

Faith Sharing Guidelines*

Each person is led by God on his/her personal spiritual journey. Faith sharing refers to shared reflections on the action of God in one's experience as related to Scripture and faith. Faith sharing is not discussion, problem solving, or scripture study. The purpose is an encounter, between a person in the concrete circumstances of life and the Word of God, which leads to a conversion of heart. The entire faith sharing process is seen as prayer, i.e. listening to the Word of God as revealed in scripture and in each other's experience.

Participants are given time to reflect before sharing begins, and a period of comfortable silence might occur between individuals sharing. Silence is a vital part of the total process of faith sharing.

Ground Rules for Small Group Discussion:

- Sharing is optional. Each person shares at the time and on the level where he or she feels comfortable.
- There is no set order for sharing (you do not need to go in a circle around the group).
- Listen respectfully and openly. If someone does not hear the sharing or does not understand, he or she can ask for clarification.
- There is no discussion or commenting on what is shared. An appropriate response from the group might be a smile, a nod, or a "thank you."
- The group is not "problem solvers" or "advice givers."
- Participants are encouraged to share in the first person (I feel...I believe...etc.).
- Anything that is shared in the group should be treated as confidential and should not leave the group. It is meant to be a gift for this group only.

**Adapted from the Pastoral Council Prayers and Faith Sharing Resource*

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Reflection Questions

Mission

Evangelization. How do we live out our mission to share the Good News amidst uncertainty?

Worship. How does our Sunday Eucharistic Celebration prepare us to live as disciples?

Word. How do we provide faith formation opportunities for all ages and cultures in our community?

Service. In what ways are we involved in people's lives within and beyond our parish community? How is Christ calling us to be of service?

Community. How do we create a spirit of warmth and hospitality within our parish? Is everyone welcome?

Stewardship. How are we reaching out to invite others to recognize their gifts? Is there a clear path for every member of the parish to share their gifts and talents?

Leadership Development. Are we empowering our parishioners to take on the mission of the parish or are we doing it all ourselves?

What Makes a Pastoral Council Effective?

What do we need to do at our pastoral council meetings this year to build the mission of our parish as we navigate through uncertain times?

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