River, Ignatius had an extremely enlightening experience that forever impacted him. The experience helped him to understand many things, spiritually as well as intellectually, about God and life. Later, he mentioned that all the enlightenments of his life combined “would not, in his judgment, be as great as what he experienced on that occasion.”

Spiritual Guide

Ignatius was overwhelmed by his enlightenment at Cardoner. He saw clearly how the risen Jesus and his kingdom were truly real and active among us. He also saw how we all struggle to experience God in our lives and to fight the battle between good and evil in the world. Thus, he wanted to share his own experiences of God and ways we can “find God in all things.” This is one of the central characteristics of Ignatian spirituality. It is especially evident in his prayer of the Awareness Examen. He also wrote a book which helps others discover their personal vocations called “The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.” It is upon these exercises that CLC is based.

University of Paris

After many years of helping others to experience God, Ignatius discovered that he needed to further his education to better serve others. During his studies, he continued helping others to find God and discern their vocations in life. He found a small group of friends in his dorm, including Francis Xavier, Peter Faber and James Lainez. They helped one another to discover their calling and purpose in life. They eventually founded a community called the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1540. By the time of Ignatius’ death in 1556, thirty-five Jesuit colleges had been established in Europe. LMU is now one among twenty-eight Jesuit universities in the U.S. and one of ninety Jesuit colleges world-wide.
Ignatius Grab-Bag Game

1/ Family: Ignatius was born as Inigo de Loyola in Spain in 1491, a year before the discovery of America. He was the youngest of 13 children. His parents died before he was 16, when he went to live with a family friend.

Questions:
1. Where and when were you born? Is there anything significant about the place and time?
2. How many family members do you have? Who do you feel closest to in your family?

2/ Ignatius’ talents and addictions: Ignatius’ gifts were dueling and horse riding. However, he was very addicted to gambling and women.

Questions:
1. What are your unique talents?
2. Is there anything you particularly struggle with that you feel comfortable sharing?

3/ Cannon Ball Experience: During battle, a cannon ball wounded one of Ignatius’ legs and broke the other. During his recuperation, two books that changed his life were The Life of Christ and The Life of the Saints.

Questions:
1. Have you had any “cannon ball” experiences that made you pause and question life and God?
2. Are there any books that have “changed” your life or outlook in life?

4/ Dreamer: Ignatius daydreamed about being a knight and winning a noble lady in court. He also daydreamed about being a saint.

Questions:
1. What do you usually daydream about?
2. What is your dream right now at this point in your life?

5/ Seeker: After regaining his health, Ignatius decided to go on a journey to encourage his spiritual growth and explore his dream. He left Loyola and went to Montserrat, where he went to confession, held an all-night vigil, left his sword at the altar symbolizing leaving his old way of life, and gave away his clothes.

Questions:
1. Are there any important questions or decisions you have to make right now?
2. Have you ever given up something meaningful in order to pursue a new of different goal?
6/ Prayer: Ignatius’ first months at Manresa were filled with profound spiritual consolation. He volunteered to help the sick in a hospital, begged for food, and slept wherever he could.

Questions:
1. How do you pray?
2. When was the last time you experienced consolation, a sense of God’s presence, of being at peace and alive?

7/ Restless Heart: After months of consolation, Ignatius began to experience desolation. He felt that God was totally absent in his life. Ignatius tried to pray and fast more to regain the joy and consolation that he once had. But, it was all in vain! He was on the brink of desperation and suicide.

Questions:
1. Have you ever felt God did not listen or respond to your prayer? Explain.
2. When was the last time you felt depressed and cried?

8/ Transformative Experiences: When peace returned to his tortured soul, Ignatius had some transformative experiences. These moments strengthened his faith to the point that he said that if there were no Bible, he would still be convinced of God’s existence and love for him.

Questions:
1. How would you describe your relationship with God right now?
2. At what point in my life was my faith strongest? How do I account for this?

9/ Spiritual Guide: During his time, Ignatius often shared with others his own experiences of God. He wrote a book, which helps others discover their personal vocations called “The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.” It is upon these exercises that CLC is based.

Questions:
1. Have you ever talked or shared with others about your experiences of God? Describe.
2. If you had to give advice or write a book about spirituality, what one or two things would you say?

10/ Education: After many years of helping others to experience God, Ignatius discovered that he needed to further his education to better serve others. During his studies, he found a small group of friends who helped one another to discover their calling and purpose in life.

Questions:
1. What do you think about Ignatius’ outlook of education, that “he needed to further his education to better serve others”?
2. How do your friends help you discover your calling and purpose in life?
St. Ignatius of Loyola
All the Lord's followers often met together, and they shared everything they had. They would sell their property and possessions and give the money to whoever needed it. Day after day they met together in the temple. They broke bread together in different homes and shared their food happily and freely, while praising God. Everyone liked them, and each day the Lord added to their group others who were being saved. (Acts 2:44-47)

*Col 3: 12-17*  
“Clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything...”

*Jn 17:20-21*  
“I pray that all may be one...”

NOTE: This meeting is best carried out by bringing together two or more small CLC groups for a joint session.

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

**I. Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: to imagine how we are called to live out God’s dream for us in a community at a local and global level.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer or use the attached *Prayer With the General Principles of CLC*.

**II. Short Check-In (5’)**

Invite each person to introduce themselves (if you are doing a joint meeting) and to briefly share feelings about how their last week has been.

**III. Focus Exercise (40’): CLC Video and Commercial**

**Materials Needed:** *Prayer With the General Principles of CLC, History of CLC@LMU*

Handout (enough copies for however many groups will be present), CLC video

Φ Introduction: remind participants the goal of this meeting is to learn more about CLC in order to decide if they want to continue in CLC.
Exercise: CLC Video, CLC commercial
1. Show the CLC video (Borrow a copy from the CLC office or go to the CLC website http://www.clcyya.org/trailer.htm)
2. Give out the History of CLC@LMU handout.
3. Divide participants into their usual CLC small groups to do a commercial trying to sell CLC to a skeptical friend. They have 90 seconds to perform their commercial and it should include at least one point about Ignatius, one point about CLC@LMU, and three additional facts about CLC. Have coordinators act as the judges and give prizes to the best groups.

Sharing: (have members from different groups share one-on-one)
1. What did you see in the video that really touched you?
2. Were there any images in particular that struck you? How did they affect you?
3. How do you see yourself fitting into this picture?
4. How do you imagine our group growing in this way of life?

Deep Listening: (whole group together, ask for just a few volunteers to share)
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (10’)

Wrap Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action: continue to reflect on the CLC Commitment handout during the week. Or visit some of the websites for CLC@LMU, the Western Region, CLC-USA or even the World CLC.

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.

REMINDER: Next week we will have an open and honest discussion about how CLC is going and whether or not you feel you would like to commit to it for the rest of year.

V. Closing Prayer: (5’)

Dear Lord, thank you for this gift of life. As we continue this journey, help us to discover our own pathways to our true selves, to one another, and to You. Help each of us in the coming week, in prayerful deliberation, to imagine how that path might include others, specifically through CLC, either in this group or another community of faith. Amen.
The way of life of Christian Life Community commits its members, with the help of the community, to strive for a continuing personal and social growth which is spiritual, human and apostolic. Finally, each one assumes responsibility for participating in the meetings and other activities of the Community, and to help and encourage other members to pursue their personal vocation, always ready to give and to receive advice and aid as friends in the Lord (GP #12).
Praying with the General Principles of CLC

**Song:** Open the Eyes of My Heart  
*A Reading from the General Principles of CLC*

Reader 1:  
Our Community is made up of Christians:  
men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions  
who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely  
and work with him for the building of the Kingdom,  
who have recognized Christian Life Community  
as their particular vocation within the Church.

Reader 2:  
We aim to become committed Christians  
in bearing witness to those human and Gospel values  
within the Church and society which affect the dignity of the person,  
the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation.

Reader 3:  
We are particularly aware of the pressing need  
to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor  
and a simple life style which expresses our freedom and solidarity … by opening hearts to conversion and struggling to change oppressive structures.

Reader 4:  
To prepare our members more effectively  
for apostolic witness and service, especially in our daily environment, we assemble people in community who feel a more urgent need  
to unite their human life in all its dimensions  
with the fullness of their Christian faith  
according to our charism, rooted in the Spiritual Exercises.

Reader 5:  
We seek to achieve this unity of life  
in response to the call of Christ  
from within the world in which we live.  
The Lord invites us to intimacy with Him,  
and to collaborate with Him in His mission  
of announcing the Good News and promoting God's Reign.

Reader 6:  
Thus, our life is essentially a calling that is personal, communal  
and apostolic.

*Optional: Now I invite you to share a word or phrase that best summarizes your reaction to this reading.*
**History of CLC@LMU**

"On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." – John 20:19-22

1540 St. Ignatius of Loyola founded the Society of Jesus and developed the *Spiritual Exercises* to help a person discern his or her mission in life through powerful personal experiences of God.

1563 Jesuit teacher, Jan Leunis, formed a group of students at the Roman College to explore a way of living out of the *Spiritual Exercises* in everyday life. They were called to spread the good news through their community bonds and by reaching out to others in mission. These groups came to be known as “Sodalities” or “Marian Congregations” after Mary, the first disciple of Jesus and became prominent on many renaissance university campuses. Lay students were attracted to his way of experiences spirituality in daily life.

As the organization grew during the 17th century, the nature and vision of the original inspiration gradually faded. It was not until 1922 that these Marian Congregations took the first steps towards a return to their core spirituality and identity. In 1948 the Congregations developed a clear statement of vision.

1967 The movement took a decisive turn and a new name: Christian Life Communities (CLC). Marked by a clear set of General Principles, these communities expanded beyond their Catholic roots to include Christians from other denominations. Over the next thirty years the world community of CLC has worked to embody this tradition as a community of disciples around the world who came together in local, national, and world settings for prayer and mission.

1991 Under Father Jim Erps SJ, CLC@LMU began with one group that met bi-monthly. In the 1990s there grew to be about 25 groups on campus with the support of many Jesuits as well as Sr. Peg Dolan, RSHM.

2000, Fr Tri Dinh, SJ joined LMU Campus Ministry. Between 2000 and 2005 the organization grew to becoming a cohesive unit comprised of more than 50 groups involving 500 diverse members. Its growth has been fueled by the Spirit’s formation of animated and fun-loving leaders who embody the CLC Way of Life in a manner that is both attractive and imaginable.

Since 2004, CLC@LMU has offered its resources, training manuals and leadership formation programs nationally to other schools and communities that are interested in Young Adult CLC. Several alumni of the program have gone into national leadership as well as into leadership in the CLC programs on other campuses.

2011, CLC@LMU is shaped by a student run Executive Council (ExCo) and a student Formation Team that work with the Campus Ministry staff to form additional adult and student leadership for CLC@LMU.

*CLC is essentially a group of “friends in the Lord” who come together to support one another, deepen their own spirituality, and serve their local and world communities.*

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44
#6 Be Still… and Listen

**Scripture**

When a large crowd gathered, ..Jesus spoke in a parable. "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path and was trampled, and the birds of the sky ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky ground, and when it grew, it withered for lack of moisture. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell on good soil, and when it grew, it produced fruit a hundredfold." After saying this, he called out, "Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear." (Lk 8:4-8)

*Rev 3:20*  
"Listen! I am standing at the door knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door….”

*Ps 95*  
"….If today you hear his voice...Do not harden your heart…”

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

**I. Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: to open our hearts to listen attentively to God within and through those around us.

Use the grace or suggested scripture passage above to develop an opening prayer.

*Loving God, we ask for a listening heart and open ears. Help us to be a healing and supportive presence to one another. Help us also to experience listening as a form of prayer, a way of loving, a means of growing closer to You and one another. Amen.*

Reflect on the quote:

“Friends united in prayer know no separation” St. Francis de Sales

**II. Short Check-In (5’)**

**III. Focus Exercise (40’): Prayer Partners**

**Materials Needed:** “Active Listening Praxis” handout (enough copies for your group members)

- Introduction: emphasize the importance of listening in our daily conversation.

- Demonstration of active listening
  1. Role-play to demonstrate good and bad listening habits. (You need to prepare with your co-leader or a member beforehand).
  2. Ask members to identify the good and the bad listening habits.
Exercise: active Listening Praxis
1. Pass out “Active Listening Praxis” handout to each member and briefly go over it.
2. Have members break into pairs and find a quiet space in the room or nearby.

Sharing
Invite members to share their experiences with the group.
1. How would you describe your experiences as a listener?
2. What was it like to share given how your partner was listening?
3. What has been your experience of CLC so far?
4. Would you like to make a commitment to stay in CLC for the rest of the year?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation. Mention that the way in which we listen to others gives us clues about the way we listen to God in prayer.

Action: Prayer partners: One concrete way to listen and support one another is to have a prayer partner. We will pair off and, as prayer partners, do two things: (1) pray for one another at least once during the week, (2) get together with for lunch, coffee, etc. We will switch partners each week.

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Encourage members to lift up petitions for their prayer partners, then close with this:

_Loving God,_
_Let us cherish your mysterious presence in others._
_And delight in them as You do._
_Let us look with Your eyes, to see as You see._
_Let us feel with Your heart, to love as You love._
_Grant us patient listening,_
_With tenderness and compassion,_
_With deep affirmation and gentle challenge._
_We thank You for the opportunity to listen to Your Word_ 
_Spoken through our voices as we shared,_
_Through our partner as we listened._
_Please help us to take the risk to give of ourselves_ 
_In honest conversations with one another. Amen._
Active Listening Praxis Handout (20 minutes)
(for Freshmen group)

1. Decide which prayer partner will be the listener and which will be the sharer:

2. The **sharer** quietly prays: The **listener** quietly prays:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Honesty and Openness</th>
<th>For Compassion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I pray for the gift of openness, Lord, I ask for the ability to share my feelings with another With honesty, And for the knowledge that no one is making a judgment about my life, Even if this makes me uneasy. And in all this I experience the joy of knowing, That in relationships I am loved by You, The God of love.</td>
<td>I pray for the gift of compassion, Lord, I ask for the ability to enter into the feelings of another With love, And for the generosity to make no judgment on another’s life, Even if this tries my patience. And in all this I experience the joy of knowing that in compassion I am like You, The God of compassion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The listener begins by asking the following questions one at a time for **5-7 minutes**.
   - How has your relationship with God changed since you started school?
   - How are you dealing with the stress being at school and away from home, etc.?
   - How would you describe your experiences with CLC so far?
   - Do you see yourself wanting to commit to CLC for the year?

4. Both the listener and sharer give honest, concrete & brief feedback for **2-3 minutes**, using the following format as a guide:
   - The listener reflects first, asking:
     - How was I present to the person?
     - How was I empathic understanding and caring?
     - Which skill(s) could I be more attentive to?
   - The sharer reflects:
     - Did I feel that I was being understood?
     - What was helpful about the listener’s presence, behavior or questions?
     - What could have been more helpful?

5. Switch roles and repeat steps 2-3.

**Reminders:** Be as present as possible and don’t focus too much on applying the skills. Please return to the large group in 20 minutes.
Active Listening Praxis Handout (20 minutes)
(for groups beyond the first year)

1. Decide which prayer partner will be the listener and which will be the sharer:

2. The **sharer** quietly prays: The **listener** quietly prays:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Honesty and Openness</th>
<th>For Compassion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I pray for the gift of openness, Lord,</td>
<td>I pray for the gift of compassion, Lord,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask for the ability to share my feelings with another</td>
<td>I ask for the ability to enter into the feelings of another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With honesty,</td>
<td>With love,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And for the knowledge that no one is making a judgment about my life,</td>
<td>And for the generosity to make no judgment on another’s life,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even if this makes me uneasy.</td>
<td>Even if this tries my patience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And in all this I experience the joy of knowing, That in relationships I am loved by You,</td>
<td>And in all this I experience the joy of knowing that in compassion I am like You,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The God of love.</td>
<td>The God of compassion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The listener begins by asking the following questions one at a time for **5-7 minutes**.

   - How would you describe your relationship with God?
   - What are the challenges? The joys?
   - What concerns you about your faith?
   - How would you describe your experiences in CLC?
   - Do you see yourself wanting to commit to CLC for the year?

4. Both the listener and sharer give honest, concrete & brief feedback for **2-3 minutes**, using the following format as a guide:

   - The listener reflects first, asking:
     How was I present to the person? How was I emphatic (understanding) and caring? Which skill(s) could I be more attentive to?
   - Then the sharer reflects: Did I feel that I was being understood? What was helpful about the listener’s presence, behavior or questions? What could have been more helpful?

5. Switch roles and repeat steps 2-3.

**Reminders:** Be as present as possible and don’t focus too much on applying the skills. Please return to the large group in 20 minutes.
Scripture

Sing out, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth, break forth into song, you mountains. For the Lord comforts his people and shows mercy to his afflicted. But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me." Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you. See, upon the palms of my hands I have written your name; your walls are ever before me. (Is 49:13-16)

Jn 13:12-16 “If I….have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.”
Matt 25:37-40 “…. whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did it for me.”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to serve humbly and generously, out of gratitude for the ways God touches our lives through the hands of others.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below:

*God help us to be grateful for the way in which You have loved and cared for us through other people. Help us to be Your hands to others. Teach us to be humble servants, doing Your work in the world around us. Make us generous with our gifts and help us to use our talents for with and for You. Amen.*

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Hand-tracing activity

Materials Needed: CD Player and the song “Hands,” by Jewel (or a similar song) and copies of the lyrics, paper (two for each person), pens, scissors and markers

 gloves  Introduction: explain today we will use a song to help set the tone for the meeting. Listen to the words of a song, such as Jewel’s “Hands,” and ask the group to reflect on the words as they listen. Either provide them with a blank piece of paper for journaling as they listen or a copy of the lyrics on which they can mark key words or phrases for discussion. After the song, invite them to take 5-10 minutes to reflect on specific people who have served and cared for them.
Exercise: hand-tracing activity
1. Invite group members to trace their hands on the provided pieces of paper.
2. On the palm of the hand, have them write the names of people who have loved, cared for and served them.
3. On the fingers, have them write the names of people they have served.
4. Have them cut the hands out.

Sharing
When every member has completed their hand, invite them to reflect and share on the following suggested questions:
1. In what ways have these people loved and cared for you?
2. How has their influence in your life shaped how you love and serve others?
3. How might your loving and serving others be an act of faith? How might you be an extension of God’s hands in your service to others?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling during the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap Up: Mission is one of the three pillars in CLC (community, spirituality, mission)
- Begin to discuss possible group service projects (e.g., Feeding the Hungry, etc.)

Action:
(1) Invite members to imagine with God how they can best serve others around them this week, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized. Next, come up with a concrete action to do.
(2) Switch prayer partner

Announce: topic for next meeting; ask everyone to bring an item that is really meaningful and important to them (e.g., photo, heirloom, gift, etc.)

Announce: upcoming CLC events.
V. Closing Prayer: (‘5)

As St. Teresa of Avila says,

“Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

God, fill us with overflowing gratitude so we may
better discern Your call and become more willing
to do Your work. Teach us humility and to
compassionately serve others.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

We are to become identified with [Christ’s] mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives…(GP #8). Each of us receives from God a call to make Christ and His saving action present to our surroundings…(GP #8A).

[The] Spirit-inspired love respects the uniqueness of each personal vocation and enables us to be open and free, always at the disposal of God. It challenges us to see our responsibilities and constantly seek answers to the needs of our times…progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and dignity for all (GP #2).

The more I grow in gratitude of God’s plentiful love for me and all of creation, the more will I respond fully and generously in service or and with others. Gratitude fuels my striving to love as I have been loved (CLC spirituality).
Hands (by Jewel)

If I could tell the world just one thing
It would be, we're all okay
And not to worry
'Cause worry is wasteful and useless
In times like these

I won't be made useless
Won't be idle with despair
I will gather myself around my faith
For light does the darkness most fear

My hands are small I know
But they're not yours, they are my own
But they're not yours, they are my own
and I am never broken

Poverty stole your golden shoes
But it didn't steal your laughter
And heartache came to visit me
But I knew it wasn't ever after

We'll fight, not out of spite
For someone must stand up for what's right
'Cause where there's a man who has no voice
There ours shall go singing

My hands are small I know
But they're not yours, they are my own
But they're not yours, they are my own
and I am never broken

In the end only kindness matters
In the end only kindness matters

I will get down on my knees, and I will pray
I will get down on my knees, and I will pray
I will get down on my knees, and I will pray

My hands are small I know
But they're not yours, they are my own
But they're not yours, they are my own
and I am never broken

My hands are small I know
But they're not yours, they are my own
But they're not yours, they are my own
and I am never broken

We are never broken

We are God's eyes
God's hands
God's heart
We are God's eyes
God's hands
God's heart
We are God's eyes
God's hands
God's eyes
We are God's hands
Scripture

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroys, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroy, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. (Mt 6:19-21)

Prov 2:4-5  “If you seek [Wisdom] like...hidden treasures search her out: the will you understand …”
Lk 18:22  “You lack of one thing: sell all you have……you shall have treasure in heaven…”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to become more aware of the love of God and others through the things in this world and what we value.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: God, in becoming one of us, You tangibly revealed Yourself in flesh and blood. You entered into this world and made it possible for us to know You in this world. We thank You for all the gifts and treasures You have given us. Give us the grace of openness to become more aware of Your love and that of others through the things in this life and what we value in it. May our sharing of our objects help us to know each other more deeply and to become “friends in You.” Amen.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Hidden Treasure

Materials Needed: Members’ objects

❖ Introduction: make sure everyone has brought an object representing something important about him/herself, e.g. picture, heirloom, special gift, etc. If a member forgot to bring an object, invite him/her to draw the object on a sheet of paper.
Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

Consider God’s gifts to me. God creates me out of love and desires nothing more than a return of love on my part. So much does God love me that even though I turn away and make little response, this Giver of all good gifts continues to be my Savior and Redeemer (SpEx #234).

The more I grow in gratitude of God’s plentiful love for me and all of creation, the more will I respond fully and generously in service or and with others. Gratitude fuels my striving to love as I have been loved (CLC spirituality).

Sharing: invite everyone to spend a few minutes in prayer (with some instrumental background). Suggested questions to pray and share:
1. How did you get this object? (Did you buy it? Did someone give it to you?)
2. What were some of your feelings when you got it?
3. Why is this object so important to you?
4. Why were you inspired to bring this particular object today? What image, grace, or experience could God be reminding you of?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap Up: draw upon examples of was shared in the meeting and tie them into your understanding of Ignatius’ view of the things in this world: “All the things in this world are gifts from God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily” (Ignatius’ First Principle and Foundation).

Action: invite the group to pray over the question, “are there any ways God is inviting me to share my gifts, material or otherwise, with others at this time?”

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.

REMINDER: If this is your last meeting before Christmas break, make sure that you all agree with a meeting time and place for next semester.

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Encourage everyone to pray for each member by praying for the person to their left. Coordinator should begin first…. 
Jesus said to (his) disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life and what you will eat, or about your body and what you will wear...All the nations of the world seek for these things, and your Father knows that you need them...Instead, seek His kingdom, and these other things will be given you besides. Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom...For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.” (Lk 12:22-34)

Phil 1:3-6 “I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you...”
Thess. 5:16-18 “In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: for honesty and openness to look at our lives and the way we spend our time and energy.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: Lord, we thank You for gathering us here. As the semester comes to an end, our hearts are full of different emotions...excitement about Christmas break, anxiety over final exams, looking forward to going home...Help us to not to forget to be grateful for all of Your blessings in the semester. Tonight, we pray for the grace of being honest and open as we look at our lives and the way we spend our time and energies. Amen.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Time & Energy


Introduction: by looking concretely at how I spend my time and energy, I can become more aware of what I am committed to and what I am passionate about. The key question is, “how have I spent my time and energy during the past 3-4 months?”
Exercise: Time & Energy
Pass out the “Semester Awareness Exercise: Time and Energy” handout. Encourage members to imagine God sitting next to them. Use this exercise as a form of prayer for about 10 minutes.

Sharing:
Ask members if they would like to give honest feedback (both affirmations and challenges) to each person after he/she has shared. Suggested questions to generate sharing:
1. What feelings and thoughts emerged within you during the prayer?
2. Did you gain any insights about the way you spend your time and energy? Do you see any patterns?
3. If you continue to allow your time and energy to be shaped by these priorities, what kind of person do you think you will become?
4. Did you sense any invitations from God during your prayer?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling during the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation. Discuss the following:
1. How can I continue to grow during Christmas break? (See CLC habits for suggestions)
2. How can we continue to support one another during Christmas break?
3. Complete the “Mid-year and Year-end Evaluation” handouts and discuss about it.

Action: encourage everyone to carry out their responses to wrap-up questions #1 and 2.

Announce: agree on a group meeting time and place for next semester.
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Pray for each other. Concretely, have each person pray for the person on his/her left. Begin by reading the following prayer…

*Happy moments, praise God*
*Difficult moments, seek God*
*Quiet moments, worship God*
*Painful moments, trust God*
*Every moment, thank God.*

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**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*Love is shown more in deeds than in words (SpEx #230).*

*I beg for the gift of an intimate knowledge of all the goods which God shares with me. Filled with gratitude. I want to be empowered to respond just as totally in my love and service (SpEx #233).*

*Our vocation calls us to live this spirituality, which opens and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life (GP #5).*
Semester Awareness Exercise
Time & Energy

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” - Luke 12:34

Introduction: By looking concretely at how I spend my time and energy, I can become more aware of what I am committed to and what I am passionate about. How have I concretely spent my time and energy during the past 3-4 months? Such consideration might help me discover what I treasure, as well as where my heart currently lies.

**Time**
1. On which (kinds of) activities on my calendar have I spent much of my time?

2. To which (kinds of) activities have I devoted much time to that are not on my calendar?

3. How much time do I have just for relaxing, vegging, hanging out, etc.?

**Energy** - What are three things I think about the most?
1.

2.

3.

**Discovering My Treasure**
1. With whom is much of my time and energy spent?

2. When I look at how I spend time, what does it show me about my priorities?

3. If I continue to allow my time and energy to be shaped by these priorities, what kind of person will I become?
CLC Habits: living out CLC way of life

Choices → Actions → Habits → Character → Vocation → Mission → Communion with God

How might God invite me to adopt & cultivate 1 or 2 suggested habits below?

1/ Build stronger community:
   • attend all of my CLC group meetings
   • be more vulnerable, honest, and real
   • care and support one another with a love that
     empowers – helps one another discover and develop our unique gifts
     transforms – helps one another change positively
   • participate in campus wide CLC events at least once a month (BBQ, Bowling, Agape Latte, etc.)
   • ask someone to serve as your accountability partner to be
     faithful with a habit you’re working on
     attentive and disciplined in an area of struggle or of growth

2/ Grow in my journey of faith:
   • pray regularly: daily Awareness Examen, quiet reflection, journaling, pray with the
     graces and prayer materials from CLC meetings, and other ways of praying such as
     Taize, eXaLT, etc.
   • read the Bible or spiritual readings (10’ everyday)
   • participate in Sunday Worship or Mass every Sunday
   • go to Confessions during Advent and Lent
   • attend a spiritual retreat as a retreatant once a year
   • see a spiritual director
   • get enough sleep and exercise regularly

3/ Become a person with and for others
   • serve the poor and marginalized regularly
   • reach out to the lonely and forgotten in CLC and beyond
   • raise greater awareness of justice issues locally, nationally, and globally
   • keep up with my studies as a way to develop my gifts for furthering God’s kingdom of
     peace and justice
   • live simply so others simply live

Daily habit: Actualize our greatest yet unused power--be the difference that makes the differ-
ence in a person’s life/day!!!

What kind of person do I want to become?
  Who I am is God’s gift to me
  Who I become is my gift to God
Mid-Year & Year-End Evaluations

1. Did CLC meet your expectations? Why or why not?

2. What was your favorite meeting this year? Why?

3. In your opinion, what are the strengths and/or weaknesses of our CLC group?

4. Which campus wide CLC event (social events, service, Taizé, etc…) was the most memorable for you and why?

5. Do you have any concrete suggestions to improve CLC (with your group or as a whole)?
Part 2:

Prayer
Scripture

As they continued their journey he entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary (who) sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her." (Luke 10:38-42)

Mk 6:31 “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.”
Luke 5:1-6 “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.”

Note: This meeting is meant to be a first meeting after Christmas break.

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

Welcome members back to their second semester as a CLC group. Thank them for coming.

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to find God in all things

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, perhaps encouraging each person to voice their own petitions out loud.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Review of Life discussion

Materials Needed: “Review of Life” handout (optional), CD player and soft instrumental music

Introduction: this meeting will center around looking back at the past few months and the semester break in order to help the group process all that has happened and changed. It will help deepen the group’s practice of finding God in all aspects of our lives and learning to be more attentive to God’s movements in our everyday experiences as well as more momentous times, particularly in change. Also, we are going to discuss meeting topics for the rest of the semester.
Exercise 1: “Review of Life” questions (30’)
Allow everyone to spend some time in prayer and reflection for a few minutes on the following questions and then have an open and honest discussion about them (remind everyone about confidentiality). The “Review of Life” questions can be found on page….in their journal booklets. Play some instrumental music in the background.

1. What changes, if any, have you noticed in your relationships with friends, significant others, family, the Church, and/or God in the past semester or over the break?
2. What are your feelings about coming back to school? What are your hopes for this semester?
3. How do you feel about renewing your commitment to CLC for the semester?

Sharing: invite everyone to share

Exercise 2: Meeting topics
Check in with members about the meeting topics for the rest of the semester.

Listening deeper
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation. Emphasize that God is with us at all times and in all aspects of our lives, such as whatever changes or transitions might be taking place for us now as well as more commonplace moments of each day.

Action: notice where you tend to pray or where you have experienced God on campus. Take a picture of this place and bring it to next week’s meeting. (Note: Ask if anyone might have a problem being able to take a picture and might need to borrow a camera or e-mail it to someone else to print out, etc.)

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events
*Make sure to confirm the group is still in agreement on the meeting day and time for this semester.*

NOTE TO COORDINATOR: Look ahead to meeting #5 (“Encountering God in the Poor”) and perhaps start asking the group to think about what they would like to do for this meeting focused on service (i.e. would they like to go off campus or do a service project within the group meeting like letter-writing, etc.? If off-campus, when would everyone be able to go? Where would they like to go? The CLC service site or somewhere else? Would they like to team-up with another group?)
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

*Invite members to lift up their hopes for the semester before or after reading the poem/prayer.*

**Patient Trust**

“Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay. We would like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new. And yet, it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability - and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you; your ideas mature gradually - let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste. Don't try to force them on, as though you could be today what time, (that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will) will make of you tomorrow.

*Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming in you will be.* Give our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.”

-Father Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ

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**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*The way Christian Life Community commits its members, with the help of the community is to strive for continuing personal and social growth which is spiritual, human and apostolic. In practice, this involves...discernment by means of daily review of one's life...(GP #12).*
A Review of Life

1. What changes, if any, have you noticed in your relationships with friends, significant others, family, the Church and/or God in the past semester or over the break?

2. What are your feelings about coming back to school? What are your hopes for this semester? What grace would you like to receive by the end of this semester?

3. How do you feel about renewing your commitment to CLC for the semester? In what concrete ways or habits are you going to commit yourself in order for you to receive the grace you hope for? (See CLC habits for suggestions)

4. Are there any meeting topics you would like to discuss in this semester?
As Jesus was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not kill; Do not commit adultery; Do not steal; Do not bear false witness; Do not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth." And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. (Mk 10:17-22)

"...Do you also wish to go away?" ....."Lord, to whom shall we go? ....."

#2 My Relationship with God

**Scripture**

As Jesus was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not kill; Do not commit adultery; Do not steal; Do not bear false witness; Do not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth." And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. (Mk 10:17-22)

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: To identify our past experiences of God and our church. Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the prayer below. After reading the scripture above, say, “Almighty God, we thank you for gathering us tonight. As we begin the new semester, help us continue to focus on you and take advantage of what CLC offers. Just as you have challenged the young man to grow deeper in relationship with you by going beyond following the Ten Commandments, please grant us the grace to grow deeper in relationship with you and one another in this semester. Amen.”

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): My faith journey

Materials Needed: journal booklets, papers and markers.

Introduction: Tonight we are going to reflect upon our experiences of God since our birth up to now. As in any human relationship, we must have had many experiences of God. Sometimes they were wonderful, full of laughter and joy. We experience God’s love through our family and friends. We get along and love our families. We are doing well in school. We enjoy engaging in our church community: going through religious or bible studies; receiving first communion and confirmation; attending retreats; volunteering in soup kitchen; and so on.
Other times, we experience God as absolutely silent or absent. God seems not to care about what was going on in our lives. Some of our families might experience divorce or separation. Some of us might have difficult times in school. Some of us might struggle with our church community. Some of us might experience depression, or feeling lost and confused when we go to college.

Whatever our experiences were, we want to honor all of them because they already happened and became part of us. As in any human relationship, we want to learn from them and see where we want to go from here.

Exercise: My Faith Journey (30’)

Invite members to pray with “My faith journey” in their journal booklets. Provide markers and papers for them to illustrate. Give them about 10 minutes to pray. You may play some instrumental music during the prayer.

Sharing: Invite members to share.

The following questions might be helpful during the conversation.
- What were some of your feelings and thoughts during the prayer period?
- Was there anything that surprised you?
- Do you see any patterns to how you have experienced God?

Listening deeper

1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: Thank members for their openness and participation. Tell them that we are going to do a longer version of the Spiritual Autobiography in our junior or senior year.

Action:

1. Encourage members to pay attention to how they experience God and pray with the question, “What would I like to see my relationship with God be by the end of this semester?”
2. Share with your prayer partner.

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

NOTE TO COORDINATOR: Look ahead to meeting #5 (“Encountering God in the Poor”) and perhaps start asking the group to think about what they would like to do for this meeting focused on service (i.e. would they like to go off campus or do a service project within the group meeting like letter-writing, etc.? If off-campus, when would everyone be able to go? Where would they like to go—The CLC service site or somewhere else? Would they like to team-up with another group?)
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

*Invite member to lift up their hopes for their relationship with God before or after reading the poem/prayer.*

**Footprints**

One night I had a dream--
I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord
and across the sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints,
one belonged to me and the other to the Lord.
When the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that many times along the path of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest
and saddest times in my life.

This really bothered me and I questioned the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you,
you would walk with me all the way,
but I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in
my life
there is only one set of footprints.
"I don't understand why in times when I needed you most,
you should leave me."
The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child,  
I love you and I would never, never leave you
during your times of trial and suffering.  
When you saw only one set of footprints,  
it was then that I carried you."

edited by Mary Stevenson

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**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*The way Christian Life Community commits its members, with the help of the community, is to strive for continuing personal and social growth which is spiritual, human and apostolic. In practice, this involves…..discernment by means of daily review of one’s life…. (GP #12).*

*God’s love shines down upon me like the light rays from the sun, or God’s love is poured forth lavishly like a fountain spilling forth its water into an unending stream…..inviting me to a fuller and better life, a sharing in divine life (SpEx 237).*
My Faith Journey

Suggested questions to pray and share:
1. Grace: to recall my experiences of God since my birth up to now
2. Imagine you write a book, make a movie of your life, or write a song.
   - What title would you give?
   - How many chapters or episodes are there? (We suggest 5 periods: before school, elementary school, junior high, high school, and college)
   - What were some of the significant “religious” experiences of God in each period?
   - What were some of the significant people and events of your life in each period?
   - What do you think God is saying to you through those people and events?
   - If you have to describe your relationship with God in terms of a journey image, what image would you use? See below for ideas. Whatever motif you use, keep in mind 2 key points: (1) timeline and (2) your experiences of God.

Image or motif samples

Sample #1: My Faith Journey
Draw your faith journey and indicate the following moments:
1. Rest Area
2. Detour
3. Wrong way
4. Accidents or choices?
5. Streets or Freeways?
6. Walking or driving?
7. People or events on your journey

Sample #2: My Faith Graph (adapted from Kairos)
Draw 2 lines of your faith graph
1. The vertical line: Indicates the high and low points of your faith life. High points mean you feel very close to God and low points mean you feel far from God.
2. The horizontal line: Indicates the timeline of your life. You may divide your life into different periods and then indicate one or significant religious experiences of God within each period.

Sample #3: My Faith Garden
Draw your faith garden
1. Trees: each tree or plant symbolizes one period of your life. How would you describe each tree?
2. Roots: symbolize your foundations.
3. Soil, fertilizer, weather condition, weeds, thorns, water, etc.: your environment and nourishment.
4. Fruits: good or rotten?

Sample #4: My Inner Journey
Draw your Faith Labyrinth and indicate the following:
1. People and events that help you move forward and closer to God.
2. People and events that influence you to go backward and away from God.
#3: My Image Of God

Scripture

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.” (Luke 3:21-22)

Mrk 8:27-30 “‘Who do you say that I am?’ Peter said to Him in reply, ‘You are the Messiah.’”

Gen. 1:1-4 “Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to be aware of how I personally imagine God or Jesus and how that influences my way of acting and relating in the world.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below:

Lord God, help us to see Your many faces. Open our minds and hearts to the many ways that You reveal Yourself in our lives. Help us to share our relationship with You openly, without hesitation or fear. We ask this through the name that saves, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): My Image of God

Materials Needed: paper and pens/markers

Φ Introduction: we are going to do a brief exercise to help us each get in touch with how we uniquely imagine and understand God. Please try to be silent through the exercise until I ask you to begin sharing.
Exercise: My Image of God
Invite each member to center themselves with the following instructions:

“I invite you to choose a comfortable yet focused posture. And close your eyes. Take a deep breath, hold it for a few seconds, then exhale completely. Again, breathe in fully and exhale entirely. Take a few more deep breaths and continue to relax…(Give people about 30 seconds more to get centered)… I am going to say a few words, please take note of the first things that come to your mind …..God……Jesus……Holy Spirit…..

Please open your eyes and take a sheet of paper. Please try to draw whatever it was that first came to your mind when you heard the words “God,” “Jesus,” and “Holy Spirit.” Try not to use words. And refrain from reflecting on the significance of your image or judging whether it is right or wrong. Don’t worry about how well your draw either.

(Allow 3-5 minutes for drawing. Then ask members to stop and silently reflect on and continue to pray with what they have created for 5-7 minutes on the following:
1. Talk to God about the image you have just created and where it might have come from (who or what shaped it, etc.).
2. How might this image influence your relationship with God, others and yourself?

Then continue...)

I invite us to silently lift our drawing for others to see. Please don’t say anything. Let each member note how they think you imagine God from your drawing. (Wait a few minutes.) We will now go around and share about each image one at a time. So we will take the first image (say member’s name) and we can each share what we see of God in his/her drawing. He/she can then share their reactions to our sharing and explain their understanding of their image. We don’t all need to say something, but feel free to mention something you observed that has not yet been noted.

Sharing:
We all have an image of God and Jesus, a working understanding of our way we relate to God. These operational images may have many influences and may continue to change over the course of our lifetimes.

1. Did anything come up for you in your prayer you would like to share?
2. Do you notice anything about the way you interpreted another’s drawing? What does it say about your own working conception of God?
3. How has your image of God changed over time—from your early childhood, to elementary school, to junior high/high school today?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person?
IV. Moving Forward (5’)

◆ Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

◆ Action: spend 5-10 minutes 3-4 times this coming week in prayer and allow God to reveal God-self to you. Take note of the ways your image of God influences the way you relate to God, others and yourself throughout your day.

◆ Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

_You Have Called Me By Name_

Oh, Lord my God,
You called me from the sleep of nothingness
merely because in Your tremendous love
You want to make good and beautiful beings.
You have called me by my name in my mother’s womb.
You have given me breath and light and movement
and walked with me every moment of my existence.
I am amazed, Lord God of the universe,
that You attend to me and, more, cherish me.
Create in me the faithfulness that moves You,
and I will trust You and yearn for You all my days.
Amen.

— Father Joseph Tetlow, SJ

**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

Throughout the day, I try to keep myself in a mood which is marked by happiness and spiritual joy. As a result, anything in my environment— the sun and warm weather or the white cover of snow, all the different beauties of nature and so on— is used to reinforce the atmosphere of consolation (SpEx #229).

This law of love, which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts, expresses itself anew in each situation of our daily lives,...respects the uniqueness of each personal vocation,...enables us to be open and free...{and} challenges us to see our responsibilities...and seek progress and peace, justice, and charity, liberty and dignity for all (GP #2).
#4 How do I pray?

**Scripture**

Jesus said to them in reply, “Have faith in God. Amen, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it shall be done for him. Therefore I tell you, all that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours. When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance, so that your heavenly Father may in turn forgive you your transgressions.” (Mark 11:22-26)

*Lk 11:1* “Lord, teach us to pray….”

*Luke 6:12* “In those days he departed to the mountain to pray…”

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

I. **Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: to become more aware of how we pray

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer.

NOTE: place the pictures everyone took of places they have prayed or experienced God in the center as a focal point.

II. **Short Check-In (5’)**

III. **Focus Exercise (40’): My Way of Praying, Four Kinds of Prayer**

**Materials Needed:** a bible, CD player and CDs, pens, pencils, markers, paper, prayer cards

☞ Introduction: this exercise will allow each person to spend time in a way they are used to praying in order to increase their awareness of how they are comfortable praying and then become aware of others’ ways of praying.
Exercise #1: My Way of Praying

Invite everyone to spend about 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each person to pray the way they are used to praying (e.g., talking to God, saying church devotional prayers, journaling or writing, using the bible, listening to music, drawing, saying a Rosary, taking a walk, watching a sunset, lying down, kneeling, etc …). Let them know they are free to use whatever has been provided in the room. Suggest that if the room is not conducive to the way they usually pray, they can imagine themselves in their usual place or atmosphere. Re-assure them that there is no “right” or “wrong” way to pray. Just encourage them to pray the way they are used to and note the group will talk about it afterward.

Suggested question to pray with:
What is the most pressing thing on your heart right now? Something joyful? Stressful? That brings you peace or worry?

Note: emphasize that this is merely a suggestion. If they have other questions or topics they want to pray about, they are most welcome to do so.

Sharing:
1. How do you usually pray? In one way or in many ways?
2. How often do you pray?
3. When and where do you pray (refer to your picture or someone else’s if helpful)?
4. Which way of praying do you find to be the most helpful? Least helpful for you?
5. When you pray, do you feel that God is present, God answering or responding to you? Please give one specific example.

Exercise #2: CLC Way of Praying

Introduction: there is no “right” way of praying. We just need to pay attention which way of praying has been helpful and has worked for you. Keep in mind: the following are merely the means or tools to pray, not the end, which is to grow in our relationship with God. Use them if helpful and ignore them if not. (note: try to connect their answers earlier with the following thoughts). Go over and discuss “3 secret steps to pray.”

Three Secret Steps to Pray: before, during, and after prayer

Step 1: Before Prayer
Keep in mind the following….
- **Purpose:** the purpose of prayer is to grow in our relationship with God by spending times with God. Like human relationship, we can’t grow and love someone without spending times to know and grow in relationship with the person. Like human relationship, we spend times with the person in different ways: sometimes alone and sometimes with others; sometimes just hanging out and other times doing activities; some times are formal and others informal.
- **Location:** Wherever you pray better. In general, it’s better to have a quiet place.
- **Time:** Whenever you pray better. In general, it’s better to have a fixed schedule or “appointment.” Besides the fixed time, we should pray throughout the day. Like human relationship, when we desire to know someone, we often think about the person throughout the day.
- **Body posture:** Whatever you pray better: sit, kneel, stand, walk slowly.
- **What to talk about?** Whatever going on in your life. Don’t forget to surprise God by asking and caring for your God, “How are you? What is going on?”
- **Which method?** Whatever that helps you. See “7 ways of praying” in your journal booklet.
- **Distraction during prayer:** good luck or see “Some common questions regarding prayer” in your booklet.

**Step 2: Prayer period**

It can be divided into three movements: begin, middle, and end.

1. **Begin:**
   - Place ourselves in God’s presence
   - Center/Quiet ourselves: breathing, candle, music might help
   - Ask for the grace desired

2. **Middle:** pray
   - Use one of the methods below if it’s helpful for you. (see “7 ways of praying” below)

3. **End:**
   - Close the prayer with a time of conversation with God, the Father, Jesus, and/or the Holy Spirit. Like human relationship, ask ourselves, “how do we conclude?” Be creative.

**Step 3: After prayer**

Review it. Have you ever looked back on a positive, deep-felt, or even difficult experience with a good friend and drawn valuable insight from it? You reviewed what your friend said, how you felt, how you responded. As a result of the reflection, you cherish, savor, and learn more from the time spent with her or him.

The review after a prayer experience is similar. It allows us to examine what happened in our prayer and notice our interior experiences. It enables us to reflect, notice, and interpret how God is present and communicates with us at this time. Ignatius recommends us to keep a journal: to record and keep track of how God works during our prayers and to better prepare for the next time we pray. In time, this discipline will cultivate within us a more discerning heart.

- **Listening deeper:**
  1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
  2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
  3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

**IV. Moving Forward (5’)**

- **Wrap-Up:** thank members for their openness and participation.

- **Action:** (1) Pay attention to the way you pray and pray for the openness of praying by serving others, for the awareness that service is prayer in that God can be encountered in ministering to others; (2) switch prayer partner.

- **Announce:** topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Invite members to pray for one another... End with the prayer that Jesus taught us to call God as Abba.....

Our Father,

Who art in heaven,

hallowed be Thy name;

Thy kingdom come;

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

The way CLC commits its members... is to strive for a continuing personal and social growth... this involves ..... daily practice of personal prayer, especially that based on Sacred Scripture (GP #12a).

When we find prayer dry and even a burden, we must be sure to spend the full hour as part of our attempt to respond by waiting for the Lord (SpEx #13).
Seven Ways to Pray

Below are seven ways and a short description of each one. We will learn more about each one throughout the years. Most of them are from Ignatius, which he found to be very helpful. Notice: some methods are more about you, e.g., awareness Examen while others are more about God, e.g, praying with scripture. Two ways street relationship, folks (yeahhh!)

1. Awareness Examen: reflect on your day with God by looking at all of your life experiences of the day and ask yourself, “Where is God in those life experiences?”

2. Praying with Scripture: Meditation. In meditation, we read the scriptural passage like a “love letter” from God. Read it slowly, aloud or in a whisper. Ponder and reflect on the letter. Notice any words, images, or phrases touch you and stay with it.

3. Praying with Scripture: Contemplation. In contemplation, we use our imaginations and all of our senses to enter into a scripture passage as if we were there: see the people, hear the dialogue, and engage in the actions.

4. Centering Prayer: in this prayer, we journey from head to heart. We spiral down into the deepest center of ourselves and be still. “Be still and know that I am God!” (Ps 46:10)

5. Mantra: one means of centering is the use of the mantra or prayer word. The mantra can be a single word or phrase. It may be a word from scripture or one that arises spontaneously from within your heart. The word or phrase is repeated slowly within oneself in harmony with one’s breathing.

6. Journaling: is a meditative free writing. We allow the Spirit of God to guide our hands and spirits. Journaling is different than keeping a journal. The former is praying and the latter is review and record the experience.

7. Art: like journaling, you allow the Spirit of God to guide your hands to draw, paint, or create an art. Or you can use other people’s art to pray with. Allow the art to stir your thoughts and feelings. Besides the paintings or sculptures, you can use other forms of art such as music, movies, dance, etc....to pray with.
Some common questions regarding prayer

A. What is the best way to handle distractions during prayer?
   - Try your best to put the distracting thoughts and images aside.
   - A good way is to place them in an imaginary bag and entrusting the bag with the concerns and preoccupations to God.
   - If you keep pushing them aside and they keep coming back, then ask: “Dear God, what are you trying to tell me through these distractions?”

B. How do I know it is God I am hearing?
   1. Follow inner movements as you “hear”.
   2. Ask: to where am I being lead?
      - toward God: toward greater peace, love, honesty, hope, solidarity…
      - away from God: a lessening of peace, faith, hope, love, toward unwillingness to sacrifice, to face the truth, or to grow closer to others.
   3. Reflect after sometime to confirm where I am actually lead (toward or away from God).
   In short, we have to follow our unique sense of God (inner or affective movements) and where we are being lead. We can learn from past experiences to hone in our sense of God and where we are being lead.

C. How do I know I am not just talking to myself?
   - Prayer is essentially about listening and “letting God be God.” Prayer takes some effort, but if we are “talking” too much or doing most of the work, then we can simple pause, listen, and just be. Be with God. Let God love you.
   - Directing one’s thoughts to God or addressing God directly are good ways to ensure that we are not merely thinking to ourselves.

D. How many kinds of prayer?
   - Four kinds: adoration, forgiveness, thanksgiving, and petition.
     1. Adoration: acknowledging God as God. After hearing she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus, Mary praised God, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord…” (Luke 1:46-55).
     2. Forgiveness: acknowledging we are sinners and need God’s mercy. David asked God for forgiveness after committing adultery and murder: “A clean heart create for me, God…” (Ps 51:12-14).
     3. Thanksgiving: acknowledging all things in this world are gifts from God. In the Psalms, we find many great expressions of thanks...“Shout joyfully to the Lord, all you lands...” (Ps 100)
     4. Petition: acknowledging the need for God’s help. At the Last Supper, Jesus prayed to His Father for His disciples...“I pray ….that they may all be one...” (Jn 17:20-24)
#5 Encountering God in the Poor

**Scripture**

> Jesus looked closely at the man. He liked him and said, “There's one thing you still need to do. Go sell everything you own. Give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come with Me.” When the man heard Jesus say this, he went away gloomy and sad because he was very rich. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “It's hard for rich people to get into God's kingdom!” The disciples were shocked to hear this. So Jesus told them again, “It's terribly hard to get into God's kingdom! In fact, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into God's kingdom.” Jesus' disciples were even more amazed. They asked each other, “How can anyone ever be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “There are some things that people cannot do, but God can do anything.” (Mark 10:17-27)

*Leviticus 25:35-38*  
“Don’t take advantage of them… honor Me by letting them stay where they live.”

NOTE: This meeting is used after the service and can be adapted and repeated as necessary whenever the group engages in service together. This meeting could also be done in a large-group setting.

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

**I. Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: to unburden myself of my worldly attachments and to encounter the poor with Jesus.

*God of compassion, let us contemplate tonight those people who have led lives of service, who have set examples of love for us and for others, those people who have called us to love others. We thank You God for the gift of Your world and Your creation, and we thank You especially for the gift of Your people. Thank You for each unique, sacred person whom You love. Help us to love others as freely and deeply as You love each one of us.*

**II. Short Check-In (5’)**
III. Focus Exercise (40’): “Seeing with Jesus” Meditation

Exercise: “Seeing with Jesus” Meditation

Take a few moments to enter into the presence of God. Continue to ask for the grace to unburden yourself of your worldly attachments and to encounter the poor with Jesus.

Picture the people who will be affected or have been affected by your service. Picture this person or these people engaging in the typical activity that they normally do. Imagine Jesus being present to the person, perhaps next to him or her or them. Pick one person now, and ask Jesus to be with you as you enter into this one person’s experience of pains and joys.

Notice how Jesus looks at the person… notice how Jesus sees the person’s unique needs and current struggles. See how Jesus treats the person. Notice how Jesus cares for the person in his or her present needs. Notice how He loves the person deeply and freely. Take 5 minutes to just observe Jesus looking at the person and relating to him or her.

Ask Jesus if He wants you to help in directly caring for and loving the person. Don’t answer for Him, but allow Him to respond. Do not project your own wants and desires. Ask Jesus how He would want you to cooperate in uniquely caring for and loving this person. At times He may ask you to indirectly love the person from a distance.

Spend time just being with Jesus, resting in Him. Thank Him for the time of learning to see, care, and love the person as He sees and cares.

1. What does reflecting on this action reveal to you about the way God loves others? About the way God loves you uniquely and personally?
2. How might have reflecting on this act have helped you to better understand how God invites you to love and care for the people you serve?
3. Is there anything about this service that really challenges you?
4. What do you think you gain from these acts of service? A sense of peace or joy?

Deep Listening

1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?
IV. Moving Forward (5’)

❖ Wrap-Up: thank members especially for being open to the time they spent in service and note that the group can hopefully continue in communal service throughout the semester and as the group moves forward, if they wish.

❖ Action: how can I concretely be praying and taking action on behalf of those individuals who my small action has already helped in some way? What can I continue to listen to from my prayer period?

As you continue to engage in service, consider using the following three questions as a means of reflecting on your experiences:

1. What does this action reveal to me about those I am serving?
2. What does this action reveal to me about God?
3. What does this action reveal to me about myself?

❖ Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

In the words of St. Ignatius of Loyola we pray:

*Lord, teach me to be generous.*

*Teach me to serve You as You deserve;*

*To give and not to count the cost;*

*To fight and not to heed the wounds;*

*To toil and not to seek for rest;*

*To labor and not to ask for reward,*

*Except to know that I am doing your will.*

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**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

We are to become identified with [Christ’s] mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives… (GP #8). Each of us receives from God a call to make Christ and his saving action present to our surroundings… (GP #8A).

The more I grow in gratitude of God’s plentiful love for me and all of creation, the more will I respond fully and generously in service or and with others. Gratitude fuels my striving to love as I have been loved (CLC spirituality).
#6 Time with Jesus

**Scripture**

This is My commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from My Father. (Jn 15:12-15)

Psalm 139  “O Lord, you have probed me, you know me: you know when I sit and stand.”

Luke 8: 22-25  “Who then is this, who commands even the winds and the sea.”

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to come in contact with God in the person of Jesus through imaginative prayer and an open mind.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: 

*In the Christian tradition, a lighted candle symbolizes Christ presence. So as we begin our prayer, let us remind ourselves Christ is in our midst, God is with us (light candle in center of the room). In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...Let us Pray. Loving God, please be with us in our mediation, inspire our imagination, permeate our thoughts, enliven our feelings, direct our wills as we experience this prayer together. We ask especially for the grace to encounter You in the person of Jesus. May we be open to whatever surprises You choose to gift us with. We hope not merely seek pleasure from our prayer, but that we seek to be closer to our true selves and more attentive to Your mysterious presence within. Amen.*

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): “Time with Jesus” Meditation

Materials Needed: an instrumental CD, CD player and a candle
Introduction:

“Prayer can be understood as simply paying attention to God and our deepest selves. When the two meet, God and our truest selves, something mysterious and special happens.

In this meditation, we’ll use our imagination to pay attention to God and our deepest selves. Don’t be afraid if it is a bit awkward, even strange. Let yourself go. Let God’s Spirit lead your own spirit, mind and imagination. Don’t judge your experience; its not right or wrong, good or bad, just be open; be aware. Use whatever speaks to you and disregard what you does not appeal to you. Your imagination might even seize you and you will no longer hear me, that’s fine too. Work with whatever image of Jesus feels right to you that comes up in prayer, especially if a particular suggested image isn’t for you. Let your imagination free you up and take your heart wherever it may.

Exercise: “Time With Jesus” Meditation
Read the meditation slowly, with soft instrumental music playing in the background. Make sure to pause long enough for members to really enter into the meditation.

Sharing:
1. What were some of the thoughts and feelings that emerged for you as you began the meditation (as you stood by the sea before Jesus arrived)?
2. How did you imagine Jesus in this meditation? What was it like for you to imagine Jesus in this way?
3. How did the meditation affect you?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation, particularly if this was a new experience for them.

Action: spend 5-10 minutes in imaginative meditation (with God).

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
*Bring a journal or paper to make a spiritual journal for next week’s meeting.*
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Create your own closing prayer or ask a member to bring in a prayer.

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**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*The Exercises are above all a time for intimate contact between God and the retreatant (SpEx #2).*

Our only desire and our choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God’s deepening life in me (SpEx 23).

*The Spiritual Exercises is a “school of the heart” which fosters a personal knowing, loving, and following of Jesus. This intimacy with our Brother and Savoir brings us to a greater identification with Christ poor and humbled, crucified and risen (CLC Spirituality).*
“Time with Jesus” Meditation

**Script:** (to be read slowly and prayerfully, you yourself should pray, pausing at the ellipses...longer at places with more ellipses......)

Sit in an upright position and close your eyes; relax but stay focused; do not fall asleep. Take a deep breath and relax. Breathe deeply in...and breathe out. Relax. Again, Breathe in slowly...and breathe out. Be aware of your breathing...

With each breath, slowly fill your lungs completely and then slowly exhale. Notice your breathing becoming slower, more gentle...feel any part of your body that is tense...Relax it...Let go of the tension...

Now I invite you to take a journey with me...Imagine yourself standing on a sandy beach at sunrise...wet sand...the glowing sun rises slowly over the horizon...the dark blue sky punctuated by morning rays dancing upon the clouds. The sea looks vast before you...its surface stirs gently with ripples of waves...some become surf, spraying you with cool mist. You stand next to the water, as its gentle coolness caresses your feet and sinks your feet into the wet sand...feel the wonderful texture of the white sand massaging your feet...The cool morning breeze brushes your face, combing your hair...feel the warm sunrays as they bathe you in their warmth. Take time to appreciate this boundless beauty...the dawning of a new day......(pause for a minute)

As you stand there in awe at this incredible scene, what feelings flow through you?...peace?...gratitude?...wonder? What do you feel deep down? What is in your heart now? Search deeply into yourself and notice if there is anything that troubles you...any anxieties and worries...with family...with school...or with an important relationship in your life... (pause for 60 seconds)

Now imagine that Jesus is present with you, standing with you, sharing in this immense beauty. Imagine that He's One of your very best friends: One with whom you can relate. One with whom you can freely be yourself; One who knows you in and out and enjoys you; One with whom you can share your joys, reveal your dreams, explore your doubts, voice your inner fears...without fear of being judged...

What does this Jesus look like as he stands with you? What does He wear? What about Him captures your attention? Notice any captivating features...He seems to have a gentle smile on His face and eyes that draw you in....Imagine Him looking directly into your eyes...uncovering your deepest emotions and feelings...He sees your anxieties and fears....He understands.....What does this feel like for you? Are you comfortable with Him seeing you so vulnerable and open?......

Spend time expressing to Jesus what arises within you...Try to communicate with Him as you would a dear friend...Listen to Him... (pause for 60 seconds)

How do you want to spend time with Jesus? What does He invite you to do...take a long walk?...play volleyball?...run?...build a sandcastle?...just to be?...spend this time with Jesus...maybe just sit and talk......(pause for a minute or two)

Now it is time to say good-bye to Jesus...notice how He bides farewell...does He invite you to return for another morning together? How does He leave you? Once He is gone, gaze at the scene around you once more...Notice what you feel at this moment...Give thanks to God...

It’s time for you to leave this place...to leave your imagination and return to this room (give the name of the room)...take your time...when you are ready, open your eyes.
#7 The Examen: Praising God

**Scripture**

Then the Lord said, "go outside and stand on the mountain before the Lord; the Lord will be passing by." A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord—but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake—but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was fire—but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.  (1 Kings 19:11-13)

Luke 17:11-19  “And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God…”

Eph. 3:14-21  “…comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth”

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

**I. Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: to grow in awareness of and gratitude for God’s action in my daily life

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer.

**II. Short Check-In (5’)**

**III. Focus Exercise (40’): The Awareness Examen (steps 1-2)**

**Materials Needed:** spiritual journals, “Awareness Examen Steps 1-2, Free Writing” slips (cut)

胚 Introduction: (paraphrase in your own words) As mentioned earlier, one hallmark of our CLC spirituality is to find God in all things and to discover our calling in life. It’s crucial for us to take time to reflect upon our life experiences and to record them in journals because God speaks through our life experiences. Keeping a spiritual journal will deepen our awareness and help us to track God moving within us. Ignatius gives us a tool to do this in the Awareness Examen. We experienced a sort of Examen with the Mountain Motif exercise earlier. Tonight we are going to learn and experience the first two steps of Ignatius’ five-step examen.

(Play instrumental music in the background). Allow each member about 5 minutes to decorated their spiritual journals. Make sure they put their names on it. If some forget to bring one, they can use paper to make one.
Exercise: The Awareness Examen, Steps 1-2

Step 1: Pray for light
Place yourself in a comfortable position. Do not be so comfortable that you will be tempted to fall asleep. Sit up straight in a steady posture so that the oxygen flows through your body freely. I invite you to close your eyes...Slowly breathe in and out, filling your lungs with the fresh air that gives us life and wellness. As you exhale, think about releasing all the negative feelings and thoughts you have carried with you on this day. As you inhale, ask for the light of the Holy Spirit to see yourself, others, and the whole world through God’s eyes and feel with God’s heart. Exhale judgments and burdens.

Step 2: Review your day in thanksgiving
Now begin to ask yourself what gifts you have received today that you are thankful for. What are you grateful for in your day? (pause for 60 seconds). Now open your eyes. Please write down the question in your spiritual journal (repeat the question) and try to recall 5 gifts or graces you have received today that you are grateful for…(Allow about 5 minutes to write in their spiritual journals in silence).

Sharing
1. Were you able to feel God’s presence in the first step as you asked for light? What was this experience like?
2. Did you feel yourself being inspired, being guiding by God’s presence, as you were journaling? How so?
3. What did you see as the gifts or graces of your day that you can be grateful for?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation, particularly if this was a new way of praying for them. Emphasize that the Examen is a central part of Ignatian spirituality, which grounds the spirituality and life of CLC.

Action: 5 minutes a day with God: Pass out the handout entitled, “Awareness Examen Steps 1-2 Free Writing.” Encourage everyone to practice this prayer 3-4 times a week in the next two weeks. Invite them to record five things for which they are grateful each day in their spiritual journals. Ask the group to try to notice how their prayer experience deepens as they pay greater attention to the many blessings God has placed in their life.

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Center each member prayerfully in a few minutes of silence. Ask that each person voice aloud a word or phrase that captures their experience of the meeting or how they are feeling as they prepare to leave the meeting.

**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*The way of life of Christian Life Community commits its members, with the help of the community, to strive for continuing personal and social growth which is spiritual, human and apostolic. In practice, this involves...discernment by means of daily review of one’s life...(GP #12).*

*Our vocation calls us to live this spiritually, which opens and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life (GP #5).*
Awareness Examen Steps 1-2 Free Writing
“You sanctify whatever you are grateful for.” Anthony de Mello, S.J.
A. Using stream of consciousness writing, I let my pen and spirit guide me without worrying about forming complete thoughts or sentences. Today, I feel alive/peace/energized/hopeful/grateful when…
B. I thank God for all the above because these are the concrete ways God is loving/gifting me today in the unique an personal way that I am…

Awareness Examen Steps 1-2 Free Writing
“You sanctify whatever you are grateful for.” Anthony de Mello, S.J.
A. Using stream of consciousness writing, I let my pen and spirit guide me without worrying about forming complete thoughts or sentences. Today, I feel alive/peace/energized/hopeful/grateful when…
B. I thank God for all the above because these are the concrete ways God is loving/gifting me today in the unique an personal way that I am…

Awareness Examen Steps 1-2 Free Writing
“You sanctify whatever you are grateful for.” Anthony de Mello, S.J.
A. Using stream of consciousness writing, I let my pen and spirit guide me without worrying about forming complete thoughts or sentences. Today, I feel alive/peace/energized/hopeful/grateful when…
B. I thank God for all the above because these are the concrete ways God is loving/gifting me today in the unique an personal way that I am…
Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, He came toward them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear. At once (Jesus) spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how (strong) the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did Him homage, saying, "Truly, you are the Son of God."  (Mt. 14:24-33)

Duet. 30:19  "...Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live…"

Phil. 3:7-15  "...straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue...God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus"

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to open our ears and hearts to hear God communicating to us through the choices that we make.

Use Matthew 14:24-33 (or another appropriate passage) to begin the prayer. Ask each member to be particularly attentive to what they notice about the reading, what strikes them or what they feel can relate to. Emphasize the reading will help move the group into tonight’s focus exercise. Read the passage slowly and prayerfully, possibly with instrumental music in the background.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): The Awareness Examen (steps 3-4)

Materials Needed: none

★ Introduction: in this meeting, we will continue learning the 5-step Awareness Examen by experiencing steps 3 and 4. We’ll use tonight’s Scripture passage to help us understand the steps and discuss our own experiences of them.
Exercise: the Awareness Examen (steps 3-4)  
Ask every member to recall the passage. Allow a significant amount of time for silent reflection before sharing. Ask the questions in a prayerful manner, setting the tone that this is a time of prayer in which the group is allowing God to enter into and move their reflection.

1. What has helped me walk towards Jesus, as Peter did on the water? Which events and people have helped me and given me life today?
2. What has made me sink into the water? What has drained me of my energy today?
3. Which of my choices today were inadequate responses to God’s love? Is there anything I might need God’s healing or forgiveness for today?

Note the group has just experienced steps 3 and 4 of the Examen and briefly explain the main points of these steps (step 3: looking at what has given or drained me of energy throughout the day; step 4: looking at my responses to God and possibly asking for forgiveness). Ask if they have any questions (about any of the steps thus far or about the Examen in general).

Deep Listening

1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness to continuing to learn the steps of the Examen. Note that next week will be the final meeting directly incorporating the Examen as they learn the final step.

Action: continue to pray the Examen, using steps 1-4 and paying particular attention to our choices. Possibly reflect on the following question: how can my daily routine incorporate an appreciation for the way God has presented Himself to me personally and communally?

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Create your own closing prayer or have a member bring one in to share.
**#9 The Examen: Planning with God**

**Scripture**

Simon said in reply, “Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at Your command I will lower the nets.” When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that they were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” (Luke 5:5-8)

*Phil. 2:1-13*  “Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus”

*Col. 1:9-12*  “We do not cease praying...asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will”

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to collaborate with God more fully in the choices I make.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: *Lord, thank You for the gift of this group and all that we have experienced together. We thank you also for Your friend Ignatius and the gift of his ways of praying. We ask particularly for the grace to collaborate with You more fully in the choices that we’ll make in the future, as we learn to plan with You through the last step of the Examen. Please continue to enfold us in Your love as we deepen our prayer lives, bringing us closer to You, each other, and our truest selves. Amen.*

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Ignatian Meditation, The Awareness Examen (step 5)

**Materials Needed:** “Grateful for God’s Presence and Action (The 5 Steps of the Awareness Examen)” handouts.

* Introduction: tonight, we will be introduced to two things: a means of prayer known as Ignatian Meditation (very close to and sometimes known as Lectio Divina) and the final step of the Awareness Examen. Ignatian Meditation is a prayerful way of reading Scripture, paying attention to how God might be speaking to you through what moves you in a given passage. We will first try this form of prayer and then move on to the last step of the Examen.
Exercise #1: Ignatian Meditation (15’)
Use the “Ignatian Meditation” sheet (included) to guide the group through this form of prayer, using Luke 5:5-8, or another suggested passage (see Scripture box above).

Sharing: note there will be a deeper opportunity for members to share what is on their hearts in the next exercise. Focus on how they found the style of Ignatian Meditation to work.
1. What was your overall experience of this form of prayer?
2. Were you able to notice what parts resonated with or challenged you?
3. Were you able to be attentive to what feelings were emerging in you or any deeper stirrings?
4. How did you find the colloquy or conversation at the end of the prayer?

Exercise #2: The Awareness Examen (steps 1-4 and Ignatian Mediation, step 5) (20’)
Pass out “Grateful for God’s Presence and Action” handout. Play some instrumental music as every member prayerfully completes steps 1-4 of the Examen by filling in #1-4 of the handout. Instruct them not to move on to step 5 yet. Wait till everyone is done. Next, have them use the tools of Ignatian Meditation that they just learned to look back over what they have written in #1-4. Instruct them to…

1. **Read their examen** several times and **pick 3 points** (words, phrases, images, thoughts, ideas) to ponder and reflect. Notice what parts resonate with them. Note any words, images or concepts that strike or challenge them. Stay there and ruminate on these; let God’s Spirit guide their thinking, imagining remembering, etc.

2. **Notice what feelings** emerge within them as they meditate on what they wrote. Do the feelings lead them to a deeper experience of God/grace? Savor that experience and listen to what God might reveal to them.

3. Notice if there are **any deeper stirrings** within their hearts or any meaningful interior movements that they can recognize.

Sharing:
1. Is there anything from the examen you would like to share (what was on your heart or what you experienced)?
2. Have you ever felt that you could allow God to enter into your planning? What was this like? Did it change your plans? Can you relate to Peter and his experience of having to recast his nets, as Jesus asked him to do?
Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

Out of love, the Word was incarnated and born (GP#1).

This law, which the Spirit inscribes in our hearts, expresses itself anew in each situation of daily life (GP#2).

We show reverence for all the gifts of creation (SpEx #23).

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action: continue to pray the Examen, using all 5 steps, paying particular attention to step 5. Ask yourself: Am I planning with God or leaving God out of my plans?

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Create your own closing prayer or have a member bring one in to share.
Ignatian Meditation

1. PRESENCE OF GOD

- **Place yourself in God’s presence:**
  Sit in a comfortable position. Breathe in and out fully and imagine God before, around, and within you like the air that fills you.

- **Centering/ Quieting:**
  Try your best to quiet and focus your mind.

- **Ask for the grace desired:**
  Peace, the gift of prayer, deep listening, letting go, surrender, faith…

2. MEDITATION

- **Read the passage** below several times and **pick 3 points** (words, phrases, images, thoughts, ideas) to ponder and reflect. Notice what parts of the passage *resonate* with you. Note any words, images or concepts that strike or *challenge* you. Stay there and ruminate on them; let God’s Spirit guide your thinking, imagining, remembering, etc.

- **Notice what feelings** emerge within you as you meditate on the passage. Do the feelings lead you to a deeper experience of God/grace? Savor that experience and listen to what God might reveal to you.

- Are there any **deeper stirrings** within your heart or any meaningful interior movements that you can recognize?

3. COLLOQUY/CONVERSATION

- Enter into an **intimate conversation** with the Lord. End the prayer period with an *Our Father, Glory Be*, or an expression of gratitude, etc.
Grateful For God’s Presence and Action
(The 5 Steps of the Awareness Examen)

Using stream of consciousness writing, I let my pen and spirit guide me without worrying about forming complete thoughts or sentences.

1. Before starting, I ask God for the light of the Holy Spirit to see through God’s eyes and feel with God’s heart.

2. Jesus, thank You for loving me through these gifts of today…

3. Jesus, these people/events/experiences have affected me in a real significant way today…

   This is how I have been present/attentive to You…

4. Jesus, I’m sorry for the following ways that I have not been responsive to You…

5. Jesus, this is how You’d like me to be attentive to/work with You in the coming day…
#10 Gratitude

**Scripture**

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. (Thess. 5:16-18)

Romans 7:25 “Thanks be to God.”

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to see God in the people in our lives and to respond in gratitude in concrete ways.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: *Dear Lord, we thank You for the gift of this day, with everything it has brought and will continue to bring. We ask tonight especially for the grace to see You in the people in our lives and to respond in gratitude in concrete ways. As we center ourselves now as we begin this meeting, please help us listen to what relationships You might be calling us to spend time reflecting on our time together. Please help us call to mind two people in our lives—one we are grateful for but might not have shown appreciation for and someone we might have a difficult relationship with and want to move forward with. Let us recall these two people now (pause for a minute). As we think of these people, help us to be aware of what feelings and thoughts come to mind. Let us continue to be attentive to this stirrings within us as we move into our exercise tonight, continuing to spend time in prayer with You about these people in our lives.*

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Letter Writing

**Materials Needed:** paper and pens/pencils, hard surfaces to write on (if desired)

**Introduction:** tonight, we are going to focus on the two people in our lives that we called to mind in our opening prayer. We are going to write a letter to each of them, prayerfully talking to them and allowing God to speak to us through our words. We will try to continue to notice what might be arising within us as we write, any specific feelings or thoughts that God might be inviting us to pay attention to. Please spend however much time you want on each letter, letting your words flow freely. Don’t worry about what to say since you don’t need to give the letters to them. Also maybe try to imagine what God might be thinking and feeling about these people.
Exercise: Letter Writing
Invite each member to take paper as they begin writing their letters. Emphasize this is a prayerful activity, in which we are inviting God to be present in and move through to help us be attentive.
1. Letter #1: a person to whom you are grateful but have not had much opportunity to show your appreciation
2. Letter #2: someone with whom you have a strained or difficult relationship, someone with whom you want to move forward in relationship with

Sharing:
1. Are there any feelings and thoughts that you were able to notice emerge while you were writing either letter?
2. Did you sense any insights or invitations from God about these people or yourself while writing?
3. Do you want to share anything specific you wrote?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action: invite members to pick one of the following:
1. Offer the letter to the person you wrote it to. If you do not feel comfortable doing so, take the letter and burn it, saying a prayer offering its intentions to the person to whom it is written.
2. Do a small gesture to thank someone who has had a positive influence on your life.
3. Do a gesture to thank a person who has had a challenging effect on your life. Offer a prayer of gratitude for the ways in which you have grown from that experience.

Announce: Topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
*Ask members to bring their agendas/appointment calendars for next week’s meeting.*
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Create your own closing prayer or have a member bring one in to share. Encourage each member to voice any petitions they might have.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

I beg for the gift of an intimate knowledge of all the goods which God lovingly shares with me. Filled with gratitude, I want to be empowered to respond just as totally in my love and service (SpEx 233).

The peace and joy which He wants to share with me can only be a gift of God (SpEx 224).

I beg for the grace of being able to enter into the joy and consolation of Jesus as he savors the victory of his risen life (SpEx 221).
#11 Year in Review: Signs of God’s Love and Invitation

**Scripture**

Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus Himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. He asked them, “What are you discussing as you walk along?” They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to Him in reply, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?” And He replied to them, “What sort of things?” They said to Him, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed Him over to a sentence of death and crucified Him. But we were hoping that He would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find His body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that He was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but Him they did not see.”

And He said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into His glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them what referred to Him in all the scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, He gave the impression that He was going on farther. But they urged Him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So He went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while He was with them at table, He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, but He vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning (within us) while He spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?” So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

(Lk 24:13-48)

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

I. **Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: to be more aware of God’s presence and action in my life and my response in the past year

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer.

II. **Short Check-In (5’)**
III. Focus Exercise (40’): The Year in Review

Materials Needed: appointment calendars/agendas/planners, year-end Evaluation handouts

❖ Introduction: tonight we are going to reflect upon our year and to give each other honest feedback. We have learned the skill of the Awareness Examen and will now see how we can apply this to longer periods of time, to see where God has been most present to us, what has given and drained us of energy, and where we are being invited to be more responsive to God’s love. To do this, we are going to use our appointment calendars/schedules/planners/agendas to recall what we have experienced this year.

❖ Exercise: The Year in Review
   Invite members to pick out 2 or 3 significant events or experiences they have encountered and consider how they have helped impacted them in this school year. Emphasize that this is a prayerful time, as we invite God into this process of reflection (just as in the Examen). The following questions might help each member to reflect:
   1. Looking back on the year, what are you most grateful for?
   2. Name 2 or 3 specific experiences that gave you life and helped you to grow closer to God. Describe.
   3. Name 2 or 3 experiences that drained you of energy and pull you away from God. Describe.
   4. Name 1 or 2 areas that God is inviting you to work on for next year. Describe. (See “CLC habits” on the next page for suggestion)

(Note: If it is helpful, they can write down the questions and answers. Give them about 5-10 minutes to pray in silence before beginning.)

❖ Sharing:
   After each member has shared on the above questions, invite each member to give honest feedback to each other (both affirmations and challenges). If desired, be creative in developing a unique way for your group to do this (an activity, etc.).

❖ Deep Listening
   1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
   2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
   3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

❖ Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

❖ Evaluation: Year-end Evaluation
   As a way of helping us to assess how our group is doing and to make sure it’s meeting
Action: ask and discuss the following during the meeting:
1. How am I personally being invited to grow this summer? Are there any habits or attitudes I can adopt to better respond to God?
2. Is there any unfinished business (such as apologies, peacemaking, thank-you’s…) of the past year I need to address?
3. How can we as a group grow and support each other over the summer?

Announce: Upcoming CLC events
*Try to set a meeting day and time for next year.*

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Encourage everyone to pray in thanksgiving for each other.
(Coordinator should begin first)…..

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

Love is shown more in deeds than in words (SpEx #230).

I beg for the gift of an intimate knowledge of all the goods which God shares with me. Filled with gratitude. I want to be empowered to respond just as totally in my love and service (SpEx #233).

Our vocation calls us to live this spirituality, which opens and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life (GP #5).
CLC Habits: living out CLC way of life

Choices → Actions → Habits → Character → Vocation → Mission → Communion with God

How might God invite me to adopt & cultivate 1 or 2 suggested habits below?

1/ Build stronger community:
   - attend all of my CLC group meetings
   - be more vulnerable, honest, and real
   - care and support one another with a love that
     empowers – helps one another discover and develop our unique gifts
     transforms – helps one another change positively
   - participate in campus wide CLC events at least once a month (BBQ, Bowling, Agape Latte, etc.)
   - ask someone to serve as your accountability partner to be
     faithful with a habit you’re working on
     attentive and disciplined in an area of struggle or of growth

2/ Grow in my journey of faith:
   - pray regularly: daily Awareness Examen, quiet reflection, journaling, pray with the
     graces and prayer materials from CLC meetings, and other ways of praying such as
     Taize, eXaLT, etc.
   - read the Bible or spiritual readings (10’ everyday)
   - participate in Sunday Worship or Mass every Sunday
   - go to Confessions during Advent and Lent
   - attend a spiritual retreat as a retreatant once a year
   - see a spiritual director
   - get enough sleep and exercise regularly

3/ Become a person with and for others
   - serve the poor and marginalized regularly
   - reach out to the lonely and forgotten in CLC and beyond
   - raise greater awareness of justice issues locally, nationally, and globally
   - keep up with my studies as a way to develop my gifts for furthering God’s kingdom of
     peace and justice
   - live simply so others simply live

Daily habit: Actualize our greatest yet unused power--be the difference that makes the differ-
ence in a person’s life/day!!!

What kind of person do I want to become?
Who I am is God’s gift to me
Who I become is my gift to God
Mid-Year & Year-End Evaluations

1. Did CLC meet your expectations? Why or why not?

2. What was your favorite meeting this year? Why?

3. In your opinion, what are the strengths and/or weaknesses of our CLC group?

4. Which campus wide CLC event (social events, service, Taizé, etc…) was the most memorable for you and why?

5. Do you have any concrete suggestions to improve CLC (with your group or as a whole)?
Section 3: Meeting Ideas (Phase 2)

Finding God in all things

Service Reflection
1. Marycrest Manor Reflection
2. Mother of Sorrows Reflection
3. Service & Theological Reflection

Part 1: Who Am I?
1. Summer in Review
2. My Covenant with God
3. Who Am I?
4. My Inner Journey
5. I Am Special
6. Me and Myself
7. Me and Others
8. My hands, God’s hands
9. Me and God
10. Am I searching for God?
11. Semester in Review
12. Gratitude and Affirmation

Part 2: Who is God for Me?
1. Review of Life
2. My hopes, God’s Desires
3. Who Is God for Me?
4. Finding God through My Own Life Experiences
5. Finding God through Other People
6. Finding God through Creation
7. Finding God through Creation and Justice
8. Finding God through Scripture
9. Finding God through Prayer
10. Finding God through the Church
11. Year in Review (part 1)
12. Year in Review (part 2)
Service

Reflection
#1 Marycrest Manor
Service Reflection

Scripture

And a large crowd followed Him and pressed in on Him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak, for she said, "If I but touch His clothes, I will be made well." Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from Him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" And his disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth. Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." (Mk 5:24b-34)

Lk 7:11-17  Raising of the Widow’s son
Mk 7:25-30  Syrophoenician woman

Note: this meeting is meant to be used after a group’s service experience at Marycrest Manor.

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to discover my true self through service and encounter God in elderly.

Use the grace or the suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below:

After reading the scripture above, say, “Lord Jesus, when You were living here on earth, You had such a great love and compassion to widows, children, and those who are sick. Grant us Your heart of compassion and help us to become instruments of Your healing. May our hands touch the wounded hands. May our ears listen to those who are lonely and forgotten. May our eyes see the beauty of the elders. And may we learn from their wisdom. Amen.”

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’):

Materials Needed:

♀ Introduction:
1. feel free to use any song to set the tone, e.g., Grandma’s Hands (by Bill Withers)
2. explain the topic and purpose of the meeting.
Exercise: Ignatian Meditation (15’)

1. Invite members to use Ignatian Meditation to pray with the suggested passage (Mk 5:24b-34). If needed, you can go over the method on page….in the journal booklet or you can guide your group through the meditation yourself.
2. Give each member a period of silence to meditate the scripture passage. Play some instrumental music during prayer.
3. Invite each member to pray and answer the Marycrest Manor Reflection questions on the next page.

Sharing

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action: invite members to research on Elder Neglect and Abuse in America http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/ncearoot/Main_Site/index.aspx

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Invite members to mention the names of the elders whom they serve out loud and pray for them. Conclude the prayer with the Prayer of Generosity by St. Ignatius of Loyola:

Lord, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
To give and not to count the cost;
To fight and not to heed the wounds;
To toil and not to seek for rest;
To labor and not to ask for reward,
Except to know that I am doing your will.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

We are to become identified with [Christ’s] mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives…(GP #8). Each of us receives from God a call to make Christ and His saving action present to our surroundings…(GP #8A).

The more I grow in gratitude of God’s plentiful love for me and all of creation, the more will I respond fully and generously in service with others. Gratitude fuels my striving to love as I have been loved (CLC spirituality).
MaryCrest Manor Reflection Questions
Ignatian Meditation (Lectio Divina)

1/ Ponder and reflect on the passage (Mk 5:24b-34). Notice any words, images, or phrases that strike you. Stay there and ruminate on them. Let God’s spirit guide your thinking, imagining, remembering, etc. What words, images, or phrases touch you? Describe.

2/ What were some of your feelings and thoughts that emerged during prayer? What do you think Jesus is saying to you personally?

3/ Recall and describe your service experience: Who were you with? What did you do? What were some of your feelings and thoughts before the service? On the way to service? During the service? After the service?

4/ Were there any moments that you felt a sense of peace, joy, or consolation? Describe.

5/ As you look back to your service experience, how did it affect you? Does any questions or thoughts that arose within you? How do you see your service experience helping you to live out CLC way of life?
Marycrest Manor

Marycrest Manor is a not-for-profit 57-bed skilled nursing center founded in 1956 by James Francis Cardinal McIntyre for the care of the frail and elderly. Marycrest offers a unique blend of 24-hour skilled nursing care in a tranquil, serene and home-like setting.

The Carmelite Sisters and staff at Marycrest provide loving care which respects and fosters personal dignity and happiness. We provide services which are supported by the richness of the Catholic faith based upon our unswerving commitment to uphold the dignity of each human person. We value the rich wisdom and experience of our elders and believe that the latter years of life are meant to be "lived to each person's fullest capacity.”

The History of Marycrest Manor

Founded in 1956 by Francis Cardinal McIntyre, Marycrest Manor is a skilled nursing facility with the special difference of religious environment and orientation.

The home has operated continuously from 1956 to the present day.

In 1962, Marycrest Manor came under the direction and sponsorship of the Religious Sisters of Charity from Ireland.

In 2002, the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles assumed sponsorship.

Contact Information
Marycrest Manor  10664 St. James Drive, Culver City, CA  90230
310.838.2778
Elder abuse refers to intentional or neglectful acts by a caregiver or trusted individual that lead to, or may lead to, harm of a vulnerable elder.

What are the types of elder abuse?
Elder abuse includes physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse as well as financial or material exploitation, neglect, and abandonment.

How Many Older Americans are Abused?
- A minimum of 1 in 9 of Americans over age 60 have experienced some form of elder abuse. Some estimates range as high as 5 million elders who are abused each year.
- For every one case of elder abuse reported to authorities, at least five more go unreported.

Who Commits Elder Abuse?
- In almost 90% of elder abuse and neglect incidents, the perpetrator is a family member.
- Two thirds of perpetrators are adult children or spouses.

Who are the Victims?
- Women and the very old are most likely to be abused.
- Some 14,000 allegations of abuse, neglect or gross negligence are reported in nursing homes.
- Close to 50% of those with dementia experience some form of abuse.
- By 2030, the numbers of older Americans over age 85 – those most at risk for abuse – will more than double. Reported cases of elder abuse are already on the rise.

What are the Effects of Elder Abuse?
- Elders who have been abused have a 300% higher risk of death when compared to those who have not been mistreated.
- While likely underreported, elder financial abuse costs older Americans more than $2.6 billion per year.
- Financial abuse accounts for nearly 21% of the allegations of mistreatment investigated by Adult Protective Services. It is the third most common substantiated form, following neglect and emotional/psychological abuse.

What is the Federal Government’s Current Role in Combating It?
- Less than 2% of federal abuse prevention dollars go to elder mistreatment efforts. 91% is spent on child abuse and 7% on domestic abuse.
- There are currently federal laws governing domestic violence and child abuse, but none related to elder abuse.
Scripture

And people were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this He became indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to Me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it." Then He embraced them and blessed them, placing His hands on them. (Mk 10:13-16)

Jn 6:9-10 “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, ….”

Note: this meeting is meant to be used after a group’s service experience at Mother of Sorrows.

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to discover my true self through service and encounter God in children.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: After reading the scripture above, say, “Lord Jesus, we thank You for giving us an opportunity to work with these children. Tonight we gather to reflect upon our experiences with them. We recall Your word, ‘let the children come to me.’ Help us to bring children to You, give them a sense of hope, and encourage them to grow into the persons they are called to be. May we learn from them a sense of wonder and trust in You. Amen.”

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’):

Materials Needed: journal booklet or handout

发布会上：

1. Feel free to use any song to set the tone, e.g., “Greatest Love of All” (by Whitney Houston)
2. Explain the topic and purpose of the meeting.
Exercise: Ignatian Meditation (15’)

1. Invite members to use Ignatian Meditation to pray with the suggested passage (Mk 10:13-16). If needed, you can go over its method on page….in their journal booklet. Or you can guide your group through the meditation yourself.
2. Give them a period of silence to meditate the scripture passage. Play some instrumental music during prayer.
3. Invite them to pray and answer “Mother of Sorrows” Reflection questions on the next page.

Sharing

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action: invite members to do research on Education and Poverty

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Invite members to mention the names of the children whom they serve out loud and pray for them. Conclude the prayer with the Prayer of Generosity by St. Ignatius of Loyola:

Lord, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
To give and not to count the cost;
To fight and not to heed the wounds;
To toil and not to seek for rest;
To labor and not to ask for reward,
Except to know that I am doing your will.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

We are to become identified with [Christ’s] mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives…(GP #8). Each of us receives from God a call to make Christ and his saving action present to our surroundings…(GP #8A).

The more I grow in gratitude of God's plentiful love for me and all of creation, the more will I respond fully and generously in service or and with others. Gratitude fuels my striving to love as I have been loved (CLC spirituality).
Mother of Sorrows Reflection Questions
Ignatian Meditation (Lectio Divina)

1/ Ponder and reflect on the passage (Mk 10:13-16). Notice any words, images, or phrases that strike you. Stay there and ruminate on them. Let God’s spirit guide your thinking, imagining, remembering, etc. What words, images, or phrases that touch you?

2/ What were some of your feelings and thoughts emerged during prayer? What do you think Jesus is saying to you personally?

3/ Recall and describe your service experience: Who were you with? What did you do? What were some of your feelings and thoughts before the service? On the way to service? During the service? After the service?

4/ Were there any moments that you felt a sense of peace, joy, or consolation? Describe.

5/ As you look back to your service experience, how did it affect you? Were there any questions or thoughts that arose within you? How do you see your service experience helping you to discover and live out your truest self?
'Mother of Sorrows has really changed'
The South Los Angeles parochial school almost closed 10 years ago. But with a renovated campus and renewed emphasis on academics, it's attracting attention — and new students.

By R. W. Dellinger

During the late 1990s, Mother of Sorrows School in South Los Angeles certainly lived up to its name. Enrollment had dropped from 250 students in 1994-95 to less than 150 in 1999. Teachers were laid off and those who remained often weren't paid on time. Classes were combined; test scores were low. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur who started the parochial school in 1948 were gone, and there was a constant turnover in administration and faculty. The whole school community seemed to be suffering from the same inner-city malaise that pervaded its gang-plagued neighborhood.

Today, after an extensive summer renovation financed by the John and Dorothy Shea Foundation, Mother of Sorrows has gone from being a nondescript barred-up building at Main Street and 87th Place to a two-toned Carolina blue-and-white academy of urban learning.

Double-paned bullet-proof windows, frosted on the bottom to keep prying eyes from looking into classrooms, were installed, along with a dozen security cameras. Bathrooms were gutted with new plumbing installed, while the entire school was rewired. New whiteboards and bulletin boards went up in brighter freshly-painted classrooms. On a walking tour around the two-story structure — which once housed a convent upstairs that's now vacant — principal Jennifer Beltramo can barely contain herself.

"The reaction of the kids has really been incredible," she reports, with little of her east Tennessee accent left intact. "The students have always had a very strong pride in the school. Now all the renovations have just renewed their pride. They want to tell other people and invite them in. "Parents have started telling their friends and families to bring their kids here, too. We've had at least 10 families come in off the street to enroll their children, which has never happened before. And the older kids have lockers for the first time, which is like heaven for middle school students because it feels like high school. But all the students understand the gifts that have been given to them and really appreciate it."

Enrollment is up to 210 students, with 85 percent being Latino and the remaining 15 percent African American and Belizean. Almost all are poor, qualifying for free or reduced-priced lunches and tuition assistance from the Catholic Education Foundation and other sources. Boys wear black polo shirts and slacks, girls have a more traditional look in their plaid uniforms and white blouses.

Emphasis on academics
But there's something else besides a spruced-up renovated campus that's attracting new students to Mother of Sorrows School, according to Beltramo. And that has to do with a renewed emphasis on academics, from kindergarten through eighth grade, with plans to open a pre-school next year. When the principal came to Mother of Sorrows seven years ago as a student-teacher in the University of Notre Dame's ACE (Alliance for Catholic Education) program, only 20 percent of graduates were going on to Catholic high schools. Last year the figure jumped to 80 percent. She says that's crucial because at the two local public secondary schools, John C. Fremont and Locke high schools, nine-out-of-ten students don't graduate, with only 10 percent going to college.

Beltramo credits the Sisters of Charity, who have sponsored Mother of Sorrows for nearly nine years, for the dramatic turnaround. The religious community has not only sponsored the school, but also supplies a development director, counselor and kindergarten aide today. "The Sisters serve the poorest of the poor, following St. Vincent de Paul's mission," she says. "So they want to make sure that every family, regardless of their income, can find a way to have a quality education for their children. So it's not only helping with scholarships to get into the school, but helping to make sure that the school is able to provide a good education, whether it's through resources or textbooks or teachers."
In fact, this school year Mother of Sorrows has five new teachers. Besides two from ACE, there are two graduates of Loyola Marymount University's PLACE (Partners in Los Angeles Catholic Education) Corps and one from Response Ability, a ministry of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus Sisters. Beltramo stresses that she wanted to put together a strong energetic faculty dedicated to working in the inner city.

'Everything works!'
Robert Parra has taught seventh- and eighth-graders at the school since 1992. When he came to teach algebra and social studies, Mother of Sorrows was so impoverished there wasn't even a planned-out yearly budget. He recalls the principal taking money from his own wallet to buy school supplies, an example Parra and many other teachers followed over the years. The teachers, he maintains, were the ones who really kept Mother of Sorrows going.

"It's a completely different school," the veteran educator observes. "This year is the first year it's ever looked this good. When the kids wrote letters to the benefactors, they said, 'It looks like a real school now. The windows work. The heater and air conditioner work. Everything works!'"

Parra agrees with his current principal that the other big change has been the number of students being able --- with tuition assistance from individuals, the Sisters of Charity, the Catholic Education Foundation and other sources --- to go on to Catholic high schools such as Verbum Dei, St. Mary's Academy, Serra, St. Bernard and Notre Dame Academy.

"We're providing avenues to them for a good high school education," he notes. "We're helping to prep them to pass the high school exams, especially the writing part. That wasn't happening before, but it's happening now. The only thing I wish is that all this had happened 10 or 15 years ago."

Rounding a corner
A schoolyard sampling of students readily concur.

"It's gotten better because the Shea Foundation renovated it and the Sisters of Charity donated a lot of things," reports Jesslin Chacon, a seventh-grader. "Plus we have a new lunch program." The latter especially got the 12-year-old's attention because she wants to go to Bishop Conaty-Our Lady of Loretto High School with the career goal of becoming a gourmet chef.

Classmate Ruby Brione, who's hoping to attend Notre Dame Academy and eventually become a lawyer, was impressed by another change: "I think it's safer, because with the cameras around school now and bullet-proof windows we have more security."

What excites Ivan Veliz, a self-proclaimed computer nerd, is the more advanced computer lab. "And the teachers try to get you more prepared," he points out. The 13-year-old wants to go to Serra High School.

"With the new colors, our school stands out more," says Jose Herrera, 14. "And we've got lockers." The eighth-grader has applied to Verbum Dei and Loyola high schools.

Another eighth grade student, Leon Floyd, also likes the new sharp colors, both inside and outside the building. But he says there's also a new spirit at the parochial school. "Mother of Sorrows has really changed," he reports. "Like from teachers to a new paint job and lockers and new classrooms. A lot of things have happened here."

These comments bring a smile to Jennifer Beltramo's face. "I definitely believe we've rounded a corner," she says. "I still think we have a ways to go. But the entire school is moving forward."
11 Facts about Education and Poverty in America

1. What is the Poverty Line, anyway? According to the U.S. Census Bureau, it's a family of four (two adults, two children) that earns less than $19,157.

2. Still, $35,000 is basic-needs budget for a U.S. family of four (two adults, two children), as calculated in An Atlas of Poverty in America.

3. In 2006, nearly 37 million people Americans lived in poverty; 12.8 million were under the age of 18.

4. In the US, poverty is still tied to race: 33% of black children live below the poverty line while 10% of white children do.

5. School budgets are tied to property taxes. This is why schools in poor neighborhoods get about half as much money per student than schools in affluent neighborhoods.

6. Three-quarters of the nation's schools (almost 60,000) report needing repairs, renovations or modernization in order to reach good condition.

7. Not surprisingly, most schools in bad condition are in cities where at least 70% of students are below the poverty line.

8. Urban students are less likely to graduate than their suburban counterparts. High school graduation rates are 15% lower in the nation’s urban schools when compared with those located in the suburbs.

9. Graduation rates are also lower among certain groups, particularly ethnic minorities and males. In 2004, the graduation rate among African-Americans was 53.4% compared to 76.2% for whites.

10. In 2004, 17 of the nation's 50 largest cities had high school graduation rates lower than 50%, with the lowest rates reported in Detroit (24.9%), Indianapolis (30.5%) and Cleveland (34.1%).

11. Children of poor families are up to six times more likely to drop out than wealthy children.

Are you inspired to make a difference?
#3 Service & Theological Reflection

**Scripture**

“Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer, while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all My holy mountain," says the LORD. (Isaiah 65:20-25)

*1 Cor 9:4,7-10* Do we not have a right to our food and drink?

*Matt 5:10-12* Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven

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**Coordinators Note:** This meeting is useful after any service or immersion activity that the group has done together or individually. Invite members to bring pictures or items from the day with them to this meeting to form a reminder of the experience as it is being prayed over.

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

**I. Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: to listen for what God is cultivating in me as I have served others, through a service experience or immersion.

**II. Short Check-In (5’)**

**III. Focus Exercise (40’): Theological Reflection**

**Materials Needed:** prayer journal, pictures from the service or immersion experience

⊕ **Introduction:**

The purpose of this activity is to give us the opportunity to step back and allow the experience we had to sink in. There is a value in doing acts of service. However, in CLC we believe that service is linked to our faith and to the life of our community. Service is not an extra thing that we add on if we have the time, but rather an outgrowth of our relationship with God and one another as a community. By allowing ourselves to be transformed by experiences with the poor and marginalized, we can learn more about who we are, what we are passionate about, and how God is calling us to respond to the needs of the world. It is also a reminder to us that we are a part of one human family created in God’s image and likeness. When one part of the body suffers, we all suffer.
Exercise: Using Theological Reflection to Explore a Service or Immersion Experience

1. Recall the service event or immersion experience. Try to call to mind the people whom you met there—those who were the beneficiaries of the work of the agency, the regular volunteers, the employees. It may be helpful to have pictures from the experience to look at during the meditation and prayer time.

2. Name and describe any feelings that emerge for you as you think about the experience. Was there anger, sadness, frustration, confusion, peace, joy? No feelings are “good” or “bad”. Just allow all possible feelings to come to the group. Keep the focus on emotions rather than on analyzing the process or the events or the emotions themselves.

3. Identify what factors might contribute to these feelings only after the feelings have been named. You may want to think about what factors contribute to the situation - who holds power? What systems are in place or are lacking that allows such a situation to happen? Are there economic or social issues at play? Use the page in your journal Tenants of Catholic Social Teaching to help you identify some of these factors.

4. Spend some time as a group sitting in prayer, asking the question, “God what are you saying to me right now about this situation?” Where was God present? Where did you feel distance or absence from God?

5. Share with the group what you feel at this moment. How are you feeling about the service experiences or immersion now that you have spent time in prayer with them?

6. Pray together as a group. Allow each person to speak a prayer aloud for how they are being invited to respond at this moment. It could be a prayer of surrender, a prayer of petition, a commitment to take action in a certain concrete way, or a decision to learn more about an aspect of the social issues involved.

Deep Listening

1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?

2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?

3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: are there any underlying issues that remain unsettled or unresolved?

Action: is there any concrete action that we feel called to take on personally or communally in response to what has been shared here?

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events. Plan for the next service opportunity.
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Jesus dreamt
Of a world
Of one
Global family
Each person
Relationship
Friendship
And blood family
Being a gift
From his Abba
Attempting to
Overcome the
Barriers of
Race, colour,
Sex and creed.
Locally we
Come together
With our individualities
Our languages
And cultures
Separate and distinct....

But there are
The obstacles
Of not knowing
Each other
And therefore
Experiencing a degree
Of unsureness
And fear.
We pass different ones
Sometimes as shadows...
Each of us
So tends to
Be centred on self
And yet how
We hunger for
Change, conversion
Of our hearts
And minds.

...adapted by John Veltri from a poem by T. McKillop

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

Living with the poor and sharing their condition, Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity in our human family (GP #1).

The Community urges us to proclaim the Word of God and to work for the reform of structures in society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims from all sorts of discrimination and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor… Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ (GP #8c).
1. **Life and Dignity of the Human Person:** We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

2. **Call to Family, Community, and Participation:** We work to protect the social structures of families and communities that seek the common good and well being of all, especially the poor.

3. **Rights and Responsibilities:** Every person has a fundamental right to life and to human decency and we have a responsibility to protect these rights for all members of our society.

4. **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:** Jesus models for us the value of the poor and instructs us to make the most poor and vulnerable a priority and their protection a necessity.

5. **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers:** People are not made to serve the economy. We must protect the dignity and rights of workers and ensure respect, just wages, and the right to organize in ways that protect and promote God’s creation.

6. **Solidarity:** We are members of one body in Christ, brothers and sisters in one human family, regardless of race and creed.

7. **Care for God’s Creation:** We are meant to care for the Earth and show respect for the Creator by our good stewardship. We must also care for the poor who are most affected when we as a society damage the environment.
Part 1: Who Am I?
#1 Summer in Review

Scripture

When the Lord saw him coming over to look at it more closely, God called out to him from the bush, "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Here I am." God said, "Come no nearer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your father,.....I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry .....Come, now! I will send you to Pharaoh to lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." (Exodus 3:4-10)

Jn 13:1-20 Peter asked Jesus, “Are you going to wash my feet?....”
Isaiah 52:7 “How beautify upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring glad tidings...”

Note: This meeting is meant to be a first meeting after summer break.

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

Welcome members back after the break and thank them for coming. If you have new members, welcome them and explain briefly about your group experiences and the meeting format.

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to find God in summer break.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: After reading the scripture, say.... “Lord, we thank You for gathering us here. We believe You are here with us, for You promised to be present wherever two or three are gathered in Your name. We ask You to open our hearts to Your love and blessings. Help us to reflect upon our breaks and to find You in places we have been. Just as you told Moses to remove the sandals from his feet, for the place where he stands is holy ground, so help us to recognize the places we have been were holy. Amen.

Note: encourage each member to take a turn in leading an opening prayer from now on. Assign a member to lead the next meeting.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Feet-tracing activity

Materials Needed: CD player and the song “The Places You Find Love” by Quincy Jones (or a similar song and copies of the lyrics (if desired), paper and pens, scissors and markers.
Introduction:
1. If you use the song, invite members to listen to the words of a song, such as Jones’ “The Places You Find Love,” on page... in their journal booklets. Ask the group to reflect on the words as they listen. Encourage them to mark key words or phrases for discussion. After the song, invite them to reflect on significant locations or places where they have found love.
2. Refer to Jones’ and Moses’ experiences of holy places, where they encountered God and lead to the activity below

Exercise: Feet-tracing activity (15’)
1. Have them trace their feet (either left or right) on the provided pieces of paper.
2. On the palm of their feet, have them write the names of all the places they have been during the summer. Circle 2 or 3 places that they consider as significant.
3. On the toes, have them write adjective words to describe their feelings about those places.
4. On the other side of the sheet, have them write what messages God wants to tell them through those places. (Give them about 5 minutes to pray and reflect)

Sharing: encourage everyone to share what they wrote on both sides

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation. Emphasize one hallmark of our CLC spirituality is to find God in all things: places, people, events, etc.

Action: notice where you tend to experience God on campus. Go back to the place and pray for the grace you need for this semester. Here are two suggested questions to pray:
1. What do you hope to get out of CLC in this school year?
2. Ask God, “What do you hope for me in this school year?”

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

As St. Teresa of Avila says,

“Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

Encourage each members to lift up their petitions and prayers out loud.

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**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*Members come together on a regular basis in a stable local community, to assure a deep sharing of their faith and human life, a true community atmosphere and a strong commitment to mission and service (GP #11).*

*Our community is made up of Christians: men and women, youth and adults, of all social conditions (GP #4).*

*Truly it is a retreat in every day life (SpEx 19).*

*A time for intimate contact between God and the retreatant (SpEx 2).*
The Places You Find Love  
(by Quincy Jones)

It was raining when I met you. You were soaking wet,  
No time to be impressed, and I remember so much later  
On, I knew that you were someone I would not forget.  
Everybody's searching, hungry for the glamour, you  
Know too many hearts are in a rush. No matter how you  
Try to, you can't explain the places you find love.

I can't explain it, but I can feel it all around me.  
The need to find the place where the feeling can be  
Safe. It's not money that buys happiness. No, it's not  
The shine of silver that puts the heart to rest.  
Everybody's pushing, the clock is always running, and no  
One ever seems to have enough. And when you least expect  
It, you come upon the places you find love. Love, love,  
remember...

Chorus 1  
In a flash, the feeling can hit you after all the times  
That it's missed you, reaching deep inside to find your  
Secret heart, yeah yeah. Look around, you'll notice  
You're flying, and for once, you're not even trying, city  
Lights below you like a million tiny stars, oh yeah.

It's a river never stopping, winding in and out, but you  
Should never doubt. It will lead you to the ocean someday.  
There's no way to fight it, let it carry you away.  
Everybody's dreaming, waiting for the feeling, that moment  
When they finally rise above. But it's always in the giving  
That gets you to the place you find love. Love, remember...

Chorus 2  
In the poorest part of town, where the sun never reaches the  
Ground, and seeing's not believing, the feeling stays alive,  
Yeah yeah. Little children laughing and playing 'cause they  
Haven't learned to start hating. Never give up, no 'cause  
They still believe in love, sweet love.

Love. Love. Love. Love. Love, remember...
Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to get in touch with our hopes for the year and make covenant with God.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer or use the one below: After reading the scripture, say….. “Lord, we thank You for gathering us here tonight. We ask You to help us get in touch with our hopes and desires for the year. We also ask for the grace of being open to make a covenant with You. Just as you have promised to be the God of Israel and Judah and take care of them, please continue to be our God. Help us to continue to choose You as our God for we belong to You as your people. Amen.”

Note: ask for a volunteer to lead opening and closing prayers for the next meeting

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Covenant with God

Materials Needed: CD player and the song “River of Hope” by Susan J. Paul or “Dreams I dream for you” by Avalon, CLC covenant cloth or poster, Awareness Examen bookmarks, and CLC journal booklets (from CLC office)

Introduction: tonight we are going to talk about our hopes for the year and then discuss the meeting topics.
Exercise 1: Our Covenant with God (15’)
1. Open your journal booklet to “Our Covenant with God” on page…… Encourage members to pray and write down the answers. Give them about 5 minutes or so to pray. Play some instrumental music during prayer.
2. Put CLC Covenant cloth or poster in the middle of the circle.

Sharing:
1. Encourage everyone to share.
2. My hopes and commitments: After each person shared, have each member write his or her commitment on the back of the Awareness Examen bookmark. (note: if for some reason they don’t have Examen bookmarks, you either give or encourage them to make one). Invite members to put the bookmark on their prayer centers at home, which you will discuss more later.
3. Our hopes and commitments. Say, “In a few minutes, we are going to make covenant with God. Before we do that, we need to come up with 2 or 3 common hopes and commitments that our group wants to commit to each other and God.”
   - Ask, “Do you hear any common hopes and commitments from what we’ve shared?” Allow time to discuss. Here are a few suggestions for the group to consider: attend weekly meetings, pray with Awareness Examen regularly, attend Spiritual Retreat as a retreatant, do group service once per semester, attend CLC event, etc.). Choose two or three common hopes and commitments.
   - Write or draw images that captures the group’s hopes or graces to pray for in the center and the group’s commitments around the CLC Covenant cloth. Feel free to decorate it. Once this is done, tell members that we are going to display it in our prayer center each meeting as a way to remind ourselves.

Exercise 2: Meeting Topics for the year (10’)
1. Members’ input: Allow times to discuss the meeting topics. Encourage members to keep in mind their hopes of the year and the graces we pray for. Which meeting topics would be helpful for us to receive the graces we pray for?
2. Formation team’s input: Share with members our formation team’s research studies from these past few years. The results show that in Phase 2, members want to be challenged more. They want to have a stronger sense of belonging in CLC. They want to have opportunities to explore the questions of self-identity and of faith and justice. They want to know how to discern and choose activities and people that help them grow fully and get closer to God.

Thus, the team designed the meetings in Phase 2 with the members’ desires in mind. They highly recommend us to follow the meetings and the spiritual movements. The main focus of this year is to explore two important themes: Who am I? Who is God for me? If helpful, you can refer them to see the meeting topics under the Table of Contents on the first page of their journal booklets or just mention them out loud. (note: feel free to adjust meeting topics within the themes according to your group’s needs)
Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action:
1. prayer center: encourage members to create a prayer center in their rooms and put their commitment bookmarks on it as a reminder of their own covenant with God. Choose one habit to work on until they receive the grace they pray for. (note: if needed, explain prayer center is a “sacred space” to remind ourselves of the presence of God. It could be as simple as a candle and a cloth, a sacred image, a bible, a crucifix, etc.)
2. prayer partner: pray for each other during the week and get together once for cp time. If needed, explain cp (cura personalis—care for the whole person)

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
- for our next meeting, bring your shoe box or any empty box if you have one. If not, we will provide you one. (Note: group leaders get boxes from the CLC office)

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Encourage everyone to pray for each other’s hopes for the semester by praying for the person to their left. Member A prays for member B, who will then pray for C and so on.

(Coordinator should begin first) I would like to pray in thanksgiving for …..

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

“The Three Divine Persons, contemplating the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions, decide to give themselves completely to all men and women and liberate them from all their chains” (GP#1).

It is good to remember that we are always in the context of prayer….(SpEx 3).
Our Covenant with God

Is there the difference between contract and covenant? We often use these two words interchangeably, but there is a huge difference in the bible. The contract is defined as an agreement between two or more parties, especially one that is written and enforceable by law. When one party breaches the agreement, s/he will be fined according to the contract and/or the other is no longer obliged to keep it. The covenant, on the other hand, often mentioned in the bible, means a promise. God, not humans, initiates the covenant. When humans break the promise, God still keep His promises.

Suggested questions to pray and share:

1/ Your hopes for the year
   - What do you hope to get out of CLC this year? Name one or two graces you would like to receive by the end of this year?

   - In what ways or actions are you going to commit yourself in living out your hopes? Any specific habits? (see the suggestion of CLC habits on the next page in your booklet)

2/ Your hopes for our group
   - What are your hopes for our CLC group in this school year? Name one or two graces you would like our group to receive by the end of this year?

   - In what ways or actions are you going to commit yourself to our group?

3/ Our commitments: In what concrete ways do you think our group should commit to each other and God? Name one or two specific actions (e.g., attend weekly meeting, awareness examen, retreat, group service, CLC events, etc….)

4/ God’s hopes: Imagine God is sitting in front of you. Ask God, “Do you have any hopes for me? For my CLC group?”
CLC Habits: living out CLC way of life

Choices → Actions → Habits → Character → Vocation → Mission →
Communion with God

How might God invite me to adopt & cultivate 1 or 2 suggested habits below?

1/ Build stronger community:
- attend all of my CLC group meetings
- be more vulnerable, honest, and real
- care and support one another with a love that
  empowers – helps one another discover and develop our unique gifts
  transforms – helps one another change positively
- participate in campus wide CLC events at least once a month (BBQ, Bowling, Agape
  Latte, etc.)
- ask someone to serve as your accountability partner to be
  faithful with a habit you’re working on
  attentive and disciplined in an area of struggle or of growth

2/ Grow in my journey of faith:
- pray regularly: daily Awareness Examen, quiet reflection, journaling, pray with the
  graces and prayer materials from CLC meetings, and other ways of praying such as
  Taize, eXaLT, etc.
- read the Bible or spiritual readings (10’ everyday)
- participate in Sunday Worship or Mass every Sunday
- go to Confessions during Advent and Lent
- attend a spiritual retreat as a retreatant once a year
- see a spiritual director
- get enough sleep and exercise regularly

3/ Become a person with and for others
- serve the poor and marginalized regularly
- reach out to the lonely and marginalized in CLC and beyond
- raise greater awareness of justice issues locally, nationally, and globally
- keep up with my studies as a way to develop my gifts for furthering God’s kingdom of
  peace and justice
- live simply so others simply live

Daily habit: Actualize our greatest yet unused power--be the difference that makes the differ-
ence in a person’s life/day!!

What kind of person do I want to become?
Who I am is God’s gift to me
Who I become is my gift to God
#3 Who am I?

**Scripture**

O Lord…what are human beings that You are mindful of them, mortals that You care for them? Yet You have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works. You have given them dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under their feet….  
(Ps 8:1, 4-5)

*Gen 1:26*  Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness.”

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

**I. Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: to grow in a greater awareness of how we see and define ourselves

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer or use the one below: After reading the scripture, say….. *Lord, we thank You for gathering us here tonight. We gather here tonight to explore the question, “Who am I?” Help us to grow in a greater awareness of how we see and define ourselves because it affects how we live and relate to You and others. Amen.*

Note: ask for a volunteer to lead opening and closing prayers for the next meeting.

**II. Short Check-In (5’)**

**III. Focus Exercise (40’): My Self Box**

**Materials Needed:** the songs, “Who I am” by Jessica Andrews or “Who am I” by Casting Crowns; empty shoes boxes or any boxes (from CLC office); markers; journal booklets;

- **Introduction:**

  1. Feel free to use any song to set the tone.
  2. In the next few weeks, we are going to begin our inner journey in exploring the question, “Who am I?” How we see and define ourselves affects how we live and relate with others and God.
  3. Tonight, we are going to have an activity called, “My Self Box.” Encourage them to do it prayerfully. Play some instrumental music during the activity.
Exercise: My Self Box

1. Materials ready: make sure that you have all materials ready and everyone has a box. Imagine the box symbolizes everything about you.

2. Step 1: outside the box, write or draw images how others (family, friends, staff, etc) see you. Give them some suggested questions and ideas…
   - Name 2 or 3 words or phrases others would describe about you
   - Name 2 or 3 things others like about you
   - Name 2 or 3 things others might not like about you
   - Or whatever else come to your mind
   Note: wait until they are done with this step, then say the next step….

3. Step 2: inside the box, write or draw images how you see yourself.
   - Name 2 or 3 words or phrases you would describe about yourself
   - Name 2 or 3 things you like about yourself
   - Name 2 or 3 things you might not like about yourself
   - Or whatever else come to your mind
   Note: wait until they are done with this step before you mention the next step

4. Step 3: in the center of the box, write or draw images how God sees you.
   - Name 2 or 3 words or phrases God would describe about you
   - Name 2 or 3 things God like about you
   - Name 2 or 3 things God might not like about you
   - Or whatever else come to your mind
   Note: wait until they are done with this step.

5. Step 4: once they are finished, invite members to pray with the box. If helpful, ask the following questions prayerfully
   - Are there any similarities and differences among the three (others, you, and God)?
   - Any surprises? Insights?
   - What do you think God is saying to you?

Sharing: encourage members to share. If helpful, refer to the same reflection questions above.
   1. Are there any similarities and differences among the three (others, you, and God)?
   2. Any surprises? Insights?
   3. What do you think God is saying to you?

Deep Listening
   1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
   2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
   3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?
IV. Moving Forward (5’)

を持っている: 会員の理解と参加への感謝。

行動:
1. 会員を「Myself Box」という近くの祈りの中心に置き、それに続く祈りを行うこと。
2. 祈りのパートナーを入れ替える。

お知らせ: 付次会議のテーマとCLCventsの情報。

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

を持っている: 各人に祈りを送れるように、隣の人に対して祈ること。

（リーダーが最初に始める）I would like to pray in thanksgiving for …..

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

……God creates me out of love and desires nothing more than a return of love on my part. So much does God love me that even though I turn away and make little response, this Giver of all good gifts continues to be my Savior and Redeemer (SpEx 234).
Who Am I?
(by Casting Crowns)

Who am I?
That the Lord of all the earth,
Would care to know my name,
Would care to feel my hurt.
Who am I?
That the bright and morning star,
Would choose to light the way,
For my ever wondering heart.

Not because of who I am,
But because of what you've done.
Not because of what I've done,
But because of who you are.

I am a flower quickly fading,
Here today and gone tomorrow.
A vapor in the wind.
Still you hear me when I'm calling.
Lord, you catch me when I'm falling.
And you've told me who I am.
I am yours.

Who am I?
That the eyes that see my sin
Would look on me with love
And watch me rise again.

Who am I?
That the voice that calmed the sea
Would call out through the rain,
And calm the storm in me.
Scripture

It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Him. And a voice came from the heavens, “You are my beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.” (Mk 1:10-11)

Is 43:1-5 “I have called you by name: you are mine…”
Is 49:15-16 “I will never forget you. See, I have carved you on the palm of my hand…”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to open ourselves to knowing and living that at our deepest, truest core, we are God’s Beloved

“Just being (with God and myself)”

After prayerfully reading the following prompt (or something similar of your own), ask for the grace above and invite everyone to just “be” in silence for about five minutes.

“Prayer is an effective path to help us journey towards are truest selves. This journey is more about creating space for a ‘deeper recognition of what is already there.’ For something hidden to be awakened, to unfold. That ‘something’ is the hidden pearl of great value, our deepest desire, our true-self before God.

Prayer is letting God be God. When we enter prayer, we are entering a world we have little if no control over. Prayer involves the willingness to be present with what is. We are invited to let-go, for we do not really know who we are, or what prayer is, or what will happen during prayer. When we pray, we are entering a ‘cloud of unknowing,’ the Mystery of God within. All we have to ‘do’ is show up and let whatever happens happen. God is already waiting…loving…inviting…”

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): My Inner Journey

Materials Needed: journal booklets

Introduction: We will be looking deeper at the question “Who am I?” by considering how God fundamentally sees and identifies us. To help us begin, we’ll start by reading two passages from John. Then, we’ll use one model of answering the question “Who am I?” to explore our lives and who we are in God’s eyes.

_filled_exercise:_ My Inner Journey

Invite two members to read both of the passages from John’s Gospel (see “What are you looking for?”…“Who are you looking for?” sheet), asking them to listen for the key questions Jesus asks in each.

Comment on the passages:
“Jesus’ first and last questions in John’s Gospel (“What are you looking for?” and “Whom are you looking for?”) uncover our fundamental quest. We are all on a spiritual journey: a journey to become more fully alive, the person we are meant to be; a pilgrimage of answering our callings in life, to fulfill our meaning and purpose. This is the journey within, from our head (who we think we should be) to our heart (who we truly are). Undertaking this journey, to the “TRUTH” of who we are, is like unwrapping a package with three layers.”

Go over the “My Inner Journey” handout with members together. Maybe ask them to take turns reading parts. Ask if they have any questions about what the handout is saying. Ask them how they feel about this way of understanding themselves. Do they like/dislike it? Why/why not? Invite them to fill out their own “inner journey” circle. Invite members to share what they included in their “inner journey” circle with the following questions.

(*Note: If members have any strong objections to the circle model, explain that this is just an exercise. They do not have to agree with the model but are being asked to consider their life through this particular lens for the moment. If they still feel uncomfortable completing it, invite them to modify their circle however they would like.)

1. What are some of things you included in the “Facts” and “Choices” layers of your circle?
2. How did you feel naming these things as “facts” and “choices”? Was it easy? Difficult? Did you struggle with the idea that these things are “facts” or “choices” according to the handout’s description?
3. Have there been times in your life when you identified yourself by the “facts” and “choices” of your life (whether they are things you like or dislike about your life)? Explain.
4. How do you feel about the center of the circle, that the “Truth” of ourselves is ultimately that we are God’s beloved (that the “facts” and “choices” of our lives are a part of us…but NOT who we most truly are)?
5. How would you say you most fundamentally identify “you” right now according to this model? By your “facts”? “choices”? “truth”? A combination thereof?
Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action: spend a prayer period in silence, just allowing yourself to be with God. Ask God for the grace to see yourself as God sees you. Ask God to show you who you truly are.

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events. Ask members to BRING BACK their BOXES next time/next week.

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

_A Blessing of Solitude_

May you recognize in your life the presence, power, and light of your soul.

May you realize that you are never alone, that your soul in its brightness and belonging connects you intimately to the rhythm of the universe.

May you have respect for you individuality and difference.

May you realize that the shape of your soul is unique, that you have a special destiny here.

That behind the façade of your life there is something beautiful, good, and eternal happening.

May you learn to see yourself with the same delight, pride, and expectation with which God sees you in every moment.

_Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms_

Our community is made up of Christians: men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with Him for the building of the Kingdom ... (GP #4)

The Exercises are, above all, a time for intimate contact between God and the retreatant... (SpEx 19).
“What are you looking for?”…

“Who are you looking for?”

“The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them," Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.”

(John 1:35-39)

“But Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been. And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken my Lord, and I don't know where they laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" She thought it was the gardener and said to him, "Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni," which means Teacher.”

(John 20:11-16)
The Inner Journey

Jesus’ first and last questions in John’s Gospel uncovers our fundamental quest. We are all on a spiritual journey: a journey to become more fully alive, the person we are meant to be; a pilgrimage of answering our callings in life, to fulfill our meaning and purpose. This is the journey within, from our head (who we think we should be) to our heart (who we truly are). Undertaking this journey, to the \textbf{“TRUTH”} of who we are, is like unwrapping a package with three layers:

1. \textbf{“FACTS”} that make up who I am: this outermost layer of ourselves and our living consists of our circumstances: those things we cannot change, or not very easily: our family and culture, our state of health and level of education, our strengths and our weaknesses, our personal history. We spend most of our time and energy in this layer, on the outside edge of ourselves.

2. \textbf{“CHOICES”} that shapes who I am: in this middle layer we can exercise some choice. We may not be able to change our circumstances (like the way others acts, the way we feel…) but we have a choice about how we respond to them. We may have no choice about who we get as a family member or work colleagues, but we can choose how we will relate to them. Every moment of my life I can choose to be truthful, my truest-self, loving, or otherwise. And these choices influence the people and world around me.

3. \textbf{“TRUTH”} of who I am: this deepest layer takes risk and the willingness to go beyond one’s comfort and control. Thus, few people journey to this center. As I move inward to toward the center of myself, I move closer to the person I most truly am before God. This is dangerous ground, for I cannot predict what I will encounter: I will discover my shame yet find my glory; I will confront my darkest fear yet embrace my deepest desire. Here, I encounter the LIVING GOD and my truest-self.

Prayer is an effective path to help us on this journey, which is more about creating space for "a deeper recognition of what is already there."

\textbf{Prayer is letting God be God.} When we enter prayer, we are entering a world we have little if no control. Prayer involves the willingness to be present with what is. We are invited to let-go, for we do not really know who we are, or what prayer is, or what will happen during prayer. When we pray, we are entering a "cloud of unknowing," the Mystery of God within. All we have to "do" is show up and let whatever happens happen. God is already waiting … loving … inviting…

\textit{“Both what you run away from - and yearn for - is within you.”}  
\textit{Anthony de Mello SJ}

(Adapted from Margaret Silf’s \textit{Inner Compass})
I AM Beloved!

"Being the Beloved expresses the core truth of our existence." – Henri Nouwen

(Adapted from Margaret Silf’s *Inner Compass*)
#5 I am Special

**Scripture**

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes..." Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. (Luke 12:22-23; 27-31)

*Romans 8:37-39* Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Eph. 2:4-7* Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich with mercy, made us alive with Christ...

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

**I. Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: to see myself through God’s eyes, loved for my flaws and weaknesses as well as my strengths.

**II. Short Check-In (5’)**

**III. Focus Exercise (40’): You Are Special Story**

**Materials Needed:**
1. Stars and dots sheets, markers and pens, etc.
2. the book *You are Special* by Max Lucado (come to CLC office for the book)
3. a basket or a box to put all the dots and stars
4. My Self Boxes from previous meeting

❖ **Introduction: Stars and Dots**
Have members cut out the Stars and Dots sheet. Let them collect the number of start and dot cutouts for themselves and it’s up to them to decide how many stars and dots they want to have. On the dots, have them write out a few things about themselves that they are not proud of, their weaknesses and shortcomings. On the stars, have them write out their strengths and positive qualities.

❖ **Exercise: You Are Special**
Read “You are Special”; by Max Lucado.
Sharing
1. What is your reaction to the story?
2. Have you allowed the stars and dots to take control of your feelings towards yourself?
3. Do you notice a shift in the way you feel about the things you wrote down now that you have heard this story?
4. Have you unfairly judged others, whether it was in regards to a positive quality or a judging of what appeared to be shortcomings?
5. Are there ways you can use your flaws and weaknesses as well as your strengths and gifts to better serve God?
6. Is there someone in your life that you could work on viewing as God views that person? Are there any ways you can respond more lovingly?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: we have taken some time tonight to look at how we see ourselves and how we interpret the way others see us. Next week we will deepen this awareness of how God sees us.

Action: try throughout the week to notice how you identify yourself with how others see you. How do you allow that to happen?

Announce: the topic for next week is “Me and Myself”. Announce any other upcoming events relevant to the group.

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Ask the members to place their stars and dots inside the box they created last week. With the boxes in front of you, pray together the Anthony De Mello poem “Don’t Change”.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

God creates me out of love and desires nothing more than a return of love on my part (SpEx 234).

God who loves us and creates us and wants to share life with us forever. Our love response takes shape in our praise and honor and service of the God of our life (SpEx 23).
Don’t Change- de Mello

I was neurotic for years. I was anxious and depressed and selfish. Everyone kept telling me to change.

I resented them, and I agreed with them, and I wanted to change, but simply couldn’t, no matter how hard I tried.

What hurt the most was that, like the others, my best friend kept insisting that I change. So I felt powerless and trapped.

Then, one day, he said to me, “Don’t change. I love you just as you are.”

These words were music to my ears: “Don’t change. Don’t change. Don’t change…I love you just as you are.”

I relaxed. I came alive. And suddenly I changed!

Now I know that I couldn’t really change until I found someone who would love me whether I changed or not.

Is this how you love me, God?
Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to grow in a greater awareness of how we reject or embrace who God has created us to be.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: After reading the scripture, say…. “God of love, we thank you for gathering us here tonight. You once have called your son, “You are my beloved.” We pray for the grace of a greater awareness of how we reject or embrace who you have created us to be. Help us to reject the loud voice saying to us, “You are no good,” and embrace the gentle voice, “You are my beloved.” Amen.

Note: assign a new member to lead opening and closing prayers in the next meeting.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): True self vs False self


❖ Introduction:
1. feel free to use any song to set a tone
2. Introduce the topic and preview the meeting
Exercise: True self vs. False self (15’)

1. Read Henri Nowen’s reflection: invite each member to take a turn to read a paragraph prayerfully out loud.

2. Pray: explain to the group that for the next 10 minutes or so, they will be engaging in a stream of consciousness writing exercise on page …..in their journal booklets. Encourage members to allow themselves to be led by the spirit, not being preoccupied with punctuation or content. In other words, consider this writing exercise as a form of prayer.
   - This is who I really am……
   - I have been true in living out my truest self in these ways….
   - I have not been true in living out my truest self in these ways….
   - Barriers that keep me from living truthfully to who I am….
   - God, you see me as….
   - God, I need a grace of …..

3. Repetition: invite members to take a couple of minutes to look over their writings and underline any parts that stand out to them or repeated themes.

Share:
Invite group members to share their writings or parts of it. In their sharing, the following questions may be helpful:
1. Was there anything that surprised you?
2. Anything that was challenging for you in the exercise?
3. How is God communicating to me through these words?
4. What parts of myself am I being called to embrace, and which parts am I being invited to grow in?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action:
1. pray awareness examen: invite members to pay attention to the moments that they live truthfully and the moments that they don’t throughout the week. Record these moments in their journal booklet.
2. switch prayer partner
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

CONFUSION (By Donald Neary, SJ)

Lord, I’m so mixed up;
There seem to be so many aspects to my personality:
With teachers and parents I am one person,
With friends I am another.

I want to do good, to follow You;
But at other times, I’m mean, I cheat, I use others for my own advantage.
You see, I’m a rag-bag of things.
Who am I, Lord, anyway?

I want to please my parents, Yet I want to be myself.
I don’t want to hurt my elders, Yet I want to be independent,
I don’t want to seem rebellious, Yet I want to be alive and spontaneous.
Tell me, Lord, how to find my true self.

Help me, Lord, to grow in confidence,
To conquer insecurity.
I know You understand who I am; Help me to know myself, forgive myself, And value myself as You do.

Lord, give me patience
With my growing-up.
Give me confidence
That within these different aspects of my personality
I will discover a self that I can accept and love.
As I discover myself, make me an instrument
For the knowledge of Your love
And the spread of Your Gospel. Amen

Please feel free to voice your own intention out loud so that we can pray with you…

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

The way in which we accept ourselves should reflect the way in which God accepts us (GP Charism II:27).

It may be quite profitable to take stock of how my living out of a particular means which I have chosen is truly responding to the faithful call of God. At this time, I should deepen the attitudes and search out ways which will better enable me to live the Christ-life in my own surroundings and environment (SpEx189).
True self vs. False self

Using stream of consciousness writing, I let my pen & spirit guide me without worrying about forming complete thoughts and sentences. I allow the pen to continuously flow forward and never back for corrections or “proof-reading.”

Before starting, I ask God for the light of the Holy Spirit to see through God’s eyes and feel with God’s heart.

1. This is who I really am……

2. I have been true in living out my truest self in these ways…. 

3. I have not been true in living out my truest self in these ways…. 

4. Barriers that keep me from living truthfully to who I am…. 

5. God, you see me as…. 

6. God, I need a grace of ….
Being the Beloved and Self-Rejection

“There is a voice that speaks from above and from within and that whispers softly or declares loudly: “You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests.” [Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:21-22]. It certainly is not easy to hear that voice in a world filled with voices that shout: “You are no good, you are ugly; you are worthless; you are despicable, you are nobody - unless you can demonstrate the opposite.”

These negative voices are so loud and so persistent that it is easy to believe them. That’s the great trap. It is the trap of self-rejection. Over the years, I have come to realize that the greatest trap in our life is not success, popularity, or power, but self-rejection. Success, popularity, and power can, indeed, present a great temptation, but their seductive quality often comes from the way they are part of the much larger temptation to self-rejection. When we have come to believe the voices that call us worthless and unlovable, then success, popularity, and power are easily perceived as attractive solutions. The real trap however, is self-rejection. I am constantly surprised at how quickly I give in to this temptation. As soon as someone accuses me or criticizes me, as soon as I am rejected, left alone, or abandoned, I find myself thinking: “Well that proves once again that I am nobody.” Instead of taking a critical look at the circumstances or trying to understand my own and other’s limitations, I tend to blame myself - not just for what I did, but for who I am. My dark side says: “I am no good… I deserve to be pushed aside, forgotten, rejected, and abandoned.” … Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the “Beloved.” Being the Beloved expresses the core truth of our existence.

I am putting this so directly and so simply because, though the experience of being the Beloved has never been completely absent from my life, I never claimed it as my core truth. I kept running around it in large or small circles, always looking for someone or something able to convince me of my Belovedness. It was as if I kept refusing to hear the voice that speaks from the very depth of my being and says: “You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests.” That voice has always been there, but it seems that I was much more eager to listen to the other, louder voices saying: “Prove that you are worth something; do something relevant, spectacular, or powerful, and then you will earn the love you so desire.” Meanwhile, the soft, gentle voice that speaks in the silence and solitude of my heart remained unheard or, at least, unconvincing.
That soft, gentle voice that calls me the Beloved has come to me in countless ways. My parents, friends, teachers, and students and the many strangers who crossed my path have all sounded that voice in different tones. I have been cared for by many people with much tenderness and gentleness. I have been taught and instructed with much patience and perseverance. I have been encouraged to keep going when I was ready to give up and was stimulated to try again when I failed. I have been encouraged to keep going when I was ready to give up and was stimulated to try again when I failed. I have been encouraged to keep going when I failed. I have been rewarded and praised for success…but, somehow, all of these signs of love were not sufficient to convince me that I was the Beloved. Beneath all my seemingly strong self-confidence there remained the question: “If all those who shower me with so much attention could see me in my innermost self, would they still love me?” That agonizing question, rooted in my innermost shadow, kept persecuting me and made me run away from the very place where that quiet voice calling me the Beloved could be heard.

We are the Beloved. We are intimately loved long before our parents, teachers, spouses, children and friends loved or wounded us. That's the truth of our lives. That's the truth I want you to claim for yourself. That's the truth of the voice that says, “You are my Beloved.”

Listening to that voice with great inner attentiveness, I hear at my center words that say: “I have called you by name, from the very beginning. You are mine and I am yours. You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests. I have molded you in the depths of the earth and knitted together in your mother's womb. I have carved you in the palms of my hands and hidden you in the shadow of my embrace. I look at you with infinite tenderness and care for you with a care more intimate than that of a mother for a child. I have counted every hair on your head and guided you at every step. Wherever you go, I go with you, and wherever you rest, I keep watch. I will give you food that will satisfy all your hunger and drink that will quench all your thirst. I will not hide my face from you. You know me as your own as I know you as my own. You belong to me. I am your father, your mother, your brother, your sister, your lover, and your spouse...yes, even your child...wherever you are I will be. Nothing will ever separate us. We are one.”

Every time you listen with great attentiveness to the voice that calls you the Beloved, you will discover within yourself a desire to hear that voice longer and more deeply …”

(Henri Nouwen, Life of the Beloved, pp 30-37)
#7 Me and Others

**Scripture**

After this Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi …. He said to him, "Follow me." And leaving everything behind, he got up and followed Him. Then Levi gave a great banquet for Him in his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were at table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes complained to His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?...." (Lk 4:27-32)

2 Kgs 5:1-14 “….if only my master would present himself to the prophet in Samaria....”
Jn 8:1-11 “….Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her…”

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to grow in a greater awareness of how I see myself affects how I see and relate with others

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: After reading the scripture, say…. “God of love, we thank you for gathering us here tonight. You once have seen Levi as a human person and not a tax collector or sinner. Help us to see others as you see. Perhaps what we see in others comes from what we see in ourselves. Is there any relationship between the two, God? Amen.

Note: assign a new member to lead opening and closing prayers the next meeting.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Gazing Activity

**Materials Needed**: Journal booklet, “Gazing Activity”, optional song

- Introduction:
  1. feel free to use any song to set a tone
  2. Introduce the topic and preview the meeting
Exercise 1: Gazing Activity (15’)

- Activity: see the end of the this meeting
- Pray: invite members to pray on page ….. in their Journal booklets
  1. Name 2 or 3 persons that you are in relationships with (family, friends or significant others)
  2. As you reflect upon your relationships, what aspects of the relationships that help you to become who you are and live out your truest self?
  3. What aspects of the relationships that hinder you to become who you are and live out your truest self?
  4. What do you like about the persons? Are there any connections between what you like about the persons and what you like about yourself?
  5. What do you dislike about the persons? Are there any connections between what you dislike about the persons and what you dislike about yourself?
  6. What is God saying to you personally about how you see others?

Share:
Invite members to share their experiences of the gazing activity and of the prayer period.
In their sharing, the following questions might be helpful:
  1. Was there anything that surprised you?
  2. Any insights? Challenges?
  3. If God is sitting right here, what do you think God would say to you?

Deep Listening
  1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
  2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
  3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action:
  1. pray awareness examen: invite members to pay attention to how they see others throughout the week.
  2. switch prayer partner

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Invite members to pray out loud either before or after the inspirational thoughts below.

**Persons are Gifts**

Persons are gifts of God to me. They are already wrapped, some beautifully and others less attractively. Some have been mishandled in the mail; others come “Special Delivery.” Some are loosely wrapped; others are tightly enclosed.

But the wrapping is not the gift, and this is an important realization. It is so easy to make a mistake in this regard, to judge the contents by the cover.

Sometimes the gift is opened very easily; sometimes the help of others is needed. Maybe it is because they are afraid. Maybe they have been hurt before and don’t want to be hurt again. It could be that they were once opened and then discarded. They may now feel more like “things” than “human persons.”

I am a person, like everyone else I too am a gift. God filled me with a goodness that is only mine. And yet sometimes I am afraid to look inside my wrapping. Maybe I am afraid I would be disappointed. Maybe I don’t trust my own contents. Or is it may be that I have never really accepted the gift that I am.

Every meeting and sharing of persons is an exchange of gifts. My gift is me; your gift is you. We are gifts to each other.

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**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*For a good relationship to develop… mutual respect is very necessary… Every good Christian adopts a more positive acceptance of someone’s statement… And favorable interpretation… should always be given to the other’s statement (SpEx #22).*

*It is good to remember that we are always in the context of prayer… We should always try to maintain a spirit of deep reverence before God (SpEx #3)*.
Gazing Activity

Objective: Achieving a different type of intimacy with a person whom you are in regular contact with in order to more deeply appreciate them. (Seeing more in someone than you usually do).

I. Instruction
- Partner up in 2's, perhaps better with people who aren't best friends but that's up to you.
- Have everyone sit and explain that the activity is about getting in contact with someone in a way you may not be used to doing.
- Basically, it is a completely silent and somewhat intense activity that they'll have to commit to, and also should be prepared to be gazing at one another's eyes, expressions, and reactions for perhaps a good 5 minutes at least (which will seem like a long time looking at one person).
- It begins with just looking at your partner (not staring)... notice the awkwardness throughout the first and second minute... let the smiles come out or giggles, laughter perhaps, but re-focus.
- Then another minute in real silence just gazing... then walk through some suggestions below.....

II. Gazing
1. Person's face
   - Make note of something you like about the person's face.
   - Notice one thing you do not like about the face of the person before you. (Becoming aware of one's judgment as well as sensitivity to another's judgment). One idea here is that you and the other person judge one another, but you both keep eye contact and remain in an attentive position towards one another; no hiding.
2. Qualities of the person
   - Notice one or two of the best qualities of the person before you.
   - Make note of some things you feel this person may need improvement in. (The idea here once again is actually to be comfortable with your own feelings towards someone else and someone else's feelings toward you).
   - Note the progression of feelings you've taken... notice how the other person most likely does not know how your feelings have progressed, nor do you really know how they feel.
   - Note your body language, uncomfortable, tenseness, defenses... note the other person's body language, any weariness, awkwardness, etc.
   - Soon, after a while looking at the person before you, perhaps you may make note of feelings in this time that may have changed slightly from the way you usually react at first glance of the person before you.
3. Concern or frustration?
   - Now without anyindicative expression on your face... express concern for the other person.
   - Now if there has been some friction use this or if not imagine a scenario then express your frustration towards your partner. (No indicative expressions)
   - Now express care for the person before you. (No indicative expressions)
   - [The no obvious expression thing has to do with how care begins inside and the external expression comes from IT... and also this suggestion may deal with the way we choose how to perceive the way someone views us... ]
Me and Others

Note: Invite members to pray (see their journal booklets on page….)

Suggested questions to pray and share

1/ Name 2 or 3 persons that you are in relationships with (family, friends or significant others)

2/ As you reflect upon your relationships, what aspects of the relationships help you to become who you are and live out your truest self?

3/ What aspects of the relationships hinder you from becoming who you are and living out your truest self?

4/ What do you like about the persons? Are there any connections between what you like about the persons and what you like about yourself?

5/ What do you dislike about the persons? Are there any connections between what you dislike about the persons and what you dislike about yourself?

6/ What is God saying to you personally about how you see others?
#8 My Hands, God’s Hands

Scripture

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. (1 Jn 4:7-12)

1 Phil. 9:1-11 “And it is my prayer that Your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless…”

Matt 25: 33-46 “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink…”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: for a deepened awareness of ourselves through service.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): “Our Hands, God’s Hands” Meditation

*NOTE: This meeting is best done after the group has done some form of service recently, either as a group or as individuals.

Materials Needed: journal booklets, “Our Hands, God’s Hands” Meditation, instrumental music

Introduction: This meeting will help us get more in-touch with ourselves by reflecting on our service with and to others, as well as our other actions and activities. It is often said that, in serving, those who are offering some form of service find themselves having likewise been served (possibly even more than those they originally sought to help). In serving, we may grow in unexpected ways or learn something about how we love or interact with others. Or we may find, for example, that we could lead simpler lives and even be happier and freer as a result of working with the materially poor. We can be reminded that we are part of one human family, interdependent upon each other and responsible for one another.
Exercise: “Our Hands, God’s Hands” Meditation
Invite everyone to find a comfortable position (sitting-up), as you will be leading them through a guided meditation. Encourage them to be aware of their reactions—how they are feeling—throughout the meditation. Slowly and prayerfully read the meditation, pausing at ellipses (“…” or longer pauses for longer ellipses “……”) to allow members to imagine and enter into what is being read. Softly play instrumental music in the background. After a minute of silence, invite everyone to open their eyes and reflect on their experience in their journal booklets using the following questions. After sufficient time, encourage the group to share.

Part 1:
1. What did you feel during the meditation? What in the meditation prompted these feelings?
2. What phrases/words stood out to you? Sit with these words or phrases. Listen to what stirs within you as you meditate upon them.
3. What is God speaking to you at this moment? What is God revealing to you about who you are, how you have been shaped, how you relate to others, or ways you want to grow through service?

Part 2:
4. What experiences of service or other activities are life-giving and leading you to God right now in your life? Which experiences of service and other activities are not?
5. How might you more fully integrate service into your life?
6. How is your serving related to your relationship with God right now? Are they flowing from each other (connected and encouraging each other)? Unrelated? Something in-between?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action: have an immersion experience with the poor or marginalized as a group or individually. Pay particular attention to how that experience is helping you to get more in-touch with how you view and relate to yourself, God, and others.

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Encourage members to pray for each other by name, specifically for a deeper awareness of themselves as they continue to go out and serve. To close, perhaps pray that the group can continue to serve each other in their journeys to discover and live out who they most truly are.

**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*Living with the poor and sharing their condition, Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity in our human family (GP #1).*

*The Community urges us to proclaim the Word of God and to work for the reform of structures in society, participating in efforts to liberate the victims from all sorts of discrimination and especially to abolish differences between rich and poor… Our life finds its permanent inspiration in the Gospel of the poor and humble Christ (GP #8c).*
“Our Hands, God’s Hands” Meditation
(read slowly and prayerfully; play instrumental music in the background)

Sit straight up, feet flat on the ground, eyes closed, hands resting in your lap, palms up. Tune into your breathing…relax any parts of your body that feel tense. With each inhale feel the pressure build up in your chest…as you exhale feel the air sink into the depths of your stomach. Feel the tension move through your shoulders and arms, escaping through your fingertips……Become aware of the air at your fingertips, between your fingers, on the palm of your hand. Wiggle your fingers and experience their energy, delicacy, and intricacy……

Think of all the things that your hands have done in your lifetime. Beginning when you were a baby, your tiny perfect hands were the means by which you learned…learned to crawl and creep…then to walk and balance yourself…hold things for the first time, feed yourself, wash and dress yourself. At one time your greatest accomplishment was tying your own shoes……

As you have grown older, what else have you learned to do? Think of the things you do every day—the essays you type, the basketball you dribble, the math problems you carefully work out…the food you cook, the notes you scribble in class…the hands you shake, the artwork you create…all the kinds of work they have done, the tiredness and aching they have known, cold and heat, soreness and bruises……What else do you do that requires the use of your hands?…

How much hurt, anger and even violence have these hands expressed?…The fights they have gotten into…the doors they have shut…the phones slammed down…the drinks raised to your lips, to your already drunk body…the objectifying things done to others’ bodies or that weren’t prevented from being done to you… the joint held or passed…the people you have overlooked and failed to help…With the awesome power of these hands, comes great responsibility. Do our hands consistently do good? When have they caused pain, either to ourselves or to others?……

Our hands are not just for ourselves, but for others. Remember the tears they have wiped away, our own or another's, the blood they have bled, the healing they have experienced…Think of the loving embrace that forgives, the pat on the back of encouragement, the “high fives” and secret handshakes of solidarity. When have your own hands offered help to another, amongst your friends or in the greater community? Building a house or doing construction work in Mexico or in a poor neighborhood… offering food to those that are hungry… bringing a card to a sick neighbor…
What hands have helped you along the way…reached out and caught you when you were about the fall…picked you up after you have hit the ground? When in a busy crowd a friend reached out and grabbed your hand to make sure you did not lose your way or get separated from your group? Take a moment to reflect in gratitude for these people and experiences……

Our hands are from God and ultimately for God. How often have your hands been folded in prayer, both a sign of their powerlessness and of their power?…We come to these states of prayer in our times of gratitude and thanksgiving, as well as in our weakness and desperation. To make the sign of the cross, strike our breast, receive Communion, hold our head in our hands…hands opened in meditation, drawing in the power and strength of our Creator, and sending it forth into the world…

Raise your right hand slowly and gently place it over your heart. Press more firmly until your hand picks up the beat of your heart, a rhythm learned in the womb from the heartbeat of your mother…Press more firmly for a moment and then release your hand and lower it into your lap very carefully as if it were carrying your heart. When you extend your hand to another, it is not just bone and skin, it is your heart.

Think of all the hands that have left their imprint on you—prints that can never be erased. Think of all the places that carry your hand prints and all the people who bear your heart prints…They are indelible and will last forever. It is in this sharing of gifts and communion of hearts that we are united with one another and transformed.

Without opening your eyes, extend your hands on either side and find another hand. Do not simply hold it but try to convey a message friendship, concern. Let your hand speak to it and let it listen to the other…Try to express your gratitude for this hand stretched out to you in the dark…and then bring your hand back again to your lap. Experience the presence of that hand lingering upon your hand. The afterglow will fade, but the print is there forever…Whose hand was that? It could have been any hand; it could have been Christ's hand. In a sense, it was. Christ’s hands through human vessels. (Pause briefly, then read “St. Teresa of Ávila once said…

Christ has no body now but yours
No hands, no feet on earth but yours
Yours are the eyes through which He looks
compassion on this world
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”
#9 Me and God

**Scripture**

“As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for You, O God. My being thirsts for God, the living God. When can I go and see the face of God? My tears have been my food day and night, as they ask daily, "Where is your God?" Those times I recall as I pour out my soul, When I went in procession with the crowd, I went with them to the house of God, amid loud cries of thanksgiving, with the multitude keeping festival. Why are you downcast, my soul; why do you groan within me? Wait for God, whom I shall praise again, my savior and my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember You From the land of the Jordan and Hermon, from the land of Mount Mizar. Here deep calls to deep in the roar of your torrents. All your waves and breakers sweep over me. At dawn may the Lord bestow faithful love that I may sing praise through the night, praise to the God of my life. I say to God, "My rock, why do You forget me? Why must I go about mourning with the enemy oppressing me?" It shatters my bones, when my adversaries reproach me. They say to me daily: "Where is your God?" Why are you downcast, my soul, why do you groan within me? Wait for God, whom I shall praise again, my savior and my God.” (Psalm 42)

*Psalm 63*  
“O God, you are my God—for you I long! For you my body yearns; for you my soul thirsts, like a land parched, lifeless, and without water.

*John 14:27*  
“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.”

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

**I. Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: for greater awareness of the emptiness or restlessness in each of our hearts and what can ultimately bring our hearts greater peace.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer.

**II. Short Check-In (5’)**

**III. Focus Exercise (40’): “Inner Thoughts of an LMU Student”**

**Materials Needed:** journal booklets

Introduction: Provide a few comments about what the group has been exploring thus far, gaining greater awareness and insight into who we really are and our feelings about our identities. Explain that tonight, we are going to go a bit deeper into perhaps some of the unanswered questions about ourselves. We are hopefully going to explore where our hearts are right now, how we handle our hearts, and the place God has in our hearts.
Exercise: “Inner Thoughts of an LMU Student” Reading found on the following page.

Have everyone take turns reading. Consider taking pauses briefly after an important idea has been presented to allow the group to absorb it. After reading, present the following questions and give everyone time in silence or with meditative music to journal or reflect on their answers. Then encourage everyone to share openly.

1. What were you feeling during the reading? Did anything particularly resonate with you or not sit well with you?
2. Where in your heart do you feel at peace, full, or fulfilled right now? Where do you feel restless, empty, or lonely?
3. What do you do or turn to right now to try to fix your restlessness or emptiness? Are these things working? (Do they leave you deeply content and at peace?)
4. What, if anything, do you think is the answer or solution to your restlessness, emptiness, or loneliness? St. Augustine wrote...

“We are one of your creatures. Lord, and our instinct is to praise you. The thought of you stirs in us so deeply that we cannot be content unless we praise you, because you made us for yourself and our hearts and restless until they rest in you.”

Adapted from St. Augustine’s The Confessions

...Do you believe that God is the answer or solution? Why/why not?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action: suggest that as members pray the Awareness Examen this coming week, they ask for the grace to be aware of what they are filling their heart with, what they are doing to address their restlessness or loneliness. In addition, encourage them to pray to see how they are or are not allowing God into the restlessness and loneliness of their hearts.

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

*Let Your God Love You*

(Edwina Gateley)

Be silent.
Be still.
Alone. Empty.
Before your God.
Say nothing.
Ask nothing.
Be silent.
Be still.
Let your God
Look upon you.
That is all.
He knows.
He understands.
He loves you with
An enormous love.
He only wants to
Look upon you
With His Love.
Quiet.
Still.
Be.

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*Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms*

*I ask for the gift of being able to recognize the false lights of Lucifer...and for the help not to be led astray; I also ask for what I desire: a graced knowledge of true human living exemplified in Jesus Christ, my Lord and my God, and the grace to live my life in his way (SpEx 139).*
I finally have a moment of rest in the midst of a busy week. I can put aside the worries and stresses of the day, the paper that was due today, the draining meeting from yesterday, the people I need to call, the work that still needs to get done, the friends that want to hang-out. I can hear myself think. I sit in a chair and look out the window...and realize that the ache somewhere in the bottom of me is still there. I pause as the thought takes shape in my mind, “I’m lonely...” These aren’t words I’ve often spoken to myself or to others. It’s a feeling that perhaps I haven’t even until now really been very aware of in myself. Lately, though, I’ve been increasingly more aware of it. And yet...somehow I know that it’s been with me for a long time. Why should I feel lonely? I’m not technically “alone.” My roommates are in the apartment. My friends down the hall want to hang-out later. I spent a good part of the day with people I care about and an organization I’m passionate about. In fact, I more often find myself dying for quiet moments like these...when I can hear myself think and take-in all the events of the day.

And yet...I feel alone. It’s like an ache. At times, it’s dull and buried beneath the heavy load of being a busy student, a friend, a leader or mentor, a reliable member of the family. But at times like these, the dull ache becomes a sharper sting that leaves me confused. I’m a good student. I have friends and a fairly supportive family. I’m involved on and off campus. I’m even spiritual and religious. I go to church, believe in God and meaning in life. I’m trying my best to live my best and be “a person with and for others.” It’s not like my life is boring or confined either, really. I have fun, in moderation. I get out. I’ve had a serious relationship...

Maybe that’s what I feel is missing. I am single right now, after all. Some of the best times of my life so far were when I was in that relationship. Maybe I made a mistake. Maybe I should try to work things out again. Or maybe it’s just time to try being with someone new. I definitely miss the physical intimacy...Maybe I’m just feeling “lonely” in that sense. There’s something just really comforting about being in someone else’s arms or them being in yours...I miss those times...

Maybe it is my friends. My roommates and I have been growing apart more and more since they were abroad last semester. I mean, we still talked while they were gone. But we went through different things. We’re different people now. I’ve been feeling like they don’t understand me as much as they used to. Or maybe we just weren’t that close to begin with...Either way, I kind of wish that I had friends I have more in common with...who understand me more and who I just enjoy being around more. When I was in that relationship I felt more understood, felt like I was being more myself. Maybe it’s just the people I’m around right now...

Looking at my life, I know that I’ve done a lot of the “right things.” I look at some of the other people I know and wonder why I still feel this way. I see the fraternity guys next door drunk every other weekend. I see the girl in my program on her fifth boyfriend in the past three years. I see my peers who only care about getting the highest paying job they can after graduation. I see friends spending all their time trying to solve the world’s problems but forgetting to take care of themselves and burning-out in the process.
I can tell myself that I know they’re not really happy. Not really. Deep down they probably feel the way I do, too... It just feels like I’m the only one a lot of the time. But maybe they do know something I don’t. Maybe they have figured out something I haven’t...

For all my efforts, though, I’m still sitting in this chair, staring out the window…lonely. It’s like this itch I can’t scratch. A restlessness. A question that’s always in the back of my mind… “What’s missing? What else is there?” Sometimes I just ignore it. I know a lot of the things I need and want to do can act as “distractions”—school, work, involvements, friends, relationships, career ambitions and money, TV, exercise and looks, service... No matter what I do, though, it seems it’s never enough. I’m never fully “satisfied.” When I finally slow down, the emptiness is still there…

Sometimes it feels like a fire. It’s more of a burning ache. Those are the times when I feel alive, like I am really living this life and getting it “right.” But I want more of that and can’t seem to get enough. It’s a zeal… but a dangerous one, one that demands more and more to be satisfied (if it can ever be satisfied). It can be good motivation... but also exhausting. At times, it’s a hopelessness. A feeling that no matter how hard I try, nothing in this life will ever really make me permanently happy. And that can be a depressing thought. What’s the point of trying, then?

My roommate walks in and asks if I want to go to dinner with everyone. I say yes, glad for the chance to take my mind off all this. Still, I know it will be with me as I go, waiting for me when I stop and slow down again. I shake off the thought for the moment and get out of my chair, telling myself that I’m just over-thinking things. Maybe I just need to have a relaxing night out and get some sleep…
#10 Am I Searching for God?

**I. Opening Prayer (5')**

*Grace: to listen for how God may be searching for me in the midst of my daily life, and to honestly look at how I may have responded to him.*

Invite someone to lead an opening prayer around the grace and the Scripture passage

**II. Short Check-In (5')**

**III. Focus Exercise (40')**:

- **Introduction:** Last week we used a prayer from St. Augustine, someone who spent a lot of time running from God and trying to fill the emptiness or sense of homelessness with all kinds of things (other people, sex, alcohol) before he realized that a sense of home with God, a relationship with God, was what he truly longed for. We also heard a reflection from another college student on what that emptiness today may feel like. Tonight we will explore how if we desire to fill that emptiness with God, what pathways or steps we can take in order to do so? Where might God still be living in the shadows of our lives, unrecognized and waiting for us? We will use two texts to illustrate these desires.

  Do not worry about analyzing them as you would in an English class, just pay attention to what emerges in you as you read and listen to their imagery and language.

- **God Searches for Me: Reflective Reading and Sharing**

  1. Read the *Hound of Heaven passage* slowly.
  2. Do any words or phrases jump out at you? Give time to each person to share a certain word or phrase.
  3. Allow a few moments of silence for everyone to sit with the words or phrases. Read the passage a second time. Invite each member to share again if there is a certain theme or feeling that is emerging within you.

**Scripture**

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile." (Jeremiah 29:11-14)

*Matthew 7:7-11*  Seek and you will find.

*Ephesians 3:12-21*  May God, through the Spirit, give you the grace for your hidden self to grow strong so that Christ may live in your hearts.
Sharing, Part 1:
1. Have you ever felt a desire to run from God? What does the image of being “chased” by God evoke in you?
2. Do you have a desire to deepen your relationship with God in any ways?

I search for God:
1. Invite another member to read the passage from St. Augustine. As before, invite each member to share any words or phrases that jump out.
2. Sit in silence for a few minutes and invite people to share again about what the readings (from Scripture and from our tradition) stir within you.
3. Of the two readings from our tradition, does one seem to resonate more with where you are at now? Does one or any part of one resonate with where you want to be?
4. Finally, ask each one to answer the question: “How would you describe your relationship with God right now?”

Sharing, Part 2.
1. Are you searching for God? Are there any other places where you have not recognized God in your life that you can more actively search for Him? Or where you have had some resistance to allowing God to enter in?
2. Try to allow yourself to spend some time just being at peace in the presence of God, to create space to listen for how God may be searching for you in the midst of your daily life?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)
Wrap-Up:
Actions: continue to reflect on the responses that came to you in Sharing, Part 2 as you become more aware of how God may be encountering you in your own life.
Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.

V. Closing Prayer (5’)
Invite each person to voice a prayer directly to God for what they desire from Him or Her.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms
They should practice the seeking of God’s presence in all things, in their conversations, their walks, in all that they see, taste, hear, understand, in all their actions, since His Divine Majesty is truly in all things by His presence, power, and essence (Letters of St Ignatius, #240).
Prayers for Searching God

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat– and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet–…
“Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.”

Francis Thompson, The Hound of Heaven

“Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside; and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which you created. You were with me, but I was not with you. Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in your they would not have been at all. You called, you shouted, you shone, and you dispelled, my blindness. You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you. I tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for your peace.”

St. Augustine, The Confessions
#11 Semester in Review

## Scripture

Thus says the Lord, who created you, …called you by name: you are mine. When you pass through the water, I will be with you; in the rivers you shall not drown. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned; the flames shall not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, …..you are precious in my eyes and glorious, and ….I love you, …. (Isaiah 43:1-4)

*Mk 1:9-11* … “You are my beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

*Thess. 5:16-18* “In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”

## Introduction & Welcome (1’)

### I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to identify the graces of the semester and come up with a response in living out those graces

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below: After reading the suggested scripture, say, “*Lord, we thank You for gathering us here. As the semester comes to an end, our hearts are full of different emotions...excitement about Christmas break, anxiety about final exams, looking forward to going home...Help us not to forget to be grateful for all of Your blessings in the semester. Tonight, we pray for the grace of being aware of Your graces and blessings for us and helping us to live out those graces. Amen.*”

### II. Short Check-In (5’)

### III. Focus Exercise (40’): Semester Awareness Examen

Materials Needed: Journal booklets, member’s Examen bookmark (the one with your hopes and commitments, and Evaluation form

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### Introduction:

Tonight we are going to reflect upon our semester together to see how God works in our lives. We have learned the skill of the Awareness Examen last year and hopefully we have used this tool to pray regularly. As you know the purpose of the examen is grow in awareness of how God works throughout the day. The same method can be applied to our semester reflection. Please turn to page…..in your journal booklet.
Exercise: Semester Awareness Examen

Sharing: invite everyone to share

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation. Discuss the following:
1. How can I live out the graces that I have received during Christmas break?
2. How can we continue to support one another during Christmas break?
3. Complete the “Mid-year and Year-end Evaluation” and discuss about it.

Action:
1. pray with his/her mantra
2. the whole group goes to Sunday Mass/worship service to give God thanks for the graces we have received

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events
1. next meeting: affirmations and evaluation
2. agree on a group meeting time and place for next semester

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Pray for each other. Concretely, have each person pray for the person on his/her left. Begin by reading the following prayer…

Happy moments, praise God
Difficult moments, seek God
Quiet moments, worship God
Painful moments, trust God
Every moment, thank God.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

Love is shown more in deeds than in words (SpEx #230).

I beg for the gift of an intimate knowledge of all the goods which God shares with me. Filled with gratitude, I want to be empowered to respond just as totally in my love and service (SpEx #233).

Our vocation calls us to live this spirituality, which opens and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life (GP #5).
Semester Awareness Examen

Who am I?

1. **Presence of God:**
   I take some time to relax, breathe regularly, and place myself in God’s presence. I ask for the gift of gratitude and sensitivity to the Spirit, so that I may more deeply understand and appreciate how God has been working and inviting me these “retreat” days.

2. **Reflect:**
   I read over my journal entries as a way to recall what took place within me. *I underline key words, phrases, or insights, especially those which reoccur or form a pattern of meaning.*

3. **God’s graces:**
   What key graces (gifts) have I received during these days? Did God grant me the graces I prayed for or something else? Perhaps deeper awareness of my belovedness or being chosen by God, deeper self-awareness and acceptance of my sinfulness, inner healing, greater self-acceptance, embracing and letting go of the past, sense of freedom, union, direction, learning more about myself...

4. **My response:**
   How do I live out these graces?
   Guided by God’s Spirit, I might compose a short prayer (1-2 sentences) that I might pray, as a mantra, following the semester. This is not a list of resolutions; but rather, a way that helps me to persevere and rediscover my experiences of God in the days and months ahead. *Looking at what I underlined in my journal, I listen for a word, phrase, or image that seems to represent how God is inviting me to concretely live out the graces that I have received. I put this mantra word or image on my Examen bookmark or prayer candle.*
   **My Prayer Mantra:**
   Sample: *Lord, help me listen to your voice, “you are my beloved.”*

5. **Closing prayer**
   As with every prayer, I spend time to listen, talk, or convey to God whatever is in my heart. I end with an Our Father or some prayer of gratitude.
Finding Blessedness In One's Own History

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve.
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health, that I might do greater things.
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.
I asked for riches, that I might be happy.
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.
I asked for power, that I might have the praise of others.
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life.
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I asked for, but everything I hoped for.
Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered.
I am most richly blessed.

By Henry Viscardi
Mid-Year & Year-End Evaluations

1. Did CLC meet your expectations? Why or why not?

2. What was your favorite meeting this year? Why?

3. In your opinion, what are the strengths and/or weaknesses of our CLC group?

4. Which campus wide CLC event (social events, service, Taizé, etc…) was the most memorable for you and how?

5. Do you have any concrete suggestions to improve CLC (with your group or as a whole)?
Scripture
I thank my God every time I remember You. In all my prayers for all of You, I always pray with joy because of Your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in. You will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have You in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that Your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:3-11)

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

*Grace: to see how God has been working in each of us individually and collectively as a group.*

II. Short Check-In (5’)

Everyone shares something that they are thankful for from this past week.

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Affirmations

☞ Introduction: Invite everyone to think about each member of the group and to call to mind for what they are most grateful about this person. Ask: “How have we seen each other for who we truly are? How have I allowed my group to see my true self?”

☞ Activity
1. Read the names of each group member one at a time (including members who may be absent that meeting). After each name, pause for at least one minute of silence.
2. Do an Affirmation Exercise such as this (or one of your own that is similar): Give everyone a piece of paper and a pen. Write your name on one side of the paper. Now turn the paper over and pass it to your left. Each person write what came to them in the reflection on the back of the sheet of paper and then fold the top of the paper over so that only the name is visible and not the affirmations. Repeat until you have written on each person’s paper.
3. Allow time for each person to read their affirmations silently. When everyone is done, take a moment to say a silent prayer of gratitude for the things that people have shared with you. Then begin the sharing questions.
Sharing
1. What stirs within you as you read what your group had to share with you?
2. How did it feel to affirm the other members of your group?
3. Is there any way you feel called to alter your daily life based on a newly “uncovered” gift or talent? Were you reminded of something that you knew was a particular gift of yours but thankful to be reminded of?

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: if this is near the end of the semester, make sure that you are planning appropriately for the following semester—day, time, and location of meetings.

Action: spend time thanking God for the giftedness He has given to you.

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Close with some appropriate prayer or song of gratitude.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

The way of life of Christian Life Community® commits its members, with the help of the community, to strive for a continuing personal and social growth which is spiritual, human and apostolic (Gp #12a).

Finally, each one assumes responsibility for participating in the meetings and other activities of the Community, and for helping and encouraging other members to pursue their personal vocation, always ready to give and receive advice and aid as friends in the Lord (Gp #12c).
Part 2:
Who is God for Me?
#1 Review of Life

## Scripture

Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light. (Mt 11:28-30)

Mk 6:31  “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.”
Luke 5:1-6  “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.”

**Note:** This meeting is meant to be a first meeting after Christmas break.

### Introduction & Welcome (1’)

Welcome members back after the break and to the new semester. Thank them for coming.

### I. Opening Prayer (5’)

**Grace:** to find God in all things

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer or use the prayer below. After reading the scripture, say…. “Almighty God, we thank You for gathering us here tonight. Thank You for Your invitation to come to You for rest and learn from You for Your yoke is easy and Your burden light. We pray for the grace of being attentive to how You have loved us over the break and helping us to identify those graces and give You glory. Amen.”

Note: ask for a volunteer to lead opening and closing prayers for the next meeting.

### II. Short Check-In (5’)

### III. Focus Exercise (40’): Review of Life

**Materials Needed:** Journal booklets (part 2: Who is God for me?), CD player and soft instrumental music

- Introduction:
  1. Use any song to set the tone.
  2. This meeting will center around looking back at the past few months and the semester break to help the group process what happened and changed. It will help deepen the group’s practice of finding God in all aspects of our lives and learning to be more attentive to God’s movements in our everyday experiences as well as more momentous times, particularly in change.
Exercise: “Review of Life” questions (30’)

Allow each member to spend some time in prayer and reflection for a few minutes on the following questions, which can be found on page….in their journal booklets. Play instrumental music in the background.

1. Recall our group meetings on the theme of “Who I am” that we explored from last semester and the graces we have received in discovering and embracing more of who we are. In light of this grace, what changes, if any, have you noticed in your relationships with family, friends, significant others, your local church community, and God over the break?
2. How did you live out the graces you have received from last semester over the break? Were there any moments you experienced God?
3. What was God like? How would you describe your image of God at the time you experienced God?
4. What do you think God is saying to you personally through those experiences?
5. How do you feel about coming back to school after the break? To our CLC group? Do you still have a desire to search for God as we discussed at the end of last semester?

Sharing: invite members to share their reflections.

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation. Emphasize God is with us at all times and in all aspects of our lives, such as whatever changes or transitions might be taking place for us now as well as more commonplace moments of each day.

Action:
1. pray with the question, “What do you hope to get out of CLC in this semester?”
2. Ask God, “What do You hope for me in this semester?”

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
*Make sure to confirm the group is still in agreement on the meeting day and time for this semester.*
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Invite members to lift up their intentions before or after reading the prayer below….

Dear Lord

Dear Lord, as I close the door on this old year,
   I ponder on the things I've done...
on the things I've said and the joys I've had...
   then I wonder, have I lost or won?

I've thought of the new friends I have made,
   and of the old ones staunch and true...
the path of the old year was made easier Lord,
   because I have walked it with You.

   I think of all the many times,
when my burdens were so heavy to bear,
   and how my faith slipped away from me...
but somehow You were always standing there.

Now as I open the door to this New Year,
   and carefully peep inside,
   I wonder what it holds for me...
   but I'll throw the door open wide

And whatever it brings to me and mine,
   I'll meet it with a heart so true...
I know that, Lord whate'er it may be
   You'll be there to carry me through.

(by Mrs. Merrel Thompson)

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

The way of life of Christian Life Community commits its members, with the help of the community, to strive for continuing personal and social growth which is spiritual, human and apostolic. In practice, this involves…discernment by means of daily review of one’s life…(GP #12).

Truly it is a retreat in every day life (SpEx 19).
Review of Life

Presence of God: spend a minute to put yourself in the presence of God and imagine where God is right now. Invite God to review your life over the break.

1. Recall our meetings on the theme of “Who I am” we explored last semester and the graces we have received in discovering and embracing more of who we are. In light of this grace, what changes, if any, have you noticed in your relationships with family, friends, significant others, your local church community and God over the break?

2. How did you live out the graces that you have received from last semester over the break? Were there any moments that you experienced God?

3. What was God like? How would you describe your image of God at the time you experienced God?

4. What do you think God is saying to you personally through those experiences?

5. How do you feel about coming back to school after the break? To our CLC group? Do you still have a desire to search for God as we discussed at the end of last semester?
Scripture

“The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah…. This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (Jer. 31:31-34).

Deut. 30:15-19 “I have today set before you life and prosperity, death and doom…..Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live…”

Jn 10:10 “…..I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to get in touch with our hopes for the semester and renew our covenant with God.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer or use the one below: After reading the scripture, say….. “Lord, we thank You for gathering us here tonight. We ask You to help us get in touch with our hopes and desires for the semester. We also ask for the grace of being open to renew covenant with You. Just as You have promised to be the God of Israel and Judah and take care of them, please continue to be our God. Help us to continue to choose You as our God and the center of our lives for we belong to You as Your people. Amen.”

Note: ask for a volunteer to lead opening and closing prayers for the next meeting

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Renew our Covenant with God

Materials Needed: CD player and the song “River of Hope” by Susan J. Paul or “Dreams I dream for you” by Avalon, CLC covenant cloth or poster, and CLC journal booklets (from CLC office)

Introduction:

1. Use any song to set the tone
2. Tonight we are going to talk about our hopes and desires for the semester and then renew our commitments with and God and one another. Finally, we will discuss the meeting topics for the rest of the semester.
Exercise 1: renew our Covenant with God (15’)
Open your journal booklet on page….., “Renew our Covenant with God.” Encourage members to pray and write down the answers. Give them about 15 minutes or so to pray. Play instrumental music during prayer.

Sharing:
1. Members’ hopes: encourage members to read their letters out loud.
2. Our hopes:
   - Are there any common hopes that you hear from what people shared?
   - Any common commitments?
   - Use the same CLC covenant cloth/poster: either add on new things or turn the cloth over to draw images that capture our hopes and promises to God.
3. God’s hopes

Exercise 2: meeting Topics for the semester (10’)

1. Members’ input: allow time to discuss the meeting theme and topics. Encourage members to keep in mind their hopes of the semester and the graces we pray for. Also, keep in mind the suggested theme of this semester is to explore the question, “Who is God for me?” (if helpful, you can mention the meeting topics in this session and the spiritual growth movement in CLC formation phases).

2. Check with members: to see whether the suggested theme and topics still respond to where the group is at. Feel free to adjust and add meeting topics within the theme, “Who is God for me?” If some reason, the group strongly wants to explore some other theme and topics, you need to talk with your person and ask for help.

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Action:
1. pray: with your letter to God and allow God to write a letter back to you in your journal booklet
2. prayer partner: share your hopes and desires for the semester

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

- Encourage each member to pray for each other’s hopes for the semester by praying for the person to their left.

  (Coordinator should begin first)  *I would like to pray in thanksgiving for ......*

- You may use the prayer below to begin or end your closing prayer. Say, “as we begin our new year and new semester, let us pray for a grace to be an instrument of God’s peace as St. Francis of Assisi prays....”

  **Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.**
  Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
  where there is injury, pardon;
  where there is doubt, faith;
  where there is despair, hope;
  where there is darkness, light;
  and where there is sadness, joy.

  O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
  to be consoled as to console;
  to be understood as to understand;
  to be loved as to love.
  For it is in giving that we receive;
  it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
  and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen

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**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*Each member assumes responsibility for participating in the meetings and other activities of the Community, and for helping and encouraging other members to pursue their personal vocation, always ready to give and receive advice and aid as friends in the Lord (GP#12).*

*It is good to remember that we are always in the context of prayer...*(SpEx 3).*
Renew our Covenant with God

**Presence of God:** Put yourself in God’s presence and ask God to guide and be with you during this prayer period. Recall our meeting on the question, “Am I searching for God?” and your hopes and desires toward the end of last semester wanting to experience and know more about God. In light of your desires, ask God to help you get in touch with your hopes and desires for this semester……

1/ **Your hopes and commitments**
- What do you hope to get out of CLC this semester? Name one or two graces you would like to receive by the end of this semester…..

- Imagine there are two points of your spiritual journey: point A (where you are at) and point B (where you would like to be). Where are you right now in terms of your relationship with God? Describe. (If helpful, see “Six Paths to God”)

- Where would you like to be in your relationship with God by the end of this semester? Describe.

- In what concrete ways or actions are you going to commit yourself to God in living out your hopes? Any specific habits? (see CLC habits for suggestions and then write a letter to God on the next blank page)

2/ **Our hopes and commitments**
- What are your hopes for our CLC group in this semester? Name one or two graces you would like our group to receive by the end of this semester…..

- In what concrete ways do you think our group should commit to each other and God? Name one or two specific actions (e.g., attend weekly meeting, awareness examen, retreat, group service, CLC events, etc….)

4/ **God’s hopes and commitments:** Imagine God is sitting in front of you. Ask God, “Do you have any hopes for my CLC group?” (God writes a letter to our group).
Six Paths to God
(Based on Chapter 2 of James Martin, SJ The Jesuit Guide to Everything)

1) The path of belief: growing-up with beliefs and continuing to believe in God
   • Benefits: faith may help you to see and explain your life and the world. It puts sufferings into a framework of meaning.
   • Pitfalls: you may not understand unbelievers and may tend to judge or come across to others as judgmental. You may become complacent—content with your childhood understandings of God.

2) The path of independence: deciding to leave the church but still believe in God
   • Benefits: you might see things in a fresh way. You speak freely and honestly.
   • Pitfalls: Perfectionism; You may search for a perfect church, which is impossible.

3) The path of disbelief: choosing not to believe in God’s existence (atheism)
   • Benefits: You don’t tend to take explanations about God for granted. You may have thought about God and life in different ways. You may care for others for different reasons. You may have a “religious-baloney detector” (sensing hypocrisy or lazy answers).
   • Pitfalls: you may experience God but expect proof solely in an intellectual way.

4) The path of return: beginning life in a religious family, drifting away, and coming back
   • Benefits: you may see things differently and may be more committed. You may have more of a desire to learn and grow out of your childhood faith.
   • Pitfalls: you may need to reeducate yourself to understand your faith in a mature way.

5) The path of exploration: being born in a religious family, who allows children to choose
   • Benefits: you may know other religions well and be enriched in your own faith as a result. You may appreciate your own faith more because of your exploration.
   • Pitfalls: you may have a tendency towards perfectionism (like the path of independence) in searching for a perfect religion, which is impossible. You might be putting God in your own “box.” You may waver in your commitment.

6) The path of confusion: being hot/cold with childhood faith; finding God is a mystery or problem.
   • Benefits: you might be fine-tuning your approach to your childhood faith. You may be refining your ideas about religious commitment.
   • Pitfalls: your confusion can lapse into laziness. You may feel it takes too much work to build community, too much time to pray, or too much money to share.
CLC Habits: living out CLC way of life

Choices → Actions → Habits → Character → Vocation → Mission → Communion with God

How might God invite me to adopt & cultivate 1 or 2 suggested habits below?

1/ Build stronger community:
   • attend all of my CLC group meetings
   • be more vulnerable, honest, and real
   • care and support one another with a love that:
     empowers – helps one another discover and develop our unique gifts
     transforms – helps one another change positively
   • participate in campus wide CLC events at least once a month (BBQ, Bowling, Agape Latte, etc.)
   • ask someone to serve as your accountability partner to be:
     faithful with a habit you’re working on
     attentive and disciplined in an area of struggle or of growth

2/ Grow in my journey of faith:
   • pray regularly: daily Awareness Examen, quiet reflection, journaling, pray with the graces and prayer materials from CLC meetings, and other ways of praying such as Taize, eXaLT, etc.
   • read the Bible or spiritual readings
   • participate in Sunday Worship or Mass every Sunday
   • go to Confessions during Advent and Lent
   • attend a spiritual retreat as a retreatant once a year
   • see a spiritual director
   • get enough sleep and exercise regularly

3/ Become a person with and for others
   • serve the poor and marginalized regularly
   • reach out to the lonely and forgotten in CLC and beyond
   • raise greater awareness of justice issues locally, nationally and globally
   • keep up with studies as a way to develop my gifts for furthering God’s kingdom of peace and justice
   • live simply so others simply live

Daily habit: actualize our greatest yet unused power--be the difference that makes the difference in a person’s life/day!!!

What kind of person do I want to become?
Who I am is God’s gift to me
Who I become is my gift to God
#3 Who is God for Me?

Scripture

When the Lord saw him coming over to look at it more closely, God called out to him from the bush, "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Here I am." God said, "Come no nearer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. I am the God of Your father," he continued, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. But the Lord said, "I have witnessed the affliction of My people in Egypt and have heard their cry of complaint against their slave drivers, so I know well what they are suffering. Therefore I have come down to rescue them from the hands of the Egyptians and lead them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the country of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. So indeed the cry of the Israelites has reached Me, and I have truly noted that the Egyptians are oppressing them. Come, now! I will send you to Pharaoh to lead My people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out of Egypt?" He answered, "I will be with you; and this shall be your proof that it is I who have sent you: when you bring My people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this very mountain." "But," said Moses to God, "when I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' if they ask me, 'What is His name?' what am I to tell them?" God replied, "I AM who am." Then he added, "This is what you shall tell the Israelites: I AM sent me to you."

God spoke further to Moses, "Thus shall you say to the Israelites: The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. "This is my name forever; this is my title for all generations. (Exodus 3:4-15)

1 Kings 19:11-13 “A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord--but the Lord was not in the wind…”

Psalm 104 “...Lord, you are great indeed!...You spread out the heaves like a tent...You fixed the earth on its foundation…”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: for a greater awareness of how we have experienced God and the openness to know and experience God even more.

Use the grace, a suggested scripture above or create your own.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

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III. Focus Exercise (40’): Your Experiences of God

Materials Needed: “God Is” by Danielle Rose, journal booklets

Introduction: explain the purpose of this meeting is to deepen our faith by re-examining our experiences of God. When we were young, we were taught and told by other people what to believe. Now, we are in college; we encounter so many different beliefs and ways of life. We might wonder about our faith and question our Church teaching. So, tonight we are going to explore this topic. We are going to focus on how we have experienced God so far. We have all experienced God, whether we are aware of these experiences or not. They may be positive, negative, affirming confusing, etc.

⊥ Exercise:

Part 1: “God Is” Lectio Divina
Invite members to listen and follow along to the words of the song “God Is,” by Danielle Rose. Encourage them to pay attention to the words or phrases that stand-out to them, that stir up particular emotions or questions. Perhaps suggest that they mark those words or phrases on the lyrics in their journal booklet.

After the song has finished, allow for additional time in silence for each member to savor the parts that stood-out for them (perhaps gazing at the words on the page or prayerfully repeating them silently to themselves, as in Lectio Divina forms of prayer). After a few minutes in silence have passed, prayerfully encourage each member to say aloud just those words or phrases that touched them. Close this time of prayer by thanking God for speaking to each of us uniquely, in different words and in different ways.

Part 2: My Experiences of God (“Common False Images of God” page)
Have each member reflect on the following questions by writing them down in their journals or giving them out as a handout:

1. What have your experiences of God been thus far in your life?
2. Last year (“Phase 1”), we drew our images of God to help us become aware of how we understand and think we experience God. Deepening that awareness, let’s look at some common false images of God. *(Briefly go over the “Common False Images of God” page in the journal booklet or as a handout.)* Do 1 or 2 of these images speak to you? When might you have imagined God in these ways (consciously or unconsciously)?
3. Who in your life most influenced how you experienced God or what your images of God were?
4. What image of God do you hold now? The same as before? Or different?
5. Have you ever doubted God’s existence or God’s nature? What questions do you have about God?
6. If you were God, how would you reveal yourself to human beings?

⊥ Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?
IV. Moving Forward (5’)

 الخي الفصل (5’)

 Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation. Encourage them to pay attention to how they experience God and their images of God in this semester.

 Action: 1) Consider asking friends and family what their experiences of God have been, perhaps for the first time or on a deeper level. Be mindful others may not be open to answering. Perhaps consider sharing your own experiences with them as well (maybe even taking the initiative to share first). 2) Meet with your prayer partner and likewise explore sharing your experiences and images of God.

 Detal: Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

 V. Closing Prayer (5’)

 Nothing is more practical than finding God, That is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, What seizes your imagination, Will affect everything.

 It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, What you will do with your evenings, How you spend your weekends, What you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, And what amazes you with joy and gratitude.

 Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.

 Pedro Arrupe, SJ

 Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

 “The Three Divine Persons, contemplating the whole of humanity in so many sinful divisions, decide to give themselves completely to all men and women and liberate them from all their chains” (GP#1).

 The Exercises are, above all, a time for intimate contact between God and the retreatants (SpEx 2).
God Is

By Danielle Rose

You want to know Me? You want to see My face?
I do not age with time; I do not fit into a space
I transcend the capacity of your eye, so who am I?
It is the question of the moment;
It is the question for all time
I am you, and you are mine

Refrain
I am the beginning and the end
I am the faith in your believing
I am the color of truth
I am the dreamer of your dreams
I am the falling in your love
I am the words of a prayer
I am the silence in the music
I am the music in the silence

I am your father; I am your mother
I am the man who cannot cry
I am the story in your eyes
I am the orphan of war
I am the leper begging on the corner
I am the black slave in chains
I am the Muslim bride who cannot show her face
I'm the cross you carry again

Refrain
I'm all you have forgotten
I am all that you have not been
I am in you - all of this is within you
Let the journey begin, Amen
I am in you, Amen

Refrain
Common False Images of God

1. Policeman God – He watches everything you do to make sure you don’t get out of line; if you do, you will be punished or imprisoned in hell forever.

2. The Accountant God – The man with the big book. He keeps track of the good and bad thing you do. In the end he totals the two columns. If the good column is greater than the bad total, then you will go to heaven.

3. The Santa Clause God – Also known as the “gimmie-god.” With this God we make a list of things we want and give it to Him. Then we expect Him to cure all our ills and make everything right.

4. The Aspirin God – Whenever things go wrong, we run to Him, we expect Him to cure all our ills and make everything right.

5. The Party God – It doesn’t matter to Him what you do as long as you have a good time. His only concern is that you think you are happy.

6. The Mountain-Top God – He is all alone—just “looking down” on the world. He is totally unrelated to humanity. There is no connection besides perhaps that He created everything. He sets everything in motion and then leaves the universe alone.

7. The Catechism God – He is a simple answer. Involvement with Him demands no thought or personal commitment.
#4 Finding God
Through My Own Life Experiences

**Scripture**

At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." … When Job's three friends, Elihaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was. (Job 1:20-21, 2:11-13)

_Psalm 121_ The Lord will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life.

_John 14:15-20_ But you know him, for he lives with you and also in you._

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**Introduction & Welcome (1')**

I. **Opening Prayer (5')**

Grace: to pray for the deep appreciation and awareness of how the Creator God has been present in my own faith history.

II. **Short Check-In (5')**

III. **Focus Exercise (40'): My Faith History (based on the work of John English, SJ)**

★ Introduction: We know through faith we can find God present in all things in all the events and dimensions of my life. But has the awareness of this presence throughout my life really taken hold of me? Memory is the sacrament of God's presence. The material over which I shall pray is the story of my own personal history -- the events, the experiences, the people who have crossed my path, the jobs I have held, the gifts I have been given, my accomplishments, my failures. After placing myself in the presence of God, I go down memory lane and ponder contemplatively the events of my own personal history. I seek how the Divine Shepherd has been involved in my life and where there have been moments of consolation and moments of desolation.
Examen on my life experiences: Coordinators should read each section prayerfully giving time to reflect and journal page for meeting #4 in your booklets between each paragraph.

1. **My Events:** I begin by remembering. This remembering is an awareness of the exterior events in my life and my interior reactions to them. I remember those that give meaning to me (both pleasure and pain) or those I still can't find meaning for but that I am still searching out. Let one memory touch another by association. This may be neither logical nor chronological. As I remember all these events and items in my life history I try to notice the gifts that I have received. What are some of the key events that surface for me as I reflect? *Allow some time to reflect.*

2. **God Speaks to Me About My Events:** After I have been in touch with the many ways in which I have been gifted, I now begin to notice how God has been present in my life. I can approach this by recalling those peak experiences where I have felt profoundly God's presence or those where God has felt very absent or distant from me. Spend time just remembering and savoring each of these moments to receive a deep-felt appreciation of them. Job spends much of his life analyzing and interpreting God's actions in his life. He is filled with doubt and anger at God at times. This is not about analyzing right now, but simply recognizing if there are ways in these events you have felt a closeness or absence from God. Are there any images that stand out for me about how God has been working in my life?

3. **I Listen to God:** Can I identify any patterns of how God has been working in my life in a constant way, not just in isolated instances or events? I can begin this investigation of remembering by trying to get hold of the various rhythms of my life, for example: the cycles of success and failure; periods of being alone and periods of being with others; periods of fatigue and periods of energy; cycles of work and cycles of leisure. This same pattern of covenant gave them a touchstone for recognizing the leading of God's Spirit. The patterns by which God encounters me can be a help to recognize God's presence, a touchstone to discern authentic consolation and the peace of Christ in my life. *Are there any patterns that emerge for me at this time?*

**Sharing**

1. Invite each member to share their reactions to the exercise… what is stirring within you? Were there any events or experiences that came up in the first portion of the reflection that surprised or particularly moved you?

2. Ignatius defines *consolation* as that which leads us towards God and fills us with peace and life, while he speaks of *desolation* as something which pulls us away from God or leaves us discontent, empty or sad. Suffering and dealing with painful situations in life is different than a feeling of desolation. Sometimes God can speak to us in our pain and fill us with a sense of consolation. Were there any patterns that emerged for you? Did they bring you joy, peace, sadness? Were there any movements that you might identify as consolation or desolation in your own experience? (see the appendix for more on consolation and desolation).
Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities? *Any common experiences and images of God?*
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

- Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.
- Action: try to spend some time praying with these events to continue to reflect on where patterns of grace have emerged in your experience of God. This process may take much longer than one or two weeks. Use the handout “Experiencing God” in the journal to continue this reflection.
- Announce: next week we will continue to explore the people who have shaped our experience of God and faith.

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Ignatius, in the Spiritual Exercises, instructs us to speak with God in a form that he calls “the colloquy.” The colloquy is a kind of conversation with God. Tonight as we close, we will take a few moments to each imagine in silence that we are communicating with God, as a friend or mentor, going over what we have experienced, what has challenged us, or what has been helpful to us in our day or in our meeting tonight.

1. Read the line of #54 from the SpEx listed below to create the scene.
2. As you sit with God in this way, ask Him what you have experienced that has truly come from God. What has come from a place of darkness within me (from the evil spirit—out of jealousy, anger, or pain)? What has come from with me... from a sense of my own intuition, my own deep desire, my own humanity?
3. Close by inviting each person to speak to God aloud if they feel comfortable or to share with the group what they imagined in a prayerful way.

**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*The Colloquy is made, properly speaking, as one friend speaks to another, or as a servant to his master; now asking some grace, now blaming oneself for some misdeed, now communicating one's affairs, and asking advice in them (SpEx 54).*

*I presuppose that there are three kinds of thoughts in me: that is, one my own, which springs from my mere liberty and will; and two others, which come from without, one from the good spirit, and the other from the bad (SpEx 32).*
My Life Experiences

What are some of the key events that surface for me as I reflect?

Are there peak experiences where I have felt profoundly God's presence or those where God has felt very absent or distant from me?

Are there any images that stand out for me about how God has been working in my life?

Are there any patterns that emerge for me at this time?
Experiencing God Through My Own Experiences
My Faith Journey

Below are some examples of the types of experiences that may have led to or accompanied and experience of God in our own life. However these points are just a beginning and there may be others.

What was the starting point?
What initiated my faith journey?

Were there any things I had to leave behind as I have gone on my faith journey, such as friendships that held me down or activities that conflicted with Church or spiritual activities?

When has my attention been drawn to others in need?
To social injustices?
How have I responded?

Are there any challenges I have faced or obstacles that I have had to overcome?

Do I have fears or doubts about who God is or how God could allow certain things to happen?

How have some portions of the journey been celebrated or recorded for posterity—such as First Communion, Baptism, important retreats, journal entries, art work?

Are there any persons or things that have helped me on this faith journey—family members, Saints, teachers, religious articles or devotionals?

Are there any places that have brought me great peace or consolation?

Do I see this faith journey leading in any particular direction right now? Closer to God, further away from God, into a more distant or more intimate place?
#5 Finding God Through Other People

Scripture

And the Lord said, "I will cause all My goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim My name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. (Exodus 33:19)

Psalm 106
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Mark 9:2-7
"This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him."

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to experience awareness and gratitude of the ways in which God reveals himself to us through the people in our lives.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Companions in Faith

♦ Symptoms of Love:
First, spend five minutes to allow each person to imagine an experience of being cared for and loved. Invite members to share adjectives or actions that indicate how someone has loved or cared for them: a sense of security, peace, joy, happiness, loving challenge, etc. We can think of truth, beauty, and goodness as ways of experiencing God’s love. In the next meeting on creation, we will focus more on God’s beauty through creation. In this meeting we will explore those people who reveal to us goodness, beauty, and truth-about ourselves, about others, and about the world. We will ask the question “what do these experiences or people reveal to us about a God of truth, goodness, and beauty?”

♦ Introduction:
These symptoms of love help us to know these people and how they have loved us, but they can also describe and reveal to us something about God’s love. He loves us through these people and also uses their love to show us that He is a God of love. Many of these symptoms of love also show us symptoms of God’s love. Other people can show us something of the way we want to live our lives and challenge us to be our truer selves. Through the Communion of Saints image in the Catholic Church, we see the image of Holy men and women who we are united with in faith. Other faith traditions do not recognize “Saints” in a specific way, but they do carry on a tradition of looking to the community as a sign of the way that God cares for us and to support us in our journey towards relationship with God and discovering what God calls us to do in our lives and in the world.
Exercise: Reflection from Council of Vatican II, On the Church, No. 50

For when we look at the lives of those who have faithfully followed Christ, we are inspired with a new reason for seeking the city which is to come. At the same time we are shown a most safe path by which ... we will be able to arrive at perfect union with Christ, that is holiness. In the lives of those who shared in our humanity and yet were transformed into especially successfully images of Christ, God vividly manifests to [people] His presence and His face. He speaks to us in them, and gives us a sign of His kingdom, to which we are powerfully drawn, surrounded as we are by so many witnesses, and having such an argument for the truth of the gospel.

Sharing:

Take time to reflect on each of these questions personally before sharing.

1. Do you agree with the statement “God vividly manifests to people His presence and His face” and uses the lives of others to reveal His love to us? Why or why not? Can you give some examples? What are the concrete ways they help you see that God is alive?

2. Are there any people in your own life that seem to have “faithfully followed Christ” based on what you have experienced through your interactions with them? Many people see the work of Blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta as a model of faith and she has been named a “Blessed” person in our Church. Are there any people who help you to see the way you want to live your life?

3. Sometimes we may experience God’s abundant love for us through the witness of a family member or neighbor. These persons may be of a different faith background or have no explicit faith at all. Are we “powerfully drawn” to God through the witness of any individuals or groups of people around us?

4. Is there something about the way all these people care for and interact with me that reveals to me something of the way God cares for me and who God is? What does God look like through these people?

Deep Listening

1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities? Any common experiences and images of God?

2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?

3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: are there any final thoughts before we leave?

Action: try to be more aware of people in your life who may have shown you something of who God is. Are there any people you may have overlooked? Are there any ways you can offer a gesture of gratitude, whether through prayer or a note or random act of kindness to that person.

Announce: next week we will explore how God is revealed through Creation. God’s created human beings are one way God reveals God’s self to us, but the world around us is another way. Bring leaves or things that can be recycled or reused for our meeting next week.
V. Closing Prayer (10’)

In Relationship

God - You are the mother some of us have ... the mother who embraces because the child is cold
the mother who feeds because the child is hungry
the mother who constantly affirms, because the child is afraid.

God - You are the father that some of us have ... the father who listens, because the child speaks
the father who knows his gentleness, because the child reaches up,
the father who guides and answers, because the child asks and seeks.

God - You are the friend some of us have ... the friend who is always there, even when we shove them away,
the friend who believes in us, even when we don't believe in ourselves
the friend who stands face to face, even when we turn away.

God - You are the brother or sister some of us have ... the brother who teases, when we take ourselves too seriously
the sister who sings, when we have lost the song
the brother, the sister who comes, when crisis comes
and we know we are not alone ...

God - You are all this and more.
You take the image of that one ...
that relationship that loves us into living ... and say,
Here I am
Thank God - you will not be limited by us.
You come again and again!

by Karen Toole-Mitchell

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

Those who are of great heart and set on fire with zeal to follow Jesus… will not only offer themselves entirely to labor for such a mission, but will act against anything which would make their response less total (SpEx 97).

We propose to commit ourselves as Christians in bearing witness to those human and Gospel values within the church and society which affect the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation (GP 4).
#6 Finding God Through Creation

**Scripture**

Then Paul stood up at the Areopagus and said: "You Athenians, I see that in every respect you are very religious. For as I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed, 'To an Unknown God.' What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all that is in it, the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in sanctuaries made by human hands, nor is He served by human hands because He needs anything. Rather it is He who gives to everyone life and breath and everything. He made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and He fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for Him and find Him, though indeed He is not far from any one of us. For 'In Him we live and move and have our being,' as even some of your poets have said, 'For we too are His offspring.' (Acts 17:22-28)

*Jer. 18:1-4*  
*Rom. 1:19-20*

"Indeed, like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, house of Israel..."

"...Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power..."

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

**I. Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: for greater awareness and openness to how God reveals God’s self through creation.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer.

**II. Short Check-In (5’)**

**III. Focus Exercise (40’): Experiencing the Creator through Creation**

**Materials Needed:** art/craft/creative supplies of any kind (markers, paint, clay, play-doh, stencils, crayons, pencils, paper and glue, stickers, etc.), enough for all members to choose what they would like, if possible (whatever you have access to or are willing to provide for your members or that members would like to bring); be as creative as possible...if needed, use ordinary objects easily at your disposal...i.e. fallen leaves, materials to be recycled, etc.); journal booklets

Φ Note: If possible, hold this meeting outside.
Introduction: don’t imply too much about what is going to be explored in the meeting. Rather, let members experience the exercise for themselves, first, before giving some sort of explanation. Maybe simply remind them that tonight’s topic is experiencing God through creation.

Exercise: experiencing the Creator through Creation

Lay out all the art materials you’ve provided or members have brought. If members have brought something they know they want to use, have them note it. If possible, encourage sharing. Have each member spend 5-8 minutes creating something of their choosing (*Note: please try to help keep your meeting area clean for future meetings. Lay down newspaper if using paint, etc.). If they need help with ideas, ask them to make something that depicts how they are doing right now or something about themselves. When they are done, have them pass their creation to the person on their right. Share using the following questions:

1. What do you think your fellow member made? What do you think she/he was trying to communicate, if anything, in making it? What does the person’s creation tell you about them?
2. (For each person to answer about their own creation) What is your creation? What, if anything, were you trying to communicate in making it? What do you think your creation says about you?

Then explain something like...God reveals God’s self through creation. We know a lot about a person through his or her works or behaviors. When we look at a piece of art, we know something about the artist. When we see the order and the beauty of creation (if outside, highlight what can be seen around you), we know something about the creator. By seeing the great power of the ocean with its waves and tides or the order of the universe, we know that its Creator must be great and powerful. By seeing the beauty of spring flowers, we know that its Creator must be beautiful, too. By seeing the goodness of a human person, we know that the person’s Creator must be good. God is spirit and invisible but His works are visible.

3. If God is the Creator of everything that exists (if members disagree on this, encourage discussion), why do you think God created?
4. What, if anything, do you think creation communicates to us about God?
5. What does creation say about humanity (since we are creatures and part of creation as well)? If helpful in forming your answer, keep in mind why you think God created and what creation says about God.
6. If God is forever Creator and continually willing creation to grow and develop, where are you in your process of being created? Are you allowing God to shape you, as a potter sculpts and molds clay? How do you feel about continuing to be “created”? 
Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities? *Any common experiences and images of God?*
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

- Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

- Action:
  1) Take an intentional period of time out of your week to pray in creation however you would like. Perhaps this might even mean just taking time just to savor what you enjoy about the natural world. Soak it in as God’s work of art made for you and thank God for the gift of creation and for yourself as a creation.
  
  2) Take a “Following Your Senses” walk by yourself or with your prayer partner.

- Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

*Prayer on Contemplating Nature*

You, O God, Majestic Creator, are the origin of all life.  
Nothing can exclude itself from Your creative influence.  
You are wonderful in Your words and in Your sovereignty.  
Amazed, I contemplate the perfection of the world You created for human beings.  
You are unmatched in Your power and in Your goodness.  
O Lord, You direct like a conductor the orchestration of a storm, and  
You shape like a sculptor the petals of a flower.  
You are prodigious in Your majesty and in Your wisdom.  
Lord, You have fashioned human beings to accept the challenges of nature  
and to be Your voice in creation.  
O Lord and King, Majestic Creator, You have made Your mystery transparent  
in the world You have created.  
I worship You in Your creation and in Your providence.  
Amen.

*(From Prayers of Blessing and Praise for All Occasions, Hugo Schlesinger and Humberto Porto.)*

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**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*Out of love, the Word became human and was born of Mary, the humble Virgin of Nazareth. Living with the poor and sharing their condition, Jesus invites all of us to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity in our human family…(GP #1).*

...*God who loves us creates us and wants to share life with us forever…All the things in this world are also created because of God’s love and they become a context of gifts, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily ... (SpEx 23).*
#7 Finding God Through Creation and Justice

Scripture

Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground." God created man in His image; in the divine image He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth." God also said: "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground, I give all the green plants for food." And so it happened. God looked at everything He had made, and He found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day (Gen 1:26-31)

Lev. 19:9 “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God.”

Is. 42:5-6 “Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spreads out the earth with its crops, Who gives breath to its people and spirit to those who walk on it: I, the Lord, have called you for the victory of justice…”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to more clearly see the connections between our care for creation, our care for our human family, and our fight for justice in building God’s Kingdom

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): The Village of Versailles video clips, NY Times Article

Materials Needed: laptop, links to The Village of Versailles video clips, NY Times article

❖ Introduction: last week, we reflected on how we can know and experience God in our experiences of creation. This week, we are going to continue this theme by looking at how our care or neglect of the environment directly affects humanity. We can easily forget that, as creatures made in God’s image, we have been given special responsibility to take care of God’s creation and each other as His creatures. In addition to needing to care for the earth because it is God’s creation in itself, how we treat the environment directly affects our human family (particularly the poor and marginalized).
Exercise: A Village Called Versailles movie clips (or newspaper article), “Ten Commandments of the Environment” reading

As a group, watch the above two clips. Explain they help connect care and concern for creation with justice and care for humanity, especially for the powerless. They depict the story of a Vietnamese community in New Orleans (the Mary Queen of Vietnam parish community) who has had to fight to have a landfill removed from their community upon returning to their homes after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. As a minority community, living in an area closer to the poorest neighborhood of New Orleans, they had little voice in the toxic destruction of their land and the endangerment of their health. (*NOTE: Many of the members of this community are in CLC groups of their own, from the youth to the older adults!)

The clips can be found at http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/village-called-versailles/film.html. Watch the top two clips (total time = 3 min.) If time allows, watch the third regarding the community’s initial experience of Hurricane Katrina. Together, share your reactions to and reflections on the clips using the following questions:

1. What were your feelings while watching the clips? Was there anything that particularly moved or challenged you?
2. After watching the clip, what connections can you see between care for the environment and care for humanity? between justice and care for creation?
3. How might you have experienced or observed these connections in your own life?

As a group, go over the page “Ten Commandments of the Environment.” After reading it together, encourage members to share their thoughts and reactions. Then invite everyone to share on the following questions:

4. How are you currently caring for the environment and humanity?
5. How might you better care for the environment and humanity?
6. If caring for creation (and humanity via creation) is not something that speaks to you, why do you feel this way? What causes or means of service speak to you most? Why do you think these touch you in this way?

If you are not able to access the clips or have additional time, read the story of the community on the same website, or see the New York Times article covering it, “A New Landfill in New Orleans Sets Off a Battle” (found at http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/08/us/08landfill.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1).
Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

“God who loves us creates us and wants us to share life with us forever. Our love response takes shape in our praise, reverence, and service of the God of our life. All the things in this world are also created because of God’s love and they become a context of gifts, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily.

As a result, we show reverence for all the gifts of creation and collaborate with God is using them so that by being good stewards we develop as loving persons in our care for God’s world and its development. But if we abuse any of these gifts of creation or, on the contrary, take them as the center of our lives, we break our relationship with God and hinder our growth as loving persons…”

(from St. Ignatius’ First Principle and Foundation)
Ten Commandments of the Environment

Presented by Bishop Giampaolo Crepaldi, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, at a congress on the theme "Ethics and the Environment" at the European University of Rome in 2005. These ten principles of environmental ethics are drawn from the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church. The Bishop was clear these principles are not to be interpreted as replacing the Ten Commandments God gave to Moses.

Here is an abbreviated version:

1) The human being, created in God's image, is placed above all other earthly creatures, which must be used and cared for in a responsible way.

2) Nature must not be reduced to a utilitarian object of manipulation, nor absolutized or placed above human dignity.

3) Ecological responsibility involves the entire planet in a common duty to respect a collective good, for present and future generations.

4) In dealing with environmental problems, ethics and human dignity should come before technology.

5) Nature is not a sacred or divine reality, removed from human intervention. Thus, human intervention that modifies some characteristics of living things is not wrong, as long as it respects their place in the ecosystem.

6) The politics of development must be coordinated with the politics of ecology, and every environmental cost in development projects must be weighed carefully.

7) Ending global poverty is related to the environmental question, remembering that the goods of the earth must be shared equitably.

8) The right to a safe and clean environment needs to be protected through international cooperation and accords.

9) Environmental protection requires a change in styles of life that reflect moderation and self-control, on a personal and social level. That means moving away from the logic of consumerism.

10) Environmental issues also require a spiritual response and a greater awareness that the created world is a gift of God.
#8 Finding God Through Scripture

**Scripture**

Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus Himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to Him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And He replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to Him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed Him over to a sentence of death and crucified Him. But we were hoping that He would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find His body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that He was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but Him they did not see." And He said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into His glory?"

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them what referred to Him in all the scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, He gave the impression that He was going on farther. But they urged Him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So He went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while He was with them at table, He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, but He vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning (within us) while He spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!"

(Lk 24:13-34)

*Heb. 4:12*  
"Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart."

*2 Tim. 3:16*  
"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness so that one who belongs to God may be competent,

**Introduction & Welcome (1’)**

**I. Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: for greater awareness of and openness to how God reveals Himself through Scripture and how we have experienced God in this way.

Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer.
II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): “The Refiner’s Touch” story

Materials Needed: journal booklets, bibles (have members bring their own or provide enough)

Introduction: last week we focused on experiencing God through creation, particularly in our care for all of creation. So far, we’ve explored how we can get to know and experience God through the events of our own life, other people and the natural world. Over time, God has continually been revealing Himself to our human family in each of these ways. The Scriptures (the bible, containing the old/Hebrew Scriptures and new testament), is a special record and way of expressing what God has done. They contain a collection of writings that convey the story of God’s relationship with humanity over time, from the creation of the universe to the culmination of His revelation in history in the life, death, and resurrection of His Son Jesus and the beginning of His Church. In the Christian tradition, these writings hold a special place in how we can come to know and experience God because they are God’s word to us, His unique way of communicating to us through human writing. So tonight we are going to focus on coming to know and experience God through Scripture.

🌺 Exercise: “The Refiner’s Touch” story
Read over the story “The Refiner’s Touch.” After reading, allow everyone time in silence or with meditative music to reflect on the following questions. Then encourage each member to share.

Part 1:
1. What were some of your feelings while reading the story?
2. Is there anything that you particularly related to or didn’t relate to?
3. How did the woman’s understanding and experience of God change as a result of deepening her understanding and experience of the Scripture passage?
4. How might have God been active in the story?

Provide additional time for members to reflect on the following questions for themselves. Suggest that members use their bibles to read over any passages that have particularly touched or challenged them during their life if they need help. Then have each member share.

Part 2:
4. What has your experience of Scripture been so far? Has it changed over time?
5. Do you think that God reveals Himself through Scripture? What does this mean to you?
6. What questions do you have about Scripture in general? About how God reveals Himself through Scripture?
7. How might you have already experienced God through Scripture?
8. Do you have any favorite Scripture passages, figures (particular people), or images? Why do these speak to you? What might God be saying to you through them?

🌺 Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities? Any common experiences and images of God?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?
IV. Moving Forward (5’)

☞ Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

☞ Action: 1) Consider what role and time Scripture has in your life. Spend time asking yourself if you would like to grow in your understanding and experience of God through Scripture. If so, what concrete actions or habits might you be able to commit to in order to encourage this growth? 2) (After passing out or pointing out tips on reading the bible in the journal booklet) Look over these pages. Consider if any of its suggestions might help you in how you read or understand Scripture.

☞ Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events.

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Teach Me Your Ways

Teach me Your way of treating others - sinners, children, Pharisees, Pilates and Herods, and also John the Baptists.

Teach me Your way of eating and drinking, how to act when I'm tired from work and need rest.

Teach me compassion for the suffering, the poor, the blind, and the lame. You who shed tears, show me how to live my deepest emotions. Above all, I want to learn how you endured Your Cross.

Teach me Your way of looking at people: the way You glanced at Peter after his denial, the way You touched the heart of the rich young man and the hearts of Your disciples.

I would like to meet You as you really are, since You change those who really know You.

If only I could hear You speak as when You spoke in the synagogue of Capernaum or on the Mount of Beatitudes!

Give me grace to live my life, within and without, the way You lived your life, O Lord.

-Pedro Arrupe, SJ
The Refiner’s Touch

There was a group of women in a Bible study on the book of Malachi. As they were studying chapter three they came across verse three which says, "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." This verse puzzled the women and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God.

One of the women offered to find out about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study. That week the woman called up a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest in silver beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver. As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that, in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest so as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot - then she thought again about the verse, that He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver. She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. For if the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?" He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's the easy part—when I see my image reflected in it."

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

The spirituality of our Community is centered on Christ and on participation in the Paschal Mystery. Our spirituality draws its life from the Sacred Scriptures….(GP #5).

As I find myself immersed in the setting of this mystery of the Incarnation, I may want just to stay with….the eternal Word, who has now become human—for me….(SpEx 109).
Some ideas on
HOW TO READ the Bible--
(the WORLD'S "BEST-SELLING" BOOK)

1. Set aside time for Bible reading
   Make Bible reading a habit -- every day of the year.

2. Try to read a "book at a time"
   Many books of the Bible can be read in 20 minutes -- some in an hour, others require more time.

3. Try to understand the writer's purposes
   Who was he? What was his "world"? Why did he write?

4. And who the message was for
   Who was the audience for this message -- what did it mean to them? What does it mean to you?

5. Keep a notebook as you read
   Jot down words to look up... and questions for which to find answers.

6. Look up things you don't understand
   Use a Bible concordance, dictionary, atlas, and commentary to help you.
OUR METHOD

1. STORY LINE: (Summary) What does the biblical passage say? Summarize the contents of the passage. Don’t retell it word-for-word, but state the main elements.

2. THEOLOGY LINE: (Interpretation) What does the biblical passage mean? That is, what is the religious truth of the passage? This is usually stated in a straightforward declarative sentence.

3. LIFE LINE: (Application) What does the biblical passage mean to me? How does its message or religious truth apply to me in my life right now? This section is stated in terms of your life, therefore it will be in the first person: I, my, me. The point is to personalize the biblical message for yourself, not for someone else.

EXAMPLE: Scripture Passage: The LORD said to Samuel, “Get some olive oil and go to Bethlehem to a man named Jesse, because I have chosen one of his sons to be king.” When they arrived, Samuel saw Jesse’s son Eliab and said to himself, “This man standing here is surely the one he has chosen. But the LORD said to Samuel, “Pay no attention to his appearance; the LORD is not looking at the outward appearance, but at the heart.” . . . Jesse said, “There is still the youngest, out caring for the sheep.” The LORD said, “Anoint him.” Samuel took the oil and anointed David . . . and the spirit of the LORD was with him from that day on. - 1 Samuel 16

1. Story Line The prophet Samuel goes to Jesse’s home in Bethlehem to anoint a successor to King Saul. He is impressed with Eliab and his brothers but the LORD rejects them in favor of the youngest, David.

2. Theology Line God does not judge by appearances as human beings do but by what’s in a person’s heart.

3. Life Line Do I judge just by appearances or do I try to see what a person really is? And am I too much interested in appearances when I should give more importance to my character and values? I should try to make sure my heart is pure and upright since that is what God sees in me.
Finding God
Through Prayer

Scripture

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that He must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that He had said these things to her. (Jn 20:1-18)

Jn 20:19-31  “….Unless I see ….. I will not believe…..”

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: to find God in prayer.
Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): Ignatian Contemplation

Materials Needed: journal booklets, CD instrumental music
Introduction
1. Explain the topic and preview of the meeting: Finding God through prayer.
2. Recall phase 1: we talked about how we prayed and experienced God in prayer and learned new ways of praying (awareness examen and Ignatian meditation). Tonight, we are going to learn another way of praying called contemplation, which Ignatius found to be very helpful.
3. Explain contemplation: In contemplation, we enter into a life event or story passage of the Scriptures by way of imagination, using all of our senses (see, listen, taste, touch, and smell). In other words, we enter the story as if we were there. We choose to play the role of one of the persons or characters in the story and let God take our imaginations and guide us through the scripture passage.
4. Invitation: The best way to learn contemplation is to experience it and then we can talk about it.

Exercise 1: Experience Ignatian Contemplation
- Note: see last pages for guided meditation
- Sharing: invite everyone to share

Exercise 2: Discuss Ignatian Contemplation
- go over some of the steps

Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities? Any common experiences and images of God?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: Thank members for their openness and participation. Remind members contemplation is the key for Ignatius to encounter a living Christ today not 2,000 years ago. By putting ourselves into the story and creating space for God, we allow God to reveal Himself to us through the life Jesus Christ. Only then, we really know and fall in love with God.

Action:
- pray: invite members to pray with their favorite scripture passages using Ignatian contemplation. If they need suggestion, encourage them to pray with the story of Thomas, the doubter, as he said, “unless I see…..I will not believe…..” (Jn 20:19-31).
- prayer partner: share your prayer experience.

Announce: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Invite members to lift up their intentions before or after reading the prayer below.

God our Father,

by raising Christ Your Son

You conquered the power of death

and opened for us the way to eternal life.

Let our celebration today raise us up

and renew our lives by the Spirit that is within us.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,

Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Easter Sunday Mass Opening Prayer)

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**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*When we find prayer dry and even a burden, we must be sure to spend the full hour as part of our attempt to respond by waiting for the Lord (SpEx 13).*

*I beg for the grace of being able to enter into the joy and consolation of Jesus as He savors the victory of his risen life ... (SpEx 221).*
Guided Meditation: Mary Magdalene encounters Jesus
(John 20:1-18)

Note: Below is merely a suggestion. Feel free to paraphrase in your own words. The underlines are main points for you to guide your members.

Preparation:

✧ Be familiar with the story: read the passage aloud if you have not done so. Encourage members to remember the story line and key points of the story:
  - After Mary saw the empty tomb, she ran to tell Peter and the other disciple (a.k.a, beloved disciple or BD)
  - Both Peter and BD ran to the empty tomb. They saw the burial cloths and then went home. Mary stayed weeping.
  - Mary saw Jesus but did not recognize Him until Jesus called her by name, “Mary!” Jesus told Mary to go and tell others about the experience.

✧ Follow the guided meditation: remind members to follow your guidance throughout the prayer, which lasts about 10 – 15 minutes or so.

✧ Invite members to choose a person or an object in the story to enter into and stay with the role throughout the prayer period: Mary Magdalene, Peter, Beloved disciple, two angels, Jesus, a tomb, a tree in the garden, a burial cloth, etc. ?

1. Presence of God/ preparation

✧ Place yourself in God’s presence: imagine where God is right now….

✧ Centering/quieting: Sit in an upright position and close your eyes; relax but stay focused; do not fall asleep. Take a deep breath and relax. Breathe deeply in…and breathe out. Relax. Again, Breathe in slowly…and breathe out. Be aware of your breathing…With each breath, slowly fill your lungs completely and then slowly exhale. Notice your breathing becoming slower, more gentle...feel any part of your body that is tense...Relax it...Let go of the tension…

✧ Composition of place: tomb and garden, house and room the disciples stay, on the way.

✧ Ask for the grace you need: to experience God in prayer (or whatever you need)

2. Contemplation

✧ Use the key points and let the passage stir your imagination. I invite you to put yourself into the story now and stay with the role throughout the prayer period. Let the story come alive as if you are there, experiencing what is happening….Follow the sequence of the story and stay with it…..if something draws your attention or touches you, remain there until you are ready to move on…..
Point 1: Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb; Disciples stay home
- Time and place: what time of the day is it? Where are you? (pause)
- Clothes: what do you wear? (pause)
- What happened?
- What do you see? items in the house? …..garden, plants, trees, rocks?….see darkness? See people? …..what are they doing? ….just watch and pay attention to what you see for a minute ….. (pause)
- What do you hear? Hear silent?….wind blowing? your feet moving?…..your breathing? …. People talking?…..what are they talking about? ….just stay with it for a minute (pause)
- What do you touch? Trees, clothes, food, table, rock? Feel the texture…
- What do you smell? Food, the room, the garden…..
- What do you taste? Food, drink, …..
- Stay with it (pause for 2 minutes)

Point 2: Peter, BD, and MM ran to the tomb
- What happened? …..how do you feel?....
- What do you see? …..trees on the way? …..your friends running with you?….the garden….the tomb….the burial cloths……
- What do you hear?…..wind blowing….your feet running…..your friends talking…..
- What do you touch?……smell?……
- Stay with it …. (pause for 2 minutes)

Point 3: MM encounters Jesus
- What happened? …..how do you feel?
- What do you see? two angels……gardener…..Jesus
- What do you hear? Your cry….angels’ questions…..conversation with the gardener…..
- What do you touch? …..smell?
- Stay with it…. (pause for 2 minutes)

3. Colloquy/ Conversation

Enter into an intimate conversation with Jesus: talk with Jesus whatever is in your heart……Stay with it until you are ready to close your contemplation. When finished, slowly come back to the present. Thank Jesus for the experience.
Review of Prayer

Invoke members to review their prayer experiences. See page…..in their journal booklet for suggestion.

Suggested questions to review your prayer and share:


2. When you put yourself in the story, which character or figure were you in the story? What did you see, hear, touch, smell, and taste?

3. What were some of your feelings, thoughts, and reactions that emerged during prayer? Were there any particular moments that touched or moved you deeply? Describe.

4. How was your conversation with Jesus? Describe.

5. Was there anything that happened during prayer you would like to come back? Any invitation from Jesus to go from here?

6. How did the prayer impact you? Anything else you want to share?
IGNATIAN CONTEMPLATION

PREPARATION

· Read the passage several times and pick 3 points (words, phrases, images, thoughts, ideas, etc.)

1. PRESENCE OF GOD

· Place yourself in God’s presence
· Centering/Quieting
· Imagine the composition of place/scene
· Ask for the Grace desired

2. MEDITATION

· Use the points and let the passage stir your imagination. Put yourself into the story: see the people, hear the dialogue and engage in the actions (what do you see, hear, touch, smell?). Let the story come alive as if you are there, experiencing what is happening. Stay with a point until you are satisfied and ready to move to the next point.

· Notice what resonates or moves your heart, that is, any feelings, effects, memories, desire emerging as you contemplate. If something draws your attention or touches you at a deeper level, remain there and let the insight permeate your experience.

3. COLLOQUY/CONVERSATION

· Enter into an intimate conversation with the Lord. End the prayer period with an Our Fa- ther, Glory Be, etc.

(adapted from Chi Ngo, SJ)

THE REVIEW OF PRAYER

I take a standing break after my prayer experience. I take about 5-10 minutes to review my prayer experience; I then journal using the suggested questions below, letting 2-3 of them guide my review:

➢ What did I experience during prayer?
➢ What feelings surfaced? Were they positive or negative?
➢ What did God’s Spirit reveal to me? Any insights or clarity?
➢ How were God and I present or absent to each other? Did I feel close or withdrawn from God?
➢ Is there some point to which I am invited to return in the next prayer?
➢ Was the environment or my posture helpful to prayer? What changes can I make that would be more conducive to prayer?

I thank God for graces received and ask pardon for any carelessness on my part.
Scripture

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it... The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (John 1:1-3, 9-13)

Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. Opening Prayer (5’)

Grace: To recognize how a faith community can help us to know God more fully and to look at how the Trinity has modeled this communion of faith for me.

II. Short Check-In (5’)

III. Focus Exercise (40’): God and Community Skit (in the journal booklet)

❖ Introduction: This skit involves the three persons of the Trinity looking down on humanity (as Ignatius describes in the Second Week of the Exercises #101-109). We invite you to use your imagination as well as we enter into what this relationship and conversation might look like. We need four people to serve as readers.

❖ Sharing

1. What is your reaction to this skit? Any reactions to the images presented?
2. What was your experience of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Spirit) in the past? What has your experience of Church and faith communities been?
3. What does this image of the Trinity - as a family looking at the world and deciding how to help it- say to you about the Church as a community?
4. Do you have any response to the question: Can I just have God and leave behind the Church idea?
5. Has our CLC group shown you anything of the benefits of a faith community? Are there any ways that God has been revealed to you by the way we support and challenge one another in CLC?
Deep Listening
1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities? Any common experiences and images of God?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation. Share with them any of these clarifying points on the skit if there is still any confusion.

Guides for the leader
- The Trinity is an expression of God’s unity (We believe in One God) that is expressed in perfect love between the Father, the Son and the Spirit. This meeting invites the CLC group to reflect on the nature of the Trinity as we have experienced it.
- The Church is a community that is called to emulate the love of the Trinity in our human community, and CLC is an invitation to build such a community through prayer and discernment together.
- The purpose of this dialogue is to stimulate a prayerful imagination of the life of the Trinity as a starting point for further prayer and reflection.
- This week’s sharing questions focus on how that love has been shared in Salvation History and experienced in the lives of the members of the group.

Action: seek out an opportunity to share community with another person—through a meal with someone you have not spent quality time with recently, by attending a weekday Mass or prayer service, or by engaging in some kind of service that builds community.

Announce: next topic and any other upcoming CLC events.

V. Closing Prayer (5’)

End with a dialogue with God, with the angel, and/or with Mary. Express to them what you feel and think; or ask for the gift of a more intimate knowledge of Jesus; or imagine what they are saying to you at this time.

Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms

Union with Christ leads to union with the Church where Christ here and now continues His mission of salvation. By making ourselves sensitive to the signs of the times and the movements of the Spirit...This sense of the Church impels us to creative and concrete collaboration for the work of advancing the reign of God on earth, and includes a readiness to go and serve where the needs of the Church so demand (GP #6).
Exercise: Skit - God in Community

Father: My Son, come and sit with me a while. I want to check in on the people and the world and see how things are going. The lands are formed and teeming with animals, the seas are formed and filled with fish and whales. All over plant life is growing. What do you see when you look at these people and things?

Son: Dad, I see a variety of peoples throughout the world -- peoples of different races, colors, creeds, with differing gifts and limitations; some making peace and others making war; some weeping, others laughing; some well, others ill; some being born and others dying; some cooperating, others refusing to cooperate.

Father: I see that too. It really bothers Me that I see so many hungry mothers and children, men who have been scarred by wars and are unable to heal and now live on the streets. I also see how some people are using so many of the natural resources that others are left thirsting and hungry. I thought when I created the world that I created enough for everyone to have what they needed. Now it looks like some of them are taking more than they need, more than what really belongs to them.

Son: What can we do?

Spirit: I have been trying my hardest. I have been planting seeds of awareness in the hearts of many people. I have been trying to help people notice the injustices. Some do. But not enough have felt this pain. Their hearts are hardened against My invitations and My urgings. The other thing I have noticed is that even the ones who notice the problems, are not sure how to respond to them. They cannot imagine a world that is so radically different than the way they see it now.

Father: Also, I think they cannot imagine a way of living themselves that is different than how they are living now. They see the laws and promises we gave them - to Moses and Abraham and so many others - but still they struggle to see how to respond to the needs of their own communities. They cling to the laws for hope, instead of finding hope in Us. They forget that We gave them the laws as guides, to help them to love Us and each other. The laws are supposed to free them, and instead they bind themselves up with them, and use them as a weapon.

Son: It really hurts when I see the way they are hurting - hurting each other, hurting themselves.

Spirit: and hurting the world that we created for them to enjoy! We sent Isaiah to warn them about joining field to field, forcing the farmers to grow cash crops and starving the people in process. When will they learn to use the land with justice?

Father: My heart is heavy. All these things We gave them as gifts, they have spent so much time and energy protecting and hoarding. Haven’t they learned yet that We will provide for them whatever they need in order to be fully alive and at peace?

Spirit: Yes! They seem less peaceful now that they have so many things. They are stressed about claiming what they think they own and fighting over who got the best of everything. This is not what we had intended.

Son: If only there was something We could do. I feel in my heart that We need to respond... but not in any way like we have before. In the past it has been within the heart of one person, in a dream, in a vision, in an inspiration. This time calls for something much more.
Spirit: I agree. There are so many things we have tried and nothing seems to be working. What if one of Us goes?

Son and Father: Goes?!

Spirit: Yes, what if One of us goes to earth as a human. Like the prophets who spoke for Us...but now, One of Us would speak. All three of Us would speak through One of Us. And live the way that We have been hoping for the humans to live. It would be so much more powerful than words... We need to act. We need to make into flesh the Word that We have proclaimed to them.

Father: Yes, but how... how could We do this? From the beginning we gave humanity free will. That free will should be a part of Our plan. We need a collaborator with Us who could care for Us on earth, to serve as a lasting example of courage and generosity. If We are going to join them and live amongst them, We will need someone to care for Us in our bodily form.

Spirit: There is a woman... I have heard what is in her heart. She is kind and generous and faithful. But she is also tough. We need someone strong to help Us... someone on earth who would be able to handle the immensity of what We are asking.

Father: Ahhh yes, Mary. I know her well. She has such a beautiful spirit. And that laugh! Oh I could listen to that all day.

Son: I have loved her for so long! I have known she would be capable of responding to the needs of those around her if she was asked. If I had to pick someone to care for Me in My most vulnerable state - as a child- I would want it to be someone like her.

Spirit: Oh how I would love to go... to look into the eyes of the people I have loved so much, and in so many ways. I know them more deeply than they can ever know themselves. I just want to be close to them and for them to really feel how much I love them. I am so close to them, and yet they feel I am so far. If I could look into their eyes, they could look back and they would recognize me.

Father: I have also wanted to really reach them in a way that I do not feel I have been able to. I feel their awe as they gaze at the tall mountains I have created for them, I feel their pain as they cry at the deaths of their parents, and I feel their joy as they hold their newborn children and grandchildren. But there is something more I long for... a closeness with them that they have not yet experienced. I am right there with them in the land and the created world and in the people around them - and even within their very souls - but they do not see Me.

Son: What if We all go? We can go together. It would be so fun! And all three of Us together could really make a difference!

Spirit: No, that would be too much. And it would be important for Us to all work together, each in Our unique ways. I think it should be one of us. I think We know what we need to do. We will go to Mary.

Father: Then let us send Gabriel to ask Her. He will be our messenger to Her.

Son: What if it is too much for Her? What if She is afraid at what Gabriel will say?
Father: Gabriel has heard the cries of humanity and We will give him the words to give her reassurance. He will be the one to share with her the Good News that will come to all people through her. We have a plan for them!

Spirit: And then My power will come upon Mary and We will begin to dwell within her. Through her We will come to them in a new way. If she will trust us so fully, then we shall do the same.

Father: The Spirit will overshadow Mary, and I will be Your heavenly Father, and You will be the Son of God on earth. You will walk, talk, and dine with them. You will laugh with them, You will cry with them. You will feel all that We feel for them, and You will also feel all that they feel. In You We will embrace everything they are. And We will be right there with You, because You are a part of Us, a part of this family of the Trinity. Whatever pain You feel, We will feel too. In You, all that We are and all that they are will be one. In this way, We will all be present there on earth, but You will be the flesh and blood given for them. Son, will You go for Us? We will go with You, We will be with You too though, but You must go, vulnerable and weak. You will remain in Us, and We will remain in You. You will show them to love as We love, in ways they will understand. Trust that this woman We have chosen and Her husband Joseph will protect You from all harm.

Son: Yes, I will go. I will go even if it means people could hurt Me or kill Me, if it means I drink water that makes Me sick, if I have to starve with the other children who are starving. I want to feel the pain and the joy, the love and the fear. When I am afraid, I will trust in You; I will trust in Your will to carry Me through. Then, now is the time.

Father and Spirit: Yes, We are ready.

Son: I think Gabriel is done with his work and Mary is with Her cousin Elizabeth now. Let’s listen.

Mary:

"My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.
His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
to Abraham and his descendants forever,
even as he said to our fathers."
#11 Year in Review

## Scripture

25 During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw Him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 28 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." (Lk 24:13-35)

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### Note: This meeting may last for two meetings

### Introduction & Welcome (1’)

I. **Opening Prayer (5’)**

Grace: to identify the graces of the year and come up with a response in living out those graces. Use the grace or a suggested scripture above to create your own prayer or use the prayer below After reading the scripture above, say, “Almighty God, we thank You for gathering us here tonight. As the year comes to an end, our hearts are full of emotions...excitement about summer break, anxiety about final exams, looking forward to going home...We pray for the grace of being open and honest as we reflect upon our year together. Help us to identify some of the consolation moments that helped us walked on water toward You and some of the desolation moments that made us drown under the water. Amen.”

II. **Short Check-In (5’)**

III. **Focus Exercise (40’): The Year in Review**

**Materials Needed:** journal booklets, CLC cloth/poster, members’ items (My Self box or any “spiritual” items that remind them of God’s love), Year-end Evaluation handouts

1. **Introduction:**
   1. Feel free to use any song to set a tone.
   2. Explain the topic and preview the meeting: Tonight we are going to reflect upon our year together and to give each other honest feedback. We have learned the skill of the Awareness Examen last year and the inner movements of consolation and desolation this semester. We will now use these tools to identify the graces of the year, our consolations and desolations, and God’s invitation. To do this, we are going to use our journal entries and “spiritual” items.
Exercise: The Year in Review
Invite members pray with the questions which can be found in the next page.

Sharing and Feedback

1. Explain the procedure: tonight we are going to do something different. After each person shared, we are going to write to the shared member our prayer notes, which include both affirmations and challenges. Our group only grows if we can be honest with each other assuming it’s ok with everyone (check to see if it’s ok with everyone).
2. Invite each member to share: after each member shares, allow times for all members to write a prayer note to the person who just shared. Then each member will share her/his note either by reading it or say the main thoughts to the person.

Deep Listening

1. What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities? Any common experiences and images of God?
2. How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
3. Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

Wrap-Up: thank members for their openness and participation.

Evaluation: have members to fill out the “Year-end Evaluation” and discuss about it.

Action: Discuss the following
1. Is there any unfinished business (such as apologies, peacemaking, thank-you’s…) of the past year we need to address?
2. Remind members of God’s invitation and their responses to live out the graces received.
3. How can we as a group grow and support each other over the summer? (e.g., accountable partner; group sharing on facebook every week, etc.)

Announce: upcoming CLC events
*Try to set a meeting day and time for next year.*
V. Closing Prayer (5’)

- Encourage everyone to pray in thanksgiving for each other by praying for the person to their left. (Coordinator should begin first) I would like to pray in thanksgiving for ……

- We may conclude the prayer with your favorite prayer or the one below

**Before The One Who Is Mystery**

Holy One, Mystery, Caring God ….

Now I know that You are always greater than anything I can think or imagine, and for this I am most grateful.

I am glad that I can not locate You, define You, describe You.

I used to worry about self-identity, about who I was.

Now I am glad not to know, and I can thank You for the mystery of my being....

I do not know how much longer I shall live, nor what shall become of me.

I do not know if the way I am trying to live now really is Your will.

You have shown me something of the depths of self-deception that are in me, and I may still be deceiving myself.

But what I do know is that You are the God of every situation, God in our darkness drawing us to light, God in our sinfulness offering us healing, God in our self-deception leading us into truth,

God who is for us, even when we are against ourselves.

So I know that even if I am unwittingly deceiving myself, if I follow what truth there is in me, then You will draw me further into Your truth, and that there is no situation, no state, no place I can reach where you will not still be closer to me than I am to myself.

Adapted from Gerard Hughes in “God, Where Are You?” (Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1997) p. 269f.

**Spiritual Exercises / General Principles & Norms**

*Love is shown more in deeds than in words (SpEx #230).*

*I beg for the gift of an intimate knowledge of all the goods which God shares with me. Filled with gratitude, I want to be empowered to respond just as totally in my love and service (SpEx #233).*

*Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we respond with gratitude to God for this gift of Jesus in every circumstance of our lives (GP #5).*
Year Awareness Examen

Presence of God: I take some time to relax, breathe regularly, and place myself in God’s presence. I ask for the gift of gratitude and sensitivity to the Spirit, so that I may more deeply understand and appreciate how God has been working and inviting me this year.

Reflect: I read over my journal entries as a way to recall what took place within me. I particularly pay attention to my covenant with God, my hopes and desires at the beginning of each semester. I underline key words, phrases, or insights, especially those which reoccur or form a pattern of meaning.

1. Gratitude: Looking back this year, what are you most grateful for?

2. Consolation
   - Which activities or persons in this year who helped you walked on water and grew closer to God as Peter? Describe.
   - How would you answer the question of who I am tonight?
   - How would you answer the question of who God is for me tonight? What is your dominant image of God now? (see the list of Scriptural images if helpful)

3. Desolation
   - Which activities or persons in this year who caused you drowned under the water and pulled you away from God as Peter? Describe.
   - How have you not responded to God? Might you need God’s forgiveness?

4. God’s Invitation
   - Name one or two areas that God is inviting you to work on during the summer and next year.
   - In what concrete ways or habits do you envision to live out these graces?

5. Image of the year: if you have to choose an image to describe your inner journey this year, what would it be? Draw it out on the next blank page.

Closing prayer: As with every prayer, I spend time to listen, talk, or convey to God whatever is in my heart.
My image of the year
Earlier, we looked at the different images of God we’ve held throughout our lives and our images at that moment. In reflecting on what our images of God are right now in our lives, it’s always important to let our understanding and articulation of our images come from our actual experiences of God. Only we can really know how we see and understand God. And only God can ultimately be the source of positive change in these images, change resulting in a more authentic image reflective of who God really is and how God really sees us.

It can often be helpful, however, to consider our images in light of the genuine images of others, especially those found in Scripture. Exploring other true images can help us to better articulate, appreciate, and embrace how God is uniquely loving us and revealing His true nature and identity to each of us. Truly, no image of God can fully describe God. God cannot be confined to an image. In this earthy life, however, images are tools to help us be in relationship with God. They help us to understand and be open to that relationship a little bit more.

The following Scriptural images may be helpful for you in this process of being in-touch with your images of God and allowing God to reveal Himself to you…

**Scriptural Images of God**

1. **God as Father** – Found in the story of the Prodigal Son, this image portrays God as a father who loves unconditionally and forgives. He endlessly greets you just as you are with a warm hug. (Luke 15:11-32)
2. **God as Mother** – This image portrays God as the perfect mother whose love for her child is endless. Even if an earthly mother can abandon her child, God as mother will never abandon you. (Isaiah 49:5-6, 15-16)
3. **God as Shepherd** – This image portrays God as a shepherd that knows His flock and whose flock know Him. It portrays a God that is willing to lay down His life for His sheep. He loves each sheep so uniquely He is willing to leave His flock to find one that is lost. (John 10:13-16, Luke 15:4-10)
4. **God as a Wise Woman (Wisdom)** – The book of Wisdom portrays God as Wisdom, describing how “…in Her is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, agile, clear, unstained…the good…beneficent kindly…tranquil, all-powerful, all-seeing…” (Wisdom 7:23).
5. **God as Friend** – This image describes God as a friend who shares mutual openness together in a common purpose who loves at the sake of His own life. (Jn 15:11-17)
6. **God as Teacher** - This image describes God as a teacher who guides our and directs our lives. He knows and teaches us all we need to be ourselves and to be with Him (Jn 14:25).
7. **God as Healer or Doctor** - This image describes God as the ultimate source of our healing. (Mt. 9:9-13, any passage of Jesus’ healing miracles)
8. **God as Lover** - The Song of Songs describes the relationship and conversation between a lover and his beloved. In much the same way, God can be understood and experienced as lover who desires and pursues His beloved. (Song of Songs, esp. chapter 2)
9. **God as Creator**: This image describes God as the Creator of all that exists, including humanity. He is our ultimate source of life and everything that sustains our lives. (Psalm 104)
10. **God as the Light of Life** - This image depicts God as the light that prevents us from stumbling in darkness and fear. He illuminates our hearts and lives, guiding and giving warmth to our lives. (Jn 8:12, Isaiah 60)
11. **God as the True Vine** - This image describes how God is our ultimate source of life. Apart from Him, we cannot truly live. As a vine enables its branches to live and bear fruit, so too God enables us to live lives of goodness and true life. (Jn 15:1-10)
Mid-Year & Year-End Evaluations

1. Did CLC meet your expectations? Why or why not?

2. What was your favorite meeting this year? Why?

3. In your opinion, what are the strengths and/or weaknesses of our CLC group?

4. Which campus wide CLC event (social events, service, Taizé, etc…) was the most memorable for you and how?

5. Do you have any concrete suggestions to improve CLC (with your group or as a whole)?
Section 4: Appendices

Part 1: Prayers

Community
1. Birthday Blessing
2. Confusion Neary sj
3. Don’t Change de Mello sj
4. Fear Neary sj
5. Gathering prayer
6. Hearing Neary sj
7. Hope
8. The saving goodness of Love (Meditation)
9. Touch Neary sj
10. People in Your Life
11. Prayer of the Person
12. What is a friend?

Spirituality
13. And Today
14. Choosing the Breath of Christ
15. “God Who Are You?” Neary sj
16. Evening Prayer Neary sj
17. Eyes of Christ (Meditation)
18. Forgiving Self Neary sj
19. Finding God (Meditation)
20. Meeting Myself in Scriptures (Meditation)
21. Morning Prayer Neary sj
22. Sinfulness Neary sj
23. Soul of Christ Fleming sj

Service
24. Apology to my brothers and sisters in developing countries (Joyce Rupp)
25. Belfast Prayer (Donald Neary, S.J.)
26. Desire to help in the world (Neary, s.j.)
27. It’s difficult to believe (Neary, S.J.)
28. Prayer of gratitude and justice (Joyce Rupp)
29. A Future not our own (Oscar Romero)
30. Where are you, Lord? (Neary, S.J.)
Part 2: Stories

1. A brother’s voice (hope, selfless love)
2. A Coincidence? (giving)
3. Call me your father
4. Dandelions—de Mello
5. Diogenes
6. God will meet us half way
7. Golden Shoes for Jesus (giving)
8. Good news
9. Hans and Carl (perspective)
10. The Hugging Prayer (God’s love)
11. I try to remember (life)
12. The Magi (Christmas)
13. Thomas Merton (Letter to a Young Activist)
14. We are three, you are three (faith)

Part 3: Scripture index

Part 4: Ignatian glossary

Part 5: Song list

Part 6: Movie list

Part 7: CLC website resources
Birthday Blessing

May you sip contentedly from the fragrant wine of your life.

May you stretch eagerly into the opening light of each new day.

May you discover kernels of wisdom hidden in unwanted experiences.

May you find comfort and consolation when you are hurting.

May you know the protection and guidance of your angels.

May you hear the tender voice of the Beloved calling you in the deepest part of your being.

May you have a soul friend whose unconditional love gives you courage to keep growing.

May you be a bearer of loving kindness when you meet those who suffer.

May you gather your daily blessings to your heart and relish their presence.

May you never give up seeking greater peace for yourself and for your world.

May you go to sleep each evening aware of being held in the embrace of a merciful and welcoming God.

May you hear the marvelous music singing in your soul every moment, landing the exquisite gift of being alive.

-Joyce Rupp
CONFUSION

Lord, I’m so mixed up;
There seem to be so many aspects to my personality:
With teachers and parents I am one person,
With friends I am another.

I want to do good, to follow you;
But at other times
I’m mean,
I cheat,
I use others for my own advantage.
You see, I’m a rag-bag of things.
Who am I, Lord, anyway?

I want to please my parents,
Yet I want to be myself.
I don’t want to hurt my elders,
Yet I want to be independent,
I don’t want to seem rebellious,
Yet I want to be alive and spontaneous.
Tell me, Lord, how to find my true self.

Help me, Lord, to grow in confidence,
To conquer insecurity.
I know you understand who I am:
Help me to know myself, forgive myself,
And value myself as you do.

Lord, give me patience
With my growing-up.
Give me confidence
That within these different aspects of my personality
I will discover a self that I can accept and love.
As I discover myself, make me an instrument
For the knowledge of your love
And the spread of your Gospel.

By Donald Neary, SJ
I was neurotic for years. I was anxious and depressed and selfish. Everyone kept telling me to change.

I resented them, and I agreed with them, and I wanted to change, but simply couldn’t, no matter how hard I tried.

What hurt the most was that, like the others, my best friend kept insisting that I change. So I felt powerless and trapped.

Then, one day, he said to me, “Don’t change. I love you just as you are.”

These words were music to my ears: “Don’t change. Don’t change. Don’t change…I love you just as you are.”

I relaxed. I came alive. And suddenly I changed!

Now I know that I couldn’t really change until I found someone who would love me whether I changed or not.

Is this how you love me, God?
FEAR

There are times, Lord, when I feel afraid,
Like floundering in the deep end of a swimming pool.
   Or being lost in the dark,
Or feeling like a stranger on a new estate.
   A feeling of tension or darkness;
It’s hard to give it a specific cause or even a name,
   But I know it’s in me, and I wonder why.

I feel afraid to trust someone with a secret;
I am nervous that they might let me down.
   I feel anxious about that interview,
Because I might make a fool of myself.
I feel afraid to offer friendships to others
   In case they reject me.
I’m afraid of many things, many situations:
   Fearful of my opinions being laughed at,
Fearful of my friendship being dumped,
   Fearful of feeling foolish,
   That’s me.

Let me pause, lord, and know what my fears mean.
   They are not wrong,
But they often prevent me from doing
   Something worthwhile:
   Showing some kindness,
   Breaking out of a rut,
   Or saying what’s right in my group.
Fears are like a red light at a junction, warning me of something,
   But if the lights never go green, the traffic gets stuck;
   And if my fears control me, I never live freely.

Let me be aware of my fears, lord, for what they are worth.
Help me to overcome them so they don’t shatter my confidence.
   At times I feel so empty,
   Like a well with no end,
   Or a withered leaf;
But help me to know you love me, fears and all.

By Donald Neary, SJ
Gathering Prayer

Loving God
You enfold this gathering in love
Enable us to be blessing for one another
as we ask you to be blessing for us.

Bless our eyes
to see You in each other
and to recognize looks of joy and pain,
insight and searching
as revelation of your vision.

Bless our ears
to hear You in each other
and to recognize question and affirmation,
fear and desire
as revelation of your listening.

Bless our lips
to speak your truth to each other
and to recognize words of promise and challenge,
belief and contradiction
as revelation of your speech.

Bless our minds
to understand your wisdom in each other
and to recognize ideas and impasse,
planning and hesitation
as revelation of your direction among us
and finally

Bless our hearts
to feel the passion for Mercy in each other
and to recognize calls for justice and
anguish for our sisters and brothers
as revelation of your all-embracing heart.

God of all seeing and hearing
speaking and understanding and feeling
Be blessing of hospitality among us.

We pray impelled by our vision and hope for God’s reign.
We pray in Jesus’ name.
Amen.
Hearing

That piece of music moved me, Lord.
Thanks for all the sounds I like:
  Different music,
  Wildlife and country noises,
  Echoes of laughter and love,
  The sound of my name being called.
Thanks, Lord, for the gift of hearing and listening.

Thanks for the people I have listened with
  Respect;
Thanks, too, for those who have heard me;
  Listening, hearing, and learning,
  Exchanging ideas and feelings,
  Fostering sympathy and love.

Help me, Lord, to use this gift in your service:
  To listen with compassion,
  To hear without judging,
  To listen without condemning.
I want to be able to listen between the words,
  To hear the joys of struggles of another.
I want to help myself and the other to grow in
  Openness.
  I want to fully hear her meaning.
Restrain the curiosity in me that invites gossip,
Let me take no pleasure in the weakness of others,
And may I never fall into the trap of rejoicing in
  Someone else’s misfortune.
Help me to listen with love and understanding.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of hearing and of listening.

By Donald Neary, SJ
HOPE

I hope that I will be for each person,
What he or she needs me to be.
I hope that each person’s death will always diminish me,
But that fear of my own will never diminish my joy of life.
I hope that my love for those whom I like
Will never lessen my love for those I do not.
I hope that another’s love for me
Never be a measure of my love for that person.
I hope that my worth is in Christ,
Not in what I do or don’t.
I hope to receive my daily bread,
But not seek for more.
I hope that I will always ask for forgiveness from others,
But will never need to be asked for my own.
I hope that I will always accept my limitations,
But that I will construct none.
I hope that loving will always be my goal,
But that love will never be my idol.
I hope that each person will always have hope.
I hope to seek you, Lord,
And not your gifts.

I hope that your deed will be done through me, today,
And not tomorrow.
I hope that the desire to please you Lord,
Does, indeed, please you.
I hope to serve and follow you Christ Jesus,
As you choose not as I prefer.
I hope to labor with you Christ,
And not count the costs.
I hope to suffer for you, Jesus,
And not lick the wounds.
I hope to console, more than to seek it.
To understand, rather than be understood.
To bring peace, as much as to receive it,
And to love, much more than to be loved…
People in Your Life

Sometimes people come into your life and you know right away that they were meant to be there…to serve some purpose, teach you a lesson, or help figure out who you are, or who you want to become.

You never know who these people may be, but when you lock eyes with them you know that very moment that they will affect your life in some profound way.

And sometimes things happen to you at the time that may seem horrible, painful, and unfair, but in reflection you realize that without overcoming those obstacles you would have never realized your potential, strength, will power, or heart.

Everything in life happens for a reason. Nothing happens by chance or by means of good luck, illness, injury, love, lost moments, of true greatness, and sheer stupidity all occur to test the limits of your soul.

Without these small tests, life would be smoothly paved, straight, flat road to nowhere, safe, comfortable, but dull and utterly pointless.

The people you meet affect your life. The successes and downfalls that you experience can create who you are, and the bad experiences can be learned from. In fact, they are probably the most poignant and important ones.

If someone hurts you, betrays you, or breaks your heart, forgive them because they have helped you learn about trust and the importance of being cautious to whom you open your heart.

If someone loves you, love them back unconditionally, not only because they love you, but also because they are teaching you to open your heart and eyes to little things.

Make every day count. Appreciate every moment and take from it everything that you possibly can, for you may never be able to experience it again.

Talk to people you never talked to before, and actually listen. Let yourself fall in love, break free, and set your sights high.

Hold your head up because you have every right to. Tell yourself you are a great individual and believe in yourself, for if you don’t believe in yourself, no one else will believe in you. Create your own life and then go out and live it!
Prayer of the Person

The person across from you is the greatest miracle and the greatest mystery in this moment- a testament of God’s continuing creation and presence in the world.

The person across from you is an inexhaustible reservoir of possibility, with potentialities only partially realized.

The person across from you is a unique universe of experience- of possibility and necessity, laughter and tears, love and indifference, hopes and fears- all struggling for expression.

The person across from you believes in something- something precious; stands for something, lives for something, labors for something, waits for something, runs for something, runs towards something.

The person across from you is not perfect- often feels disappointed, is often undecided and disorganized and woefully close to chaos; but is endowed with a tremendous inner strength, and is capable of surviving great difficulties and persecutions.

The person across from you is a community of persons- persons met during a lifetime. Each carries with them a mother and father, student and teacher, brother and sister, enemy and friend.

The person across from you does some things like no one else in the world. There is something this one life on earth means and cares for- will that person dare speak of it to you?

The person across from you is more description than explanation. The person across from you is MYSTERY made in God’s image, never to be fully understood.

Look before you, and within you- look around- for God is indeed among us!

(author unknown)


**The saving goodness of love**

**Purpose**

To use guided meditation to focus on a particular theme

**Exercise**

Guided meditations can be designed to help the meditator focus on a theme of her or his own choosing. In today's meditation, the theme is love as we have experienced it in our personal relationships. By slightly changing the instructions, however, you can focus this meditation on any theme you wish to explore in prayer—your relationship with God, your future, a particular fear you are struggling with. Following is a script for this meditation. Record it and place the tape and a tape player in your prayer space so that they are ready and within reach when you need them. In the script, a series of periods (...) indicates a pause; at these points you should allow enough silence to permit your imagination to create the scene suggested by the script. Then move on to the next part of the instructions. The script opens with directions for centering. Feel free to replace these with others if you have developed a centering technique that works well for you. Assume your prayer posture . . . Relax. . . . Let all tension leave your body . . . . Breathe deeply in and out . . . Feel the tension leave your feet . . . your legs. . . . Relax your stomach and chest . . . . Now let all the tension escape from your arms . . . and from your neck. . . . Let your jaw and face relax . . . . Slow down . . . Breathe in and out slowly . . .

Now imagine taking a long walk. . . . See and feel yourself slowly walking through a clearing in a woods . . . . Tall grass and wildflowers wave in the soft breeze . . . . The sun caresses your face . . . . You stop to take in the scene. . . . Birds flit among the wildflowers and fly into the pine trees ahead of you. . . . Butterflies float among the flowers. . . . One stops near you. . . . You barely breathe so that it won't wing away . . . . Now you inhale the fragrances carried on the wind . . . . You breathe in and out deeply several times. . .

Slowly, you continue to walk toward the woods . . . . A man sits on a log in the shade . . . . With a slight wave of his hand he invites you to share the log with him . . . . When you are close, he says, "Peace be with you." - - Your eyes are opened and you know that he is Jesus. . . . You look deeply into his eyes. . . . Jesus reaches out and takes your hand in his and says, "I love you with an everlasting love." . . . Softly he says, "Now, my friend, tell me of the people you love. Share with me stories of those you love and who love you." - - You see before you the faces of several people you love. . . Now you tell Jesus about the loved ones who reside deeply in your heart. . . . He listens carefully. [Allow a longer pause here.] When you are finished, Jesus stands to go, saying, "Your sins are forgiven because you have loved much." He embraces you. . . . Then you watch as he walks slowly into the forest. . . . When he has disappeared, you gaze at the scene around you once more. . . . When you are ready, return from the scene and open your eyes. (Adapted from Carl Koch, Teaching Manual for Creating a Christian Lifestyle, pp. 99100)
TOUCH

I’m thankful, Lord, for the touch of a friend’s hand,
For the hug of sympathy and friendly warmth,
For the embrace of love and care.
I’m thankful for the people whose lives touch mine with friendship.

I recall, Lord, the touch of the hands that helped
Me grow from childhood to this day:
The touch of parents and friends that meant security and love;
The touch of a friend whose presence cheered me when I was sad;
The touch of encouragement when I was afraid;
The touch of sympathy when I was unhappy.
I thank you, Lord, for this gift;
You have touched me many times with your own presence
Through the goodness of others.

I remember the touches that wounded me,
That still smart in my memory;
Help me to forgive the lasting sting of hurt, insult, or rejection.

Help me, Lord, to use this gift in your service,
To nurture your love among us.
Let me not exploit the loneliness and vulnerability of others;
Let my touch be a touch of care, compassion and kindness;
Let it be a touch of joy and freedom;
And in all the touches, embraces and precious moments of warmth,
Let me remember that I am meeting one made from love,
In the image and likeness of a loving God.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of touch.

By Donald Neary, SJ
What is a Friend?

Please note: the pronoun ‘he’ in this poem refers inclusively to both men and women.

What is a Friend? I will tell you...
It is a person with whom you dare to be yourself.
Your soul can be naked with him.
He seems to ask of you to put on nothing, only be what you are.
He does not want you to be better or worse.
When you are with him,
You feel as a prisoner feels who has just been declared innocent.
You do not have to be on guard.
You can say what you think, so long as it is genuinely you.
He understands those contradictions in your nature that lead others to misjudge you.
With him you breathe freely,
You can avow your little vanities and envies and vicious sparks.
Your meanness and absurdities and,
In opening them up to him, they are lost,
Dissolved on the white ocean of his loyalty.
He understands; you do not have to be careful.
You can keep still with him.
It makes no matter,
He likes you -- he is like a fire that purges to the bone.
He understands; he understands.
You can weep with him,
laugh with him,
pray with him,
(sin with him.)
Through it all -- and underneath -
he sees, knows, and loves you.
A Friend? What is a Friend?
Just one, I repeat, with whom you dare to be yourself.
AND TODAY…

Today I will walk a little slower so
That I may see how God has painted
Fall in the meadows and on the
Hills. I’ll take time to really
See my neighbor’s smile, and talk
With her awhile.
I’ll work a little slower as I do the daily shores,
Warm with all the love I feel for
those who’ll be eating my cakes and sweet, warm breads.
Today I’ll talk to with God and thank Him for
His autumn glory: for the birds whose chirping
Begins my day as they begin their
own in the tall old oak just outside my
bedroom window.
With gratitude that knows no words,
I’ll thank God for the ones I love…
For a child’s wet and noisy kiss…
A teenager’s clumsy but heartfelt hug…
For the laughter and singing that ring through our house.
I’ll thank Him for the deep slate-colored November sky:
What better way to show off crimson maples, fat orange pumpkins,
Brilliantly glowing birches?
For life, and health, and so many blessings beyond counting,
Ill give thanks, beginning with today.
Choosing the Breath of Christ

I choose to breathe the Breath of Christ
That makes all life holy.
I choose to live the flesh of Christ
That outlasts sin’s corrosion and decay.
I choose the Blood of Christ
Along my veins and in my heart
That dizzies me with joy.
I choose the awful agony of Christ
To charge my senseless sorrows with meaning
And to make my pain pregnant with power.

I choose You, good Jesus, You know.
I choose You,
Good Lord;
Count me among the victories
That you have won in bitter woundedness.
Never number me among those alien to You.
Make me safe from all that seeks to destroy me.
Summon me when I come to close my eyes in death.
Summon me to come to You.
Stand me solid among the angels and saints
Chanting yes to all You have done,
Exulting in all You mean to do
Forever and ever.

Then for this time, Father of all,
Keep me, from the core of my self,
Choosing Christ in the world.

Amen
GOD, WHO ARE YOU?

God, who are you?
It all seemed so simple in childhood:
God, gentle Father, and Christ, the friendly Saviour.
But now it’s all questions.
The experiences of my life make me ask questions.
I don’t see you, and I wonder where you are;
I see horror heaped upon horror,
And I wonder why your love is not at work in our world.
My own life is so full of struggles and doubts
That I despair at times;
And there’s so much suffering among the people I know
That I wonder at the meaning of human life.
I admit, Lord, that my own faith in your goodness is shaken
But hurts in my own life:
Death, broken friendships, illness,
Make me question who you are;
Fears and anxieties about my future, about failures and weaknesses,
Make me question who I am.
Will I ever be able to love?
Will I be a victim of the evil in our society?
Will the lure of money, sex, and power bewitch me?
Will I fail?
Will you fail me?

God, where are you?

You are a mystery.
Everyone I know is a mystery.
If a person is so hard to understand,
I t only stands to reason that you, our God, are even more so.
I can’t know another person completely;
I can’t know you completely.
Let my relationship with you be a mystery to be lived out,
Rather than a puzzle to be worked out;
A hand to be held,
Rather than a mind to be fathomed;
An adventure to be undertaken,
Rather than a problem to be solved.

By Donald Neary, SJ
EVENING PRAYER

This evening, Lord, I give you thanks.

For the good things of today,
For people whose friendship I value,
    For the work well done,
    For the deadlines met,
For home and for shelter,
    For the food I ate,
    Thank you, Lord.

May the darkness of tonight
Take with it the bitterness of today;
May sunset put to rest my anger,
And the starlight be a reminder that your
Forgiveness never fails.
For my failure in your service this day,
    I ask your forgiveness, Lord.

I see now that you were present to me this day;
    In the love of those I met,
    In the call to sympathize and console,
    In the cries of those poorer than I—
    Those who have no friends,
    No food, no home, no shelter.
I remember them now, Lord, in your presence.

    For today, Lord, thanks and sorry.
    I put to rest with you the troubles of this day;
    I ask the peace of your presence until the new
Day dawns.
May the protection you give at the end of a day
    Be with me and my loved ones
    All the days of our lives.

By Donald Neary. SJ
The Eyes of Christ Meditation

To begin: A mirror is necessary for each person doing this mediation.

To prepare for this meditation, I ask you to be silent, collect yourself, and place yourself in the presence of God. Every time we pray, we are on holy ground with God.

This mediation is about the eyes. The eyes are the most telling parts of the human body. Everyday we look at ourselves in a mirror. We are now doing exactly just that, looking at ourselves in a mirror. Please pick up the mirror under your chair.

Now look very carefully at yourself in the mirror. Look at your hair, your eyebrows, your eyes, your nose, your lips, facial skin. Be aware of the feelings that arise within you as you stare at yourself.

Now suppose the mirror is large enough to reflect your whole body, and you can see yourself in a crowd. You can see in the mirror the way you walk, that way you talk, the way you interact with others, the way people look at you. Again, notice the feelings emerging in your heart.

Now the mirror turned into a magical mirror that could reflect everything in your past: your well-kept secrets, your painful mistakes, your happy moments, your many scars. They are all staring back at you. How do you feel?

Seeing the totality of oneself is never easy. It evokes more dissatisfaction than pride. The question is, “Do I really see myself or only see myself through the lens of bad experiences and failures?”

Please place the mirror beneath your chair again. I now invite you to close your eyes and travel to a faraway country. There you see Jesus teaching a crowd. Look at his eyes. As he is telling a story, a mob drags a woman toward Jesus. They yell pointing their fingers at the woman, their eyes blazing with hatred and anger, “You destroy people’s family. You don’t deserve to live.” The woman staggers in front of Jesus, her whole body burning under the condemning eyes of the crowd, her hair loose and entangled, her hands covering her ears, her shoulders trembling. The crowd looks at Jesus impatiently. A man raises his voice, “This woman was caught in adultery. Stone her according to laws. What are you waiting for rabbi?”

Jesus looks at her with loving eyes and then faces the crowd. “The person who is without sin may stone her. We all have our own sins, our own shortcoming and actions we are not proud of. But only the person, who has never felt shame in his or her actions, has the right to punish this woman for her sins.” Slowly, as the crowd remembers its own sins, they leave the woman one by one.

It is not our lack of failure or success that makes us the person we are. It is the love we have for ourselves, each other and Jesus that determine how we see the world. Take a few moments to think of how you been loved as Jesus has loved? (Have a long pause to ponder this thought). How have you loved as Jesus has loved you? (Pause to ponder). Keep these images, emotions and feelings in mind as you slowly open your eyes. Now look at yourself in the mirror again. Can you see yourself with the same love as Jesus loves you?
FORGIVING SELF

It’s hard to forgive myself, Lord.
I often think of ways I’ve let you down or
Harmed others.
I feel so ashamed when some of these memories
Come to mind,
I wish I could draw the curtains on myself and
Not be seen.
The harsh words, not always true, spoken
About others;
The disloyal remarks about a good friend
who has just hurt me;
The encouragement to someone to drink too much;
   The drugs I pass around;
The money stolen or cheated;
I just ask why I do these things—
   I know they are wrong.
I could have done good, but I didn’t.

The memory is like heavy baggage I carry with me,
   A blot on the pages of my life-story—
A blot that stares me in the face and depresses me.
   It’s a bitter grudge I bear against myself.

Lord, do you forgive?
   Do they forgive?
   I don’t know.
But I know that behind the curtain I draw on
   Myself,
   I need some sort of cleansing,
   It’s hard to forgive myself,
Because I admit that I was wrong.
No space now for excuses: I confess my wrongdoing,
   I ask you to pierce through this curtain of
   Shame with your forgiveness,
   To carry my baggage,
   To erase the blot,
Then I can begin to forgive myself.
Replace my denial of my faults
With ready admittance and acceptance.
Replace my anger at myself
With understanding and humility;

My guilt at what I’ve done
With your loving forgiveness;
My despair about improving,
With hope in your power.
And above all, Lord, may I accept the
Weaknesses in myself;
May I bring them to you and ask your help
In growing through them to become a
Stronger person,
Strong in forgiveness,
Strong in acceptance of forgiveness
From you and others.

By Donald Neary. SJ
"Finding God" Meditation

Note to Prayer Leader:

This text is only a suggestion. Please consider changing the wording or pauses to better suit your own speaking styles and the Spirit's movement.

Consider the following to prepare your group for the mediation:

“A guided meditation is a form of prayer wherein a person prepares himself for openness to God, to listen to God speak in a new way, to learn about God, or about a deeper part of him or herself. We will use our imagination in this prayer. This might be new, or even awkward to some of you. Just please try to remain relaxed and let God's spirit guide your own spirit. No matter what happens, try not to judge your experience, don't worry about being right or wrong, succeeding, competing, or being appropriate. Simply relax, let go, and let the meditation move along as it will.

Feel free to add anything into your meditation,” if you feel moved.

Have them chose a relaxed but focused position. Guide them to breathe freely and be relaxed. Have them follow and briefly become aware of their breathing.

TEXT:

"Close your eyes, and take a moment to relax your body. Identify any part of your body that seems particularly tense. Identify the muscles any part of your body that seems particularly tense. Tighten the muscles in that part of your body, become conscious of the tension there and then allow the muscles to relax ...

Now become aware of your breathing ... Spend a minute or two steadying the rate of your breathing and deepening it ... Now imagine that the air you are breathing is charged with the power and presence of God ... Think of the air as an immense ocean that surrounds you ... an ocean heavily colored with God's presence's and being ... While you are breathing in air, you are breathing in God as well ...

As you exhale, imagine that you are breathing out all your distractions, your concerns, your fears, your negative feelings ... Imagine that you see your whole body becoming energized and alive as you breath in God's life-giving Spirit and breath out your worries, what keeps you from God and peace.

“Imagine that you are sitting on a hilltop overlooking a large city. It is dusk, and the sun is slowly setting over the city. As it does so, the lights of the city begin to glow, and slowly the city begins to look like a sea of lights. You are all alone, gazing at the
marvelous sight ... Feel the gently breeze brushing the side of your face ... Observe as the sky’s color or the clouds change their hue ... Smell the freshness of the air ... Notice if there are any birds singing or whistling nearby.

After a while you hear the footsteps of someone behind you, but you are not afraid. You know that they are the footsteps of a holy man who lives on the mountain, a hermit. He comes up to you and stands by your side. He looks gently at you and says just one sentence to you: "If you go down into the city tonight, you will find God." He then turns and walks away. No explanation, no time to ask any questions.

You know that the holy man is trustworthy and that he knows what he is talking about. What do you feel like doing? Do you want to act on what he said and go into the city, or do you want to stay where you are? . . .

Whatever you might want to do, imagine now that you are going down into the city in search of God. Soon you find yourself on the outskirts of the city. Now you must decide where to go to search for God. . . for God's peace . . . God's strength . . . God's joy . . . God's friendship. . . Where in the city do you decide to go? Don't go where you think you ought to go. Rather, go where your heart truly leads you.


Is there anyone in this place? . . . What are they like? . . . How do they treat you? . . . How do you relate to them? . . . Do they reveal to you or show you anything about God?

Now imagine that you are leaving that place, that you return to the edge of the city, and that you climb up to the top of the hill that you were on before. There you again meet the holy man . . . What does he look like? . . . He asks you to tell him what you learned about God. What do you tell him? . . .

Now say a brief prayer in your heart to God, and slowly, when you are ready, open your eyes . . .”
Reflection / Sharing questions:

- At what point did you get the most out of the meditation? What occurred at that time?
- Was there anything surprising that came up? Did he learn or realize anything new or in a deeper way about his life, himself, or God during or after the meditation.
- What did you tell the hermit you learned about God?

Other helpful questions: Were you able to actually recapture the sensations? For example, could you imagine the smell and sounds of the place? Where in the city did you notice the presence of God? What did God look like? Could you hear God's voice?

Question to make transitions to extended check-in:

- During the meditation when you found God, what did you tell God about what’s going on in your life right now? With school, family, home. Any concerns, troubles, good news you’d like to share.

Toward the end – pray for one another’s concerns, troubles, etc…

Thomas Zanzig, Learning to Meditate
Meeting myself in the Scriptures

Purpose
To learn to use your imagination in praying the Scriptures

Exercise
Saint Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuits, developed a method of prayer that consists of selecting a scene from the life of Jesus and reliving it as if it were occurring right now. The meditator imagines himself or herself actively participating in the event, at times assuming the role of one of the primary characters involved or, perhaps, as simply an observer on the scene. Often the meditator is asked to imagine a dialog with Jesus taking place within the context of the story. The meditator may actually feel as if he or she is a part of all that is happening.

Enter your prayer space, and spend a few minutes becoming centered. Then read from your Bible the brief story about the cure of the blind man on the road to Jericho recorded in Luke 18:35-43. "Replay" the passage using the script provided below. This script can be recorded in advance if you wish, although you may not feel that recording it is necessary. Prayerfully reflect on the passage as follows:

Imagine yourself walking amid the crowd that is following Jesus on the road to the town of Jericho. How many people are present? . . . Feel and smell the dust of the road in the air as the crowd moves along. . . . What sounds do you hear? . . . How do you feel as a member of the crowd? . . . Excited? . . . Anxious? . . . Tired? . . . Are you talking with others in the crowd or sticking by yourself as you watch Jesus? . . . Suddenly, there is commotion by the side of the road. Someone is screaming, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me." Jesus apparently cannot hear the man calling, and others around the man are trying to shut him up. But he calls out more loudly, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me." What does his voice sound like? . . . You realize now that the man is blind. . . . What does he look like? . . . How does he dress? . . . See and listen to the response of the people in the scene—the people around you in the crowd; those near the blind man who are apparently embarrassed by his behavior. And you—how do you feel? . . .

Finally the blind man catches Jesus' attention. Jesus stops and turns toward the man. You work your way through the crowd to get closer to Jesus, anxious to see how he will handle the situation. The crowd noise lessens as people wait in anticipation. . . . Then Jesus looks at those who have been trying to silence the blind man and demands that they bring the man to him. What do those people feel like? . . . How does the blind man feel as he realizes that the crowd has grown silent? Does he feel that the people are all watching him? . . . As the man is brought forward, he stumbles against you. What does he say to you? . . . Do you say anything to the blind man? . . . How do you feel? . . .
The blind man now stands before Jesus. Jesus asks him, "What do you want me to do for you?"
"Sir," the blind man replies, "let me see again." How does Jesus look upon the man? . . . Jesus then
says, "Receive your sight. Your faith saved you." And the man's eyes slowly open. He can see!
How does he respond? . . . How does the crowd react? . . . Look at Jesus' face. What does he look
like? . . . How do you feel, and how do you respond to what you have seen? . . .

Jesus unexpectedly turns toward you. He looks into your eyes and says, "What do you want me to
do for you? What things are blinding you? How might I heal you?" What do you say to Jesus?

Thomas Zanzig, Learning to Meditate
MORNING PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, for this day;
For the dawn which is a sign of the
Sureness of your love,
Your presence,
Your forgiveness,
Your companionship,
All the days of our lives.

I start this day in trust in you, Lord.
It may be ordinary,
A day of work or study or even drudgery;
I give it to you.

I offer you the hours of this day,
That now or later they may be in your service.

I pray for those I will meet.
May I bring in some small way
A dawning of joy and peace in their lives.

Thank you, Lord, for this day;
May I always be thankful for what is good.

By Donald Neary
SINFULNESS

Lord, I have sinned;
I have been weaker than I thought;
I have failed you.

I feel guilt,
Shame,
Anger,
At what I have done.

Lord, I know that your friendship is a forgiving friendship;
Help me to believe this more fully
Help me to forgive myself,
Help me to make up this harm,
Help me to heal this hurt.

I pray that I can really believe in your forgiveness;
This will make me truly thankful to you.

By Donald Neary, SJ
Soul of Christ

Jesus, may all that is you flow into me.
May your body and blood be my food and drink.
May your passion and death be my strength and life.
Jesus, with you by my side enough has been given.
May the shelter I seek be the shadow of your cross.
Let me not run from the life which you offer.
But hold me safe from the forces of evil.
On each of my dyings shed your light and your love.
Keep calling to me until that day comes.
When, with your saints, I may praise you forever. Amen.

-A favorite prayer of St. Ignatius,
as translated by David. L. Fleming, SJ
A FUTURE NOT OUR OWN

A prayer / poem by Archbishop Oscar Romero

It helps, now and then, to step back
and take the long view.
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.
Nothing we do is complete,
which is another way of saying
that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about:
We plant seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything
and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders,
ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.
Apology to My Brothers and Sisters in Developing Countries
By: Joyce Rupp

To my brothers and sisters in developing countries:

While I was deciding which oat brain cereal to eat this morning, you were searching the ground for leftover grains from the passing wheat truck.

While I was jogging at the health center, you were working in the wealthy landowner’s field under a scorching sun. While I was choosing between diet and regular soda, your parched lips were yearning for a sip of clean water.

While I complained about the poor service in the gourmet restaurant, you were gratefully eating a bowl of rice.

While I poured “fresh and better” detergent into the washing machine, you stood in the river with your bundle of clothes.

While I watched the evening news on my wide-screen television set, you were being terrorized and taunted by a dictatorial government.

While I read the newspaper and drank my cup of steaming coffee, you walked the long, dusty miles to a crowded schoolroom to learn how to read.

While I scanned the ads for a bargain on an extra piece of clothing, you woke up and put on the same shirt and pants that you have worn for many months.

While I built a fourteen-room house for the three of us, your family of ten found shelter in a one-room hut.

While I went to Church last Sunday and felt more than slightly bored, you stood on the land with those around you and felt gratitude to God for being alive for one more day.

My brothers and sisters, forgive me for my arrogance and my indifference. Forgive me for my greed of always wanting newer, bigger, and better things. Forgive me for not doing my part to change the unjust systems that keep you suffering and impoverished. I offer you my promise to become more aware of your situation and to change my lifestyle as I work for the transformation of our world.
BELFAST PRAYER

Lord, these sounds are frightening:
  Helicopters buzzing overhead,
  Ambulance sirens screaming,
  The noise of a plastic bullet,
  The moan of injury,
  The cry of bereavement.
Lord, these are the sounds of our city;
I want to remind you that they are the sounds
  Of your city, too.

Help us, Lord,
  Heal us,
Make us hunger for peace—
Or is it worth praying for peace at all?

Lord, we are choked with anger at the
  Sight of the maimed child,
  Mistrust of empty political words,
  Fear that loved ones will be hurt,
And the crippling numbness that we live in a
  Helpless land.
  It’s so tough to face what’s going on,
  So frustrating to work for peace.

These are the deep-down war-worries I bring
  To you, Lord.
Give us, in this troubled city and land,
  The peace of heart that even city-peace cannot give;
  Reconciliation instead of anger,
  Companionship in our fears,
  Hope enlivening that awful numbness.

I wonder all the time:
  Why are people of goodwill so estranged?
Catholic and Protestant, Roman and Reformers.
Is it not possible to follow the God of love without hatred?
  Lord, where are you?
Answer us.
The only answer I get, Lord, is the sense of
Your presence,
Healing,
Hungering,
Hoping,
In the prayer groups, political groups, peace groups,
I sense your dying and rising among your people:
Dying in the moments of violence and the skin-searing shrapnel;
Rising in the resolves for reconciliation and the
Pleading for peace.

I hear your cry and your call:
Your cry for help,
And your call to help.
That’s all the answer I have;
It will do for another day.

By Donald Neary, SJ
DESIRE TO HELP IN THE WORLD

Lord,
The film I just saw was about the miseries and
Injustices of the world;
The headlines in the newspapers report violence,
Murder, and death:
And I think of other particular suffering
Around us:
Thousands of children sick in India,
Death and loneliness in Belfast,
Drug-addicts exploited by pushers,
Kids hooked on glue,
Ignorance through lack of education,
Sickness through lack of medical care,
Death on the streets.

Lord, how can I respond to the cries of your people?

I think of the less-known sufferings:
The anxieties and depressions of lonely men
And women;
Of those who attempt suicide;
Of those who drown their cares in over-indulgence in alcohol.

What can I do to help?
I want to, Lord,
I want my life to be a channel of your love to
Them;
But that can one man, one woman, do?

Help me, Lord, to believe that I can help,
And give me the courage and generosity to
Offer myself in service,
That my life might be like a candle,
Giving light to others.

By Donald Neary, SJ
IT’S DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE

It’s difficult to believe in you, Lord.  
Look at the sufferings of so many innocent people;  
Look at sickness, poverty and ravages of neglect.  
Is this your world, Lord?  
Is this your creation?  
Are you outside its tragedies and its outrages?  
Are you responsible?  
They say the world is in your hands;  
You seem far away when I call for help.

You say, Lord, that you are loving.  
Help me to believe this—  
I want to.  
May I never become so immersed in doubts  
That I fail to grow in faith.  
May these doubts lead me  
To a new knowledge of your goodness,  
To a new understanding of your ways.

Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.

By Donald Neary, SJ
(Group) Prayer of Gratitude

We are grateful for eyes that can see and ponder, for taste buds that know the sensuous pleasures of eating and drinking, for hands that hold and touch and feel, for ears that can delight in music and the voice of a friend, for a nose that can smell the aroma of newly mown grass or delicious food, and can also breathe the air that gives us life.

We are grateful for the treasure of loved ones whose hearts of openness and acceptance has encouraged us to be who we are. We are grateful for their faithfulness, for standing by us when our weaknesses stood out glaringly, for being there when we were most in need and for delighting with us in our good days and our joyful seasons.

We are grateful for the eyes of faith, for believing in the presence of God, giving us hope in our darkest days, encouraging us to listen to our spirit’s hunger, and reminding us to trust in the blessings of God's presence in our most empty days.

We are grateful for the ongoing process of becoming who we are, for the seasons within, for the great adventure of life that challenges and comforts us at one and the same time.

We are grateful for the messengers of God - people, events, written or spoken words - that came to us at just the right time and helped us to grow.

We are grateful for God calling us to work with our gifts, grateful that we can be of service and use our talents in a responsible and just way.

We are grateful that we have the basic necessities of life, that we have the means and the ability to hear the cries of the poor and to respond with our abundance.

We are grateful for the miracle of life, for the green of our earth, for the amazing grace of our history; we are grateful that we still have time to decide the fate of the world by our choices and our actions, grateful that we have it within our power to bring a divided world to peace.

CLOSING PRAYER

Faithful God, you have lavished us with love. Keep us ever mindful that you keep your promises. On our difficult days help us to remember that you are a refuge for those who need shelter, a comfort for those who feel empty and poor in spirit. On our joyful days fill us with a deep sense of thanksgiving as we experience your everlasting love. Help us to share your graciousness with all those who need a touch of generous love. AMEN.

WHERE ARE YOU, LORD?

God, I find it difficult to believe in you.
    You seem so distant;
    I never hear your voice,
    I never see your face.
People are suffering from hunger, homelessness
    And violence:
    Where are you?
Others seem so certain about you, so sure;
    What’s wrong with me?
Are you near in the world of money and power?
Where are you in a world that doesn’t love or care?

Sometimes it’s easy to find you in the countryside.
    In the rock-like strength of the mountain,
    Or the peace of the valley,
    You touch us with your presence.
But what about bad housing, concrete jungles, polluted air?
What about violence, murder, starvation, sickness?
    Where are you, Lord, in a world
    Where babies die each day of malnutrition,
    And marriages flounder from houselessness?

I know there are moments when I have found
    Your presence.
I think you are present when someone cares and helps;
    There’s a glimmer in the misery.
It’s a touch of your love, a sign of your presence.
    I expect you to be outside the world,
    But you’re right in it,
    You’re in the thick of things.

    You’re among the starving,
    Suffering with them and saving them.
    You’re among the homeless,
    Neglected with them and consoling them.
    You’re within the broken marriage,
    Hurting with them and healing them.
You are suffering, Lord, with those who suffer:
    Not just observing it, but suffering;
    Not just suffering, but courageously accepted it;
    Not just accepting it, but transforming it;
    Not just transforming it, but working to lessen it.

Can I believe that the glimmer in the misery is your light,
    Your risen hope,
    Your eternal promise?

    Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.

By Donald Neary, SJ
A Brother's Voice (hope, selfless love)

Most people have an inspiration in their life. Maybe it's a talk with someone you respect or an experience. Whatever the inspiration, it tends to make you look at life from a different perspective. My inspiration came from my sister Vicki, a kind and caring person. She didn't care about accolades or being written about in newspapers. All she wanted was to share her love with the people she cared about, her family and friends.

The summer before my junior year of college, I received a phone call from my father saying that Vicki was rushed to the hospital. She had collapsed and the right side of her body was paralyzed. The preliminary indications were that she suffered a stroke. However, test results confirmed it was much more serious. There was a malignant brain tumor causing her paralysis. Her doctors didn't give, her more than three months to live. I remember wondering how this could happen? The day before Vicki was perfectly fine. Now, her life was coming to an end at such a young age.

After overcoming the initial shock and feeling of emptiness, I decided that Vicki needed hope and encouragement. She needed someone to make her believe that she would overcome this obstacle. I became Vicki's coach. Everyday we would visualize the tumor shrinking and everything that we talked about was positive. I even posted a sign on her hospital room door that read, "If you have any negative thoughts, leave them at the door." I was determined to help Vicki beat the tumor. She and I made a deal that was called 50-50. I would do 50% of the fighting and Vicki would do the other 50%.

The month of August arrived and it was time to begin my junior year of college 3,000 miles away. I was unsure whether I should leave or stay with Vicki. I made the mistake of telling her that I might not leave for school. She became angry and said not to worry because she would be fine. There was Vicki lying ill in a hospital bed telling me not to worry. I realized that if I stayed it might send a message that she was dying and I didn't want her believing that. Vicki needed to believe that she could win against the tumor.

Leaving that night feeling it might be the last time I would ever see Vicki alive was the most difficult thing I have ever done. While at school, I never stopped fighting my 50% for her. Every night before falling asleep I would talk to Vicki, hoping that there was some way she could hear me. I would say, "Vicki I'm fighting for you and I will never quit. As long as you never quit fighting we will beat this."

A few months had passed and she was still holding on. I was talking with an elderly friend and she asked about Vicki's situation. I told her that she was getting worse but that she wasn't quitting. My friend asked a question that really made me think. She said, "Do you think the reason she hasn't let go is because she doesn't want to let you down?"

Maybe she was right? Maybe I was selfish for encouraging Vicki to keep fighting? That night before falling asleep, I said to her, "Vicki, I understand that you're in a lot of pain and that you might like to let go. If you do, then I want you to. We didn't lose because you never quit fighting. If you want to go on to a better place then I understand. We will be together again. I love you and I'll always be with you wherever you are."

Early the next morning, my mother called to tell me that Vicki had passed away.

James Malinchak (Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul)
A Coincidence? (Giving)

Give and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For whatever measure you deal out to others, it will be dealt to you in return.  

Luke 6:38 NIV

I was very proud of my daughter Emily. At only nine years old, she had been carefully saving her allowance money all year and trying to earn extra money by doing small jobs around the neighborhood. Emily was determined to save enough to buy a girl's mountain bike, an item for which she'd been longing, and she'd been faithfully putting her money away since the beginning of the year.

"How're you doing, honey?" I asked soon after Thanksgiving. I knew she had hoped to have all the money she needed by the end of the year.

"I have forty-nine dollars, Daddy," she said. "I'm not sure if I'm going to make it."

"You've worked so hard," I said encouragingly. "Keep it up. But you know that you can have your pick from my bicycle collection."

"Thanks, Daddy. But your bikes are so old."

I smiled to myself because I knew she was right. As a collector of vintage bicycles, all my girls' bikes were 1950s models—not the kind a kid would choose today.

When the Christmas season arrived, Emily and I went comparison shopping, and she saw several less expensive bikes for which she thought she'd have to settle. As we left one store, she noticed a Salvation Army volunteer ringing his bell by a big kettle. "Can we give them something, Daddy?" she asked.

"Sorry, Em, I'm out of change," I replied.

Emily continued to work hard all through December, and it seemed she might make her goal after all. Then suddenly one day, she came downstairs to the kitchen and made an announcement to her mother.

"Mom," she said hesitantly, "you know all the money I've been saving?"

"Yes, dear," smiled my wife, Diane.

"God told me to give it to the poor people."
Diane knelt down to Emily's level. "That's a very kind thought, sweetheart. But you've been saving all year. Maybe you could give some of it."

Emily shook her head vigorously. "God said all."

When we saw she was serious, we gave her various suggestions about where she could contribute. But Emily had received specific instructions, and so one cold Sunday morning before Christmas, with little fanfare, she handed her total savings of $58 to a surprised and grateful Salvation Army volunteer.

Moved by Emily's selflessness, I suddenly noticed that a local car dealer was collecting used bicycles to refurbish and give to poor children for Christmas. And I realized that if my nine-year-old daughter could give away all her money, I could certainly give up one bike from my collection.

As I picked up a shiny but old-fashioned kid's bike from the line in the garage, it seemed as if a second bicycle in the line took on a glow. Should I give a second bike? No, certainly the one would be enough.

But as I got to my car, I couldn't shake the feeling that I should donate that second bike as well. And if Emily could follow heavenly instructions, I decided I could, too. I turned back and loaded the second bike into the trunk, then took off for the dealership.

When I delivered the bikes, the car dealer thanked me and said, "You're making two kids very happy, Mr. Koper. And here are your tickets."

"Tickets?" I asked.

"Yes. For each bike donated, we're giving away one chance to win a brand new men's 21-speed mountain bike from a local bike shop. So here are your tickets for two chances."

Why wasn't I surprised when that second ticket won the bike? "I can't believe you won!" laughed Diane, delighted.

"I didn't," I said. "It's pretty clear that Emily did."

And why wasn't I surprised when the bike dealer happily substituted a gorgeous new girl's mountain bike for the man's bike advertised?

Coincidence? Maybe. I like to think it was God's way of rewarding a little girl for a sacrifice beyond her years while giving her dad a lesson in charity and the power of the Lord.

Ed Koper, Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul
Call Me Your Father

A letter written to a man on death row by the Father of the man whom the man on death row had killed:

You are probably surprised that I, of all people, am writing a letter to you, but I ask you to read it in its entirety and consider its request seriously. As the Father of the man whom you took part in murdering, I have something very important to say to you.

I forgive you. With all my heart, I forgive you. I realize it may be hard for you to believe, but I really do. At your trial, when you confessed to your part in the events that cost my Son his life and asked for my forgiveness, I immediately granted you that forgiving love from my heart. I can only hope you believe me and will accept my forgiveness.

But this is not all I have to say to you. I want to make you an offer - I want you to become my adopted child. You see, my Son who died was my only child, and I now want to share my life with you and leave my riches to you. This may not make sense to you or anyone else, but I believe you are worth the offer. I have arranged matters so that if you will receive my offer of forgiveness, not only will you be pardoned for your crime, but you also will be set free from your imprisonment, and your sentence of death will be dismissed. At that point, you will become my adopted child and heir to all my riches.

I realize this is a risky offer for me to make to you - you might be tempted to reject my offer completely - but I make it to you without reservation.

Also, I realize it may seem foolish to make such an offer to one who cost my Son his life, but I now have a great love and an unchangeable forgiveness in my heart for you.

Finally, you may be concerned that once you accept my offer you may do something to cause you to be denied your rights as an heir to my wealth. Nothing could be further from the truth. If I can forgive you for your part in my Son's death, I can forgive you for anything. I know you never will be perfect, but you do not have to be perfect to receive my offer. Besides, I believe that once you have accepted my offer and begin to experience the riches that will come to you from me, that your primary (though not always) response will be gratitude and loyalty.

Some would call me foolish for my offer to you, but I wish for you to call me your Father.

Sincerely,

God.
A man who took great pride in his lawn found himself with a large crop of dandelions. He tried every method he knew to get rid of them. Still they plagued him.

Finally he wrote the Department of Agriculture. He enumerated all the things he had tried and closed his letter with the question: "What shall I do now?"

In due course the reply came: "We suggest you learn to love them.

I too had a lawn I prided myself on and I too was plagued with dandelions that I fought with every means in my power. So learning to love them was no easy matter.

I began by talking to them each day. Cordial. Friendly. They maintained a sullen silence. They were smarting from the war I had waged against them and were suspicious of my motives.

But it wasn't long before they smiled back. And relaxed. Soon we were good friends.

My lawn, of course, was ruined. But how attractive my garden became!

* 

He was becoming blind by degrees. He fought it with every means in his power. When medicine no longer served to fight it, he fought it with his emotions. It took courage to say to him, "I suggest you learn to love your blindness."

It was a struggle. He refused to have anything to do with it in the beginning. And when he eventually brought himself to speak to his blindness his words were bitter. But he kept on speaking and the words slowly changed into words of resignation and tolerance and acceptance…and, one day, very much to his own surprise, they became friendliness . . . and love. Then came the day when he was able to put his arm around his blindness and say, “I love you.” That was the day I saw him smile again.

His vision, of course, was lost forever. But how attractive his face became!
DIOGENES

The philosopher Diogenes was eating bread and lentils for supper. He was seen by the philosopher, Aristippus, who lived comfortably by flattering the king.

Said Aristippus, “If you would learn to be subservient to the king you would not have to live on lentils.

Said Diogenes, “Learn to live on lentils and you will not have to cultivate the king.”

God Will Meet us half way

In the Jewish tradition there is a story about a father who had a violent argument with his son. In the heat of anger, the son left home to live in a distant land. After the father’s rage had run its course, he missed his son deeply. He called his servant and told him to travel to the faraway place where his son lived and ask him to return home.

The servant made the journey, found the son, and told him that his father loved him and wanted him to come back. The son replied, “Tell my father that I cannot come back. It is too far.” The servant returned to the father and told him the discouraging news. The father pondered his son’s response and later called in his servant. He told him, “Go back again and talk to my son. Tell him to come back as far as he can, and I will come the rest of the way.”

No matter how distant we are from God, he always gives us a way back. We come as far as we can, and God comes the rest of the way. When God touches us in our sinfulness, which is inherent in the human condition, we call it forgiveness. Forgiveness is the love that …

(from Allan Weinert, C.S.s.R.)
Golden Shoes for Jesus (giving)

It was only four days before Christmas. The spirit of the season had not yet caught up with me, even though cars packed the parking lot of our local discount store. Inside the store, it was worse. Shopping carts and last-minute shoppers jammed the aisles.

Why did I come to town today? I wondered. My feet ached almost as much as my head. My list contained names of several people who claimed they wanted nothing, but I knew their feelings would be hurt if I didn't buy them something.

Buying for someone who had everything and deploring the high cost of items, I considered gift buying anything but fun.

Hurriedly, I filled my shopping cart with last-minute items and proceeded to the long checkout lines. I picked the shortest, but it looked as if it would mean at least a 20-minute wait.

In front of me were two small children—a boy of about five and a slightly younger girl. The boy wore a ragged coat. Enormously large, tattered tennis shoes jutted far out in front of his much-too-short jeans. He clutched several crumpled dollar bills in his grimy hands.

The girl's clothing resembled her brother's. Her head was a matted mass of curly hair. Reminders of an evening meal showed on her small face. She carried a beautiful pair of shiny, gold house slippers. As the Christmas music sounded in the store's stereo system, the small girl hummed along, off-key, but happily.

When we finally approached the checkout register, the girl carefully placed the shoes on the counter. She treated them as though they were a treasure.

The clerk rang up the bill. "That'll be $6.09," she said.

The boy laid his crumpled bills atop the stand while he searched his pockets. He finally came up with $3.12. "I guess we'll have to put them back," he bravely announced. "We'll come back some other time, maybe tomorrow."

With that statement, a soft sob broke from the little girl. "But Jesus would have loved these shoes," she cried.

"Well, we'll go home and work some more. Don't cry. We'll come back," the boy assured her.

Quickly I handed $3.00 to the clerk. These children had waited in line for a long time. And, after all, it was Christmas.

Suddenly a pair of arms came around me and a small voice said, "Thank you, lady."

"What did you mean when you said Jesus would like the shoes?" I asked.
The boy answered, "Our mommy is sick and going to heaven. Daddy said she might go before Christmas to be with Jesus."

The girl spoke. "My Sunday school teacher said the streets up in heaven are shiny gold, just like these shoes. Won't my mommy be beautiful walking on those streets to match these shoes?"

My eyes flooded as I looked into her tear-streaked face. "Yes," I answered, "I'm sure she will."

Silently, I thanked God for using these children to remind me of the true spirit of giving.

Helga Schmidt, *Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul*
Here is the Good News proclaimed by our Lord Jesus Christ:

Jesus began to teach in parables. He said:

The kingdom of God is like two brothers who were called by God to give up all they had and serve humanity.

The older responded to the call generously, though he had to wrench his heart from his family and the girl he loved and dreamed of marrying. He eventually went off to a distant land where he spent himself in the service of the poorest of the poor. A persecution arose in that country and he was arrested, falsely accused, tortured, and put to death.

And the Lord said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You gave me a thousand talents' worth of service. I shall now give you a billion, billion talents, worth of reward. Enter into the joy of your Lord."

The younger boy’s response to the call was less than generous. He decided to ignore it and go ahead and marry the girl he loved. He enjoyed a happy married life, his business prospered, and he became famous and rich. Occasionally he would give alms to the poor.

And when it was his turn to die, the Lord said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have given me ten talents' worth of service. I shall now give you a billion, billion talents' worth of reward. Enter into the joy of your Lord!"

The older boy was surprised when he heard that his brother was to set the same reward as he. And he was pleased. He said, "Lord, knowing this as I do, if I were to be born and live my life again, I would still do exactly what I did for you."
Hans and Carl (perspective)

Once upon a time there was a proud man named Carl who loved to ride his horse through his vast estate, and to congratulate himself on his enormous wealth. One day he came upon Hans, an old tenant farmer, who had sat down to eat his lunch in the shade of a great oak tree. Hans's head was bowed in prayer. When Hans looked up, he said, "Oh, excuse me, sir. I didn't see you. I was giving thanks for my food."

"Humph!" snorted the rich man noticing the coarse dark bread and cheese that made up the old man's lunch. "If that were all I had to eat," he sneered, "I don't think I'd feel like giving thanks." "Oh," replied Hans, "it's quite sufficient. But it's remarkable that you, should come here today because I feel that I have to tell you something. I had a strange dream just before awakening this morning." "And what did you dream?" Carl asked with an amused smile. The old man answered, "There was beauty and peace all around, and yet I could hear a voice saying, 'The richest man in the valley will die tonight.'" "Ali, dreams!" cried Carl. "Nonsense!"

He turned and galloped away, and Hans prayed as he watched the horse and its rider disappear. "Die tonight!" mused Carl. "It's ridiculous! No use going into a panic." The best thing to do, he decided, was to forget the old man's dream.

And yet-yet, he couldn't forget it. He had felt fine, at least until Hans described that crazy dream of his. Now he wasn't sure that he felt all that well. So that evening he called his doctor, who was a personal friend. He asked him to come over right away, for he had to speak with him. When the doctor arrived, Carl told him of the old man's dream, how the richest man in the valley would die this very night.

"Ah," replied the doctor, "sounds like poppycock to me, but for your own peace of mind, let me examine you." A little later, the examination complete, the doctor was full of smiles and assurances. He said, "Carl, you're as strong and healthy as that horse you ride. There's no way you're going to die tonight."

The doctor was just closing his bag when a messenger arrived out of breath at the manor door. "Doctor, doctor," he cried, "come quick! It's old Hans. He just died in his sleep!"
The Hugging Prayer (God’s love)

My mother taught me many prayers when I was young. Often these were prayers of comfort, in contrast to those of my father. His prayers taught me to meet life's challenges. I did not always think of my mother's prayers as prayers, even though that's what she called them. Sometimes I just went through them with her to satisfy her. Nevertheless, because they were based on experience, many of them stuck with me.

This is one of my favorites. I was about six years old at the time that I learned this one. I was sitting outside on a block of concrete, and I was crying. I don't even know why. I was just crying and crying. My mother came along and said, "What's the matter?" I said, "Nothing. Leave me alone!" She did-and then I really started crying.

About fifteen minutes later she came back and sat beside me. "You know," she said, "I have to tell you something. There are going to be a lot of times in your life when you are going to cry, and you won't know why. You won't understand and neither will anybody else. You can marry the nicest man in the world, but at times like this, even he won't know what to do to help you stop crying."

Then she said she was going to teach me a prayer for the times when I was crying and didn't know why. She made me get off the cement block and stand up. She said, "Now put your arms around yourself." I did, but it wasn't good enough for her. "You're just folding your arms," she said. "Put them all the way around yourself. Cuddle your body. Hold yourself the way you would hold a baby in your arms.

"Now, after you have a real good hold of yourself, close your eyes and begin to rock yourself. Rock yourself real good, the way you would a baby, and just keep doing it. When you grow up, no matter how old you are, and you find yourself crying and you don't know why, I want you to rock yourself just like this. And as you do it, remember that you are God's little girl, and that God understands why you are crying even if no one else does. And remember, too, that God holds you close just the way you are holding yourself, because God loves you very much. Then just keep rocking yourself and be comforted."

Isn't that a good prayer? I still say it today when I feel bad. I recommend it for you, too. Just stand wherever you are—in the kitchen, in the shop, or in the bathroom—and wrap your arms around yourself as tightly as you can. Rock yourself. Before long you will be able to feel God holding you in the same way you are holding yourself. You will be comforted the way you were comforted as a child, when your mother held you in her arms and rocked you.

-Sr. Jose Hobday, World of Stories
I Try to Remember (life)

1. Everybody Doesn't Have to Love Me
Not everybody has to love me or even like me. I don't necessarily like everybody I know, so why should everybody else like me? I enjoy being liked and being loved, but if somebody doesn't like me, I will still be okay and still feel like I am an okay person. I cannot make somebody like me, any more than someone can get me to like them. I don't need approval all the time. If someone does not approve of me, I will still be okay.

2. It Is Okay to Make Mistakes
Making mistakes is something we all do, and I am still a fine and worthwhile person when I make them. There is no reason for me to get upset when I make a mistake. I am trying, and if I make a mistake, I am going to continue trying. I can handle making a mistake. It is okay for others to make mistakes, too. I will accept mistakes in myself and also mistakes that others make.

3. Other People Are Okay and I Am Okay
People who do things I don't like are not necessarily bad people. They should not necessarily be punished just because I don't like what they do or did. There is no reason why other people should be the way I want them to be, and there is no reason why I should be the way somebody else wants me to be. People will be whatever they want to be, and I will be whatever I want to be. I cannot control other people or change them. They are who they are; we all deserve basic respect.

4. I Don't Have to Control Things
I will survive if things are different than what I want them to be. I can accept things the way they are, accept people the way they are, and accept myself the way I am. There is no reason to get upset if I can't change things to fit my idea of how they ought to be. There is no reason why I should have to like everything. Even if I don't like it, I can live with it.

5. I Am Responsible for My Day
I am responsible for how I feel and what I do. Nobody can make me feel anything. If I have a rotten day, I am the one who allowed it to be that way. If I have a great day, I am the one who deserves credit for being positive. It is not the responsibility of other people to change so that I can feel better. I am the one who is in charge of my life.

6. I Can Handle It When Things Go Wrong
I don't need to watch out for things to go wrong. Things usually go just fine, and when they don't, I can handle it. 'I don't have to waste my energy worrying. The sky won't fall in; things will be okay.'

7. It Is Important to Try
I can. Even though I may be faced with difficult tasks, it is better to try than to avoid them. Avoiding a task does not give me any opportunities for success or joy, but trying does. Things worth having are worth the effort. I might not be able to do everything, but I can do something.
8. I Am Capable
I don't need someone else to take care of my problems. I am capable. I can take care of myself. I can make decisions for myself. I can think for myself. I don't have to depend on somebody else to take care of me.

9. I Can Change
I don't have to be a certain way because of what has happened in the past. Every day is a new day. It's silly to think I can't help being the way I am. Of course I can. I can change.

10. Other People Are Capable
I can't solve other people's problems for them. I don't have to take on other people's problems as if they were my own. I don't need to change other people or fix up their lives. They are capable and can take care of themselves, and can solve their own problems. I can care and be of some help, but I can't do everything for them.

11. I Can Be Flexible
There is more than one way to do something. More than one person has had good ideas that will work. There is no one and only "best" way. Everybody has ideas that are worthwhile. Some may make more sense to me than others, but everyone's ideas are worthwhile, and everyone has something worthwhile to contribute.

*Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul*
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**The Magi (Christmas)**

THERE is a legend that the Magi were three different ages. Gaspar was a young man, Balthazar in his middle years, and Melchior a Senior citizen. When they approached the cave at Bethlehem, they first went in one at a time. Melchior found an old man like himself with whom he was quickly at home. They spoke together of memory and gratitude. The middle-aged Balthazar encountered a teacher of his own years. They talked passionately of leadership and responsibility. When Gaspar entered, a young prophet met him with words of reform and promise.

The three met outside the cave and marveled at how each had gone in to see a newborn child, but each had met someone of his own years. They gathered their gifts in their arms and entered together a second time. In a manger on a bed of straw was a child twelve days old.

The message of Christ talks to every stage of the life process. The old hear the call to integrity and wisdom, the middle-aged to generativity and responsibility, the young to identity and intimacy. The revelation accompanies us. We marvel at its richness and adaptability. To find Christ at any stage in our lives is to find ourselves.

Yet when all enter together -- the young, the middle-aged, and the old -- we find a deeper truth. No matter where we are in the life process, we are still children of God. We are newborn from the hands of God at every moment. Our dependency and indebtedness does not go away with maturity. There are many stages in the life of a human person, and each stage presents different struggles and opportunities. Yet at each stage there is a permanent child. When we, go in separately, we know we are in different places and different times. When we go in together, we know that even though we are different we are the same.

from John Shea’s *Starlight: Beholding the Christmas Miracle All Year Long.*
Thomas Merton  
*Letter to a Young Activist*

Do not depend on the hope of results. When you are doing the sort of work you have taken on, essentially an apostolic work, you may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no result at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to this idea, you start more and more to concentrate not on the results but on the value, the truth of the work itself. And there, too, a great idea more and more for specific people. The range tends to narrow down, but it gets much more real. In the end, it is the reality of personal relationships that saves everything.

You are fed up with words and I do not blame you. I am nauseated by them sometimes. I am also, to tell you the truth, nauseated by ideals and causes. This sounds like heresy, but I think you will understand what I mean. It is so easy to get engrossed with ideas and slogans and myths that in the end one is left holding the bag, empty, with no trace of meaning left in it. And then the temptation is to yell louder than ever in order to make the meaning be there again by magic. Going through this kind of reaction helps you to guard against this. Your system is complaining of too much verbalizing, and it is right.

…the big results are not in your hands or mine, but they suddenly happen, and we can share in them; but there is no point in building our lives on this personal satisfaction, which may be denied us and which after all is not that important.

The next step in the process is for you to see that your own thinking about what you are doing is crucially important. You are probably striving to build yourself an identity in your work, out of your work, and your witness. You are using it, so to speak, to protect yourself against nothingness, annihilation. That is not the right use of your work. All the good that you will do will come not from you but from the fact that you have allowed yourself, in the obedience of faith, to be used by God's love. Think of this more and gradually you will be free from the need to prove yourself, and you can be more open to power that will work through you without your knowing it.

The great thing after all is to live, not to pour out your life in the service of a myth: and we can turn the best things into myths. If you can get free from the domination of cause and just serve Christ's truth, you will be able to do more and will be less crushed by the inevitable disappointments. Because I see nothing whatever in sight but much disappointment, frustration, and confusion…

The real hope, then is not in something we can think we can do, but in God who is making something good out of it in some way we cannot see. If we can do His will, we will be helping in this process. But we will not necessarily know all about it beforehand…

Enough of this…it is at least a gesture…I will keep you in my prayers.

All the best, in Christ,  
Tom
WE ARE THREE, YOU ARE THREE (faith)

When the bishop’s ship stopped at a remote island for a day, he determined to use the time as profitably as possible. He strolled along the seashore and came across three fishermen mending their nets. In pidgin English they explained to him that centuries before they had been Christianized by missionaries. "We, Christians!" they said, proudly pointing to one another.

The bishop was impressed. Did they know the Lord’s Prayer? They had never heard of it. The bishop was shocked.

"What do you say, then, when you pray?"

"We lift eyes in heaven. We Pray, 'We are three, you are three, have mercy on us.' The bishop was appalled at the primitive, the downright heretical nature of their prayer. So he spent the whole day teaching them the Lord’s Prayer. The fishermen were poor learners, but they gave it all they had and before the bishop sailed away next day he had the satisfaction of hearing them go through the whole formula without a fault.

Months later the bishop’s ship happened to pass by those islands again and the bishop, as he paced the deck Saying his evening Prayers, recalled with Pleasure the three men on that distant island who were now able to pray, thanks to his Patient efforts. While he was lost in the thought he happened to look up and noticed a spot of light in the east. The light kept approaching the ship and, as the bishop gazed in wonder, he saw three figures walking on the water. The captain stopped the boat and everyone leaned over the rails to see this sight.

When they were within speaking distance, the bishop recognized his three friends, the fishermen. "Bishop!" they exclaimed. "We hear your boat go past island and come hurry hurry meet you.

"What is it you want?" asked the awe-stricken bishop,

"Bishop," they said, "We so, so sorry. We forget lovely prayer. We say, 'Our Father in heaven, holy be your name, you kingdom come'...then we forget. Please tell us prayer again."

The bishop felt humbled. "Go back to your homes, my friends," he said, "and each time you pray, say, 'We are three, you are three, have mercy on us!'"
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Ignatian language and value

A.M.D.G.
Arrupe, Pedro
Betania
Cardoner
Consolation
Contemplation
Contemplatives in action
Cura Personalis
Desolation
Discernment
Examen
Finding God in All Things
Friends in the Lord
Helping souls
I H S
Ignatian/Jesuit
Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP)
Ignatian retreat
Ignatian Spirituality
Ignatius of Loyola
Jan Leunis
Jesuit
La Storta
Loyola
Magis
Manresa
Meditation
Men and Women for Others
Monserrat
The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice
The Society of Jesus
The Spiritual Exercises
Glossary of Jesuit/Ignatian Terminology

A.M.D.G. – an abbreviation of a Latin phrase, Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam. It means 'For the greater glory of God' and is the motto of the Society of Jesus.

Arrupe, Pedro (1907-1991): a superior general of the Society of Jesus for nearly 20 years. He was the central figure in transforming Jesuit’s mission and vision. He challenged all Jesuits to promote faith, which involves social justice. He also promoted CLC way of life.

Betania: is Hebrew word for Bethany, the town located on 3 km (less than 2 miles) east of Jerusalem, on the bank of Jordan River. It is where Jesus met Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, whom they became best friends. It is the place where Jesus felt at home and got support before his final week of ministry in Jerusalem.

Cardoner: the river where Ignatius experienced enlightenment. He wrote that all the enlightenments of his life combined “would not, in his judgment, be as great as what he experienced on that occasion.”

Consolation: an affective movement or state that draws us to God, away from self-centeredness, or towards a generous reaching out to others in love and service. We are directed towards growth, creativity, and a fuller and more genuine love of God, of other people, and of ourselves.

Contemplation: a second basic method of mental prayer and consists in attending to the persons, their words, and their actions, largely by use of the imagination. In contemplation, you put yourself into the story: see the people, hear the dialogue, and engage in the actions.

Contemplatives in action: Ignatius ‘in all things, actions and conversations he perceived and contemplated the presence of God and had an affection for spiritual things, being contemplative even while in action - a matter which he explained by saying 'God must be found in all things.

Cura Personalis: a Latin phrase meaning, “Care of the Whole person,” and captures a Jesuit educational ideal. Its purpose is to develop awareness of another’s needs to help the person reach his or her own fullness of life. It is a desire to care for oneself and others as God.

Desolation: affective movements draw us away from God and things which have to do with God, leading us to be self-centered, closed in and unconcerned about God or others. It agitates, disturbs the peace, and injects fears and discouragement to keep one from doing good.

Discernment: is a growing awareness of the movement of God’s grace and desire in our life and choosing to attune ourselves to such movement. Thus, it is first about orientating ourselves toward God. Secondarily, it is about making a particular choice A or choice B, as in choosing to attend graduate school or join a service program for one year after college.
**Examen:** Also known as 'examination of consciousness' or 'awareness examen', this structured review of each day, developed by Ignatius, is employed to discover God's movements and action within one's daily life.

**Finding God in All Things:** it is one of the hallmarks of Ignatian Spirituality. It invites a person to search for and find God in every circumstance of life, not just in explicitly religious situations or activities such as prayer in church (e.g., the Mass) or in private.

**Friends in the Lord:** The description that the first companions gave themselves when they were discerning the direction of their common life together.

**Helping souls:** This is one of the most frequent expressions to be found in Ignatius' writings. By 'soul' Ignatius meant the whole person, so that people could be helped by proving food for the body, learning for the mind or provision of the sacraments.

**IHS:** the first three letters, in Greek, of the name Jesus. These letters appear as a symbol on the official seal of the Society of Jesus or Jesuits.

**Ignatian/Jesuit:** Something is said to be 'Ignatian' when it is grounded in the spirituality, ethos or world view of Ignatius. Thus some schools or religious orders describe themselves as 'Ignatian' but not 'Jesuit'. Jesuit refers to that particular 'Ignatian' manifestation found in the Jesuit order (Society of Jesus) or in ministries owned and directed by them.

**Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP):** The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm is the model of the teaching/learning process in all schools which claim to be Ignatian, which includes the central cycle of the elements experience, reflection, action, taking place in a particular context and always subject to evaluation. The IPP was initially outlined in Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach published in 1993.

**Ignatian Retreat:** A number of days (usually from three to thirty) spend in prayer/reflection with a director, often following the pattern of the Spiritual Exercises, frequently and liberally adapted for school students.

**Ignatian Spirituality:** It is a pathway to God that helps us to find God in all things, to listen with a discerning heart, and to live for the greater glory of God. It is a way of life that involves “getting to the heart of the matter,” “living with integrity,” or “becoming one’s best self.”

**Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556):** a founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and, in a way, a founder of CLC. During his college years in Paris, he and his roommates (Francis Xavier and Peter Faber) got together to pray and to help one another discerning and discovering their personal vocation and mission.

**Jan Leunis:** a Jesuit professor formed a group of students at the Roman College to explore a way of living out the Spiritual Exercises in everyday life. Thus, CLC is born in 1563.
**Jesuit:** a member of the Society of Jesus. It is a shorthand name by members of the Society themselves, as well as by others favorable to them.

**La Storta:** a chapel at La Storta where God the Father told Ignatius, “I will be favorable to you in Rome” and that he would place Ignatius with His Son.

**Loyola:** Saint Ignatius was born in the town of Loyola in northern Spain.

**Magis:** The yardstick of Ignatius was always to undertake that which was 'the better choice', 'the more effective enterprise', 'the more widely influential', 'meeting the greater need', not simply because such a course was harder, but because it would yield 'the greater good' or be more loving. This is the essence of the magis.

**Manresa:** a town in northeastern Spain where Ignatius had the powerful spiritual retreat experiences that led to his famous “Spiritual Exercises” and later guided the founding and the pedagogy of Jesuit schools.

**Meditation:** a first of two methods of prayer which Ignatius teaches in the Exercises. It is discursive mental prayer especially suited to “beginners” in the stage of spiritual growth, who usually need to reason out principles and to form basic convictions. In this method, a person chooses and ponders any words, images, or passages that strike him/her.

**Men and Women for others:** The phrase first appears (in a non inclusive form) in Jesuit General Pedro Arrupe's letter to the international conference in Valencia (1973), where he exhorts all alumni to use their gifts and talents in the service of others.

**Monserrat:** the place where Ignatius spent three days writing out the sins of his life and confessed them to a priest. On the eve of Annunciation, following the rites of chivalry Ignatius offered his sword and dagger to Our Lady at the shrine.

**The Service of faith and the promotion of justice:** The 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (1975) spelt out the Society's mission today in the strongest terms: 'The mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. Reconciliation with God demands the reconciliation of people with one another.

**The Society of Jesus:** The English translation of the name of the Jesuit order. In Latin Societatis Jesu, in Spanish Compania de Jesus.

**The Spiritual Exercises:** A retreat (usually for thirty days, broken up into four 'weeks') developed by Ignatius, which employs an ordered sequence of prayers and contemplations, often undertaken when the retreatant wishes to make a choice in life towards greater love and service of God.
Part 3--Song List
(by Sam Stribling)

Community
"Lean on Me"
"Hold us Together" - Matt Maher
"Stand by Me"
"With a Little Help From my Friends" - Beatles
"Friends" - Michael W. Smith
"Thank You" - Dido
"Crash and Burn" - Savage Garden
"I'll Stand by You" - The Pretenders
"you'll be in my Heart" - Phil Collins
"Oh How the Years Go By" - Amy Grant

Spirituality
"Lay it Down" - Matt Maher
"How Great is Our God" - Chris Tomlin
"Give Us Clean Hands" - Chris Tomlin
"Let my Words Be Few" -
"The Heart of Worship" - Matt Redman
"How Deep the Father's Love for Us" - Nichole Nordman
"By Your Side" - 10th Avenue North
"As it is in Heaven" - Matt Maher
"I Can Only Imagine"
"Empty and Beautiful" - Matt Maher

Mission
"Walk by Faith" - Jeremy Camp
"Prayer of St. Francis" - Sarah McLaughlin
"Voice of Truth" - Casting Crowns
"Here I am Lord"
"Beautiful Let Down" - Switchfoot
"One Thing" - Finger 11
"My Desire" - Jeremy Camp
"Jesus Take the Wheel" - Carrie Underwood
"The Dance" - Garth Brooks
"My Hands" – Jewel

"The glory of God is a human being fully alive."
-St. Iranaeus