

◆ Agents of Hope ◆

Manual 2

Leaven in the World: Growing in Community Life

Leaven in the World Editorial Team

Agents of Hope

Manual 1

Dawn on the Horizon: Creating Small Communities

Manual 2

Leaven in the World: Growing in Community Life

Manual 3

Servants of the Reign of God: Advising Small Communities

Promotores de Esperanza

Manual 1

Amanecer en el horizonte: creando pequeñas comunidades

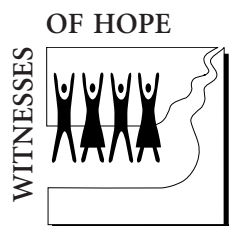
Manual 2



Levadura en el mundo: creciendo en vida comunitaria

Manual 3

Servidores del Reino: asesorando pequeñas comunidades

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Leaven in the World: Growing in Community Life is the second manual in the Agents of Hope series. It is designed for small communities of single young adults aged eighteen and over who have a growing faith commitment and at least two years of experience as a community. It is also suitable for groups of Hispanic *jóvenes* and for other pastoral settings in which a strong community life has been established. The manual’s goal is to encourage small-community members to reflect on their life as a Christian community and to further their community’s maturation process, according to the Prophets of Hope model.

Leaven in the World is especially suitable for communities formed through use of the manual *Dawn on the Horizon*, and whose members have a good understanding of their vocation and mission in the spirit of the books *In Covenant with God* and *Followers of Jesus*, from the Builders of Hope series. The community will need to determine the most appropriate time to enter this phase of reflection on their community life, accomplished through a discernment process, preferably under the guidance of their adviser. To visualize this manual’s role in the Prophets of Hope model, see appendix 1, “Prophets of Hope Process,” pages 207–209, and appendix 2, “Witnesses of Hope Collection,” pages 210–211.

A profound communitarian experience goes hand in hand with the ideal of forging a civilization of love, justice, peace, truth, and liberty. Small communities of young adults are cells of hope in the creation of this civilization of love. The reflections and activities in this manual encourage a dialog that is deep, open, and intimate

among community members, a dialog that helps them mature as individuals and as a community of faith.

The experiences of the first Christian communities, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and in some of the Epistles (letters written by the Apostles to persons or communities), serve as a basis for the formation process used in this manual.

The objectives of this process are as follows:

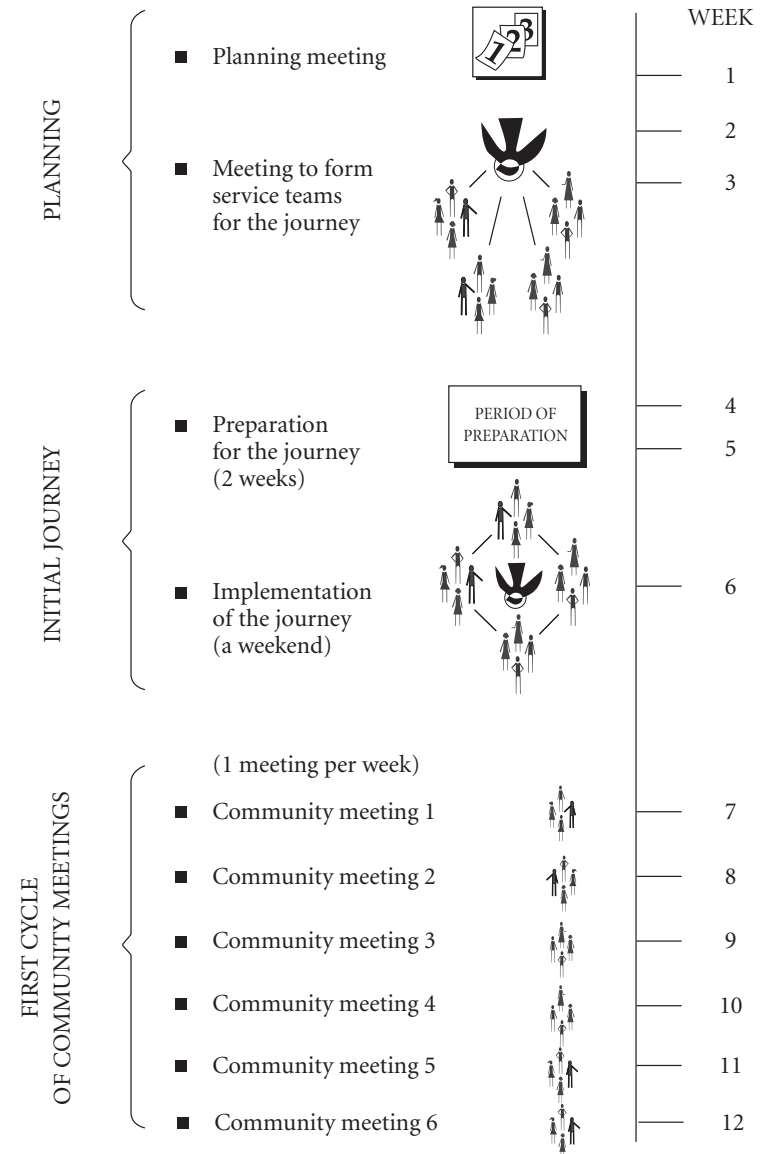
- to foster a sound and rewarding small-community experience that helps the community develop and grow
- to help community members integrate what they live and learn in their small communities into their daily lives by challenging them to assume their mission as leaven in the world
- to prepare community members to create new communities and work with them in their initial stages of formation

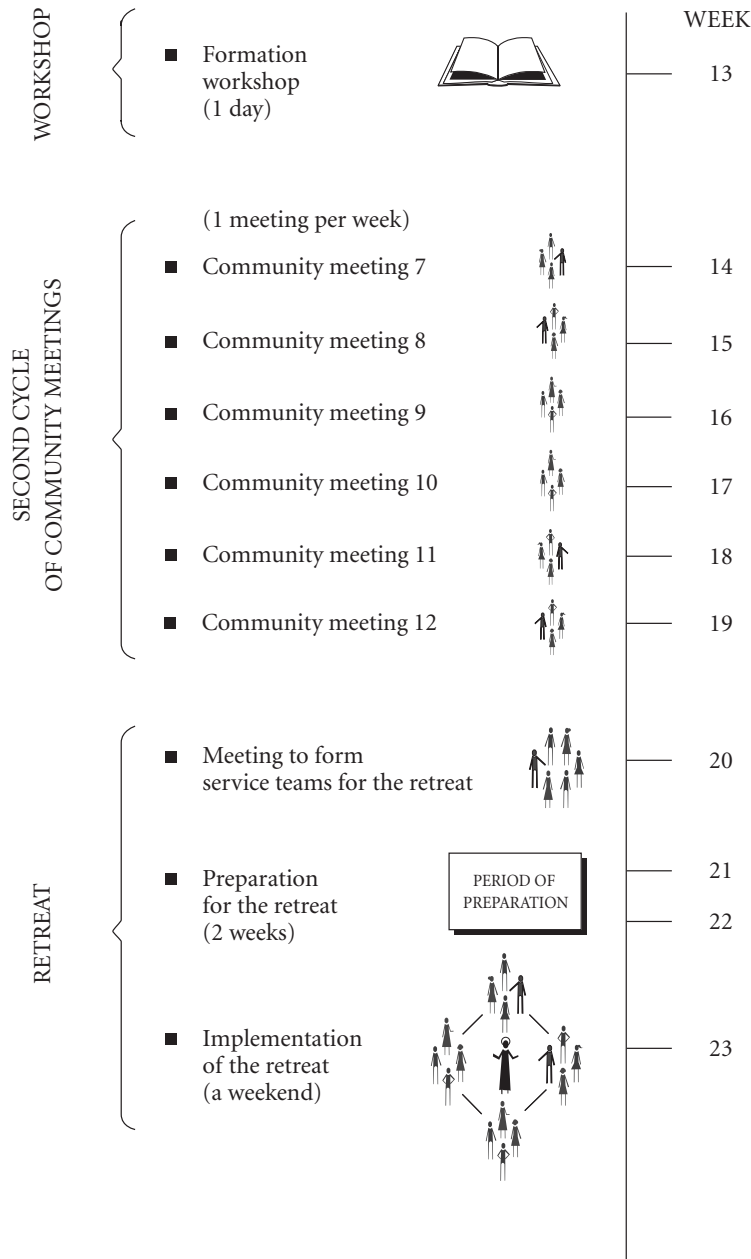
Process

The general process of *Leaven in the World* is similar to the one used in manual 1, *Dawn on the Horizon* and in the books *In Covenant with God* and *Followers of Jesus*. The process consists of an initial journey in which the young adults begin to reflect on their community's life history; two cycles of community meetings focused on various aspects of community life; a formation workshop on the role of leadership in communitarian processes; and a retreat in which the participants first reflect on their communitarian and missionary experiences in light of the life of Saint Paul and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and then undergo a discernment stage to determine whether God is calling them to help in the formation of other small communities.

The manual also contains eight documents that offer information that is necessary for the comprehension and reflection on the themes in the community meetings and formation workshop. In addition, three appendices are included: the first one presents the Prophets of Hope process, the second presents a chart of the Witnesses of Hope collection, and the third contains the evaluation forms.

Process and Scheduling: Leaven in the World





Methodology

Leaven in the World follows a methodology based on a holistic perspective of the development of a small Christian community of young adults; a critical analysis of its communal reality in light of the New Testament, especially the Acts of the Apostles; personal and communal prayer; and formation-in-action processes.


Having community members keep a community journal is part of the process presented in this manual. The journal writing follows the style of the Acts of the Apostles and begins during the initial journey and continues throughout the entire process. By articulating in their journal their experiences as a community, the participants will become aware of the Gospel values they have acquired in their small community. They will then be better prepared to incorporate these values into their daily lives and their mission in the world.

Instructions for keeping the community journal

1. Elect a community member to serve as keeper of the community journal. The journalkeeper is responsible for taking notes on what the community has decided to write in its journal and for transcribing these notes into a clean draft that will be reviewed in community meetings 6 and 12.

2. Invest a half hour per community meeting in identifying the experiences and ideas that the community wants to record in its journal. If the meeting is divided into two sessions, it is important to write the most important ideas from both reflections.

3. Have the journalkeeper be responsible for incorporating into the journal any corrections the community might make along the way, and for making a final copy available to each community member. Ideally all community members would have their own final copy to refer to during the retreat. If final copies have not been completed, then a rough draft should be taken to the retreat in case the community wants to refer to it.

4. The verses that will be written in the preface and in each chapter of the community journal are indicated with this illustration: . When writing the journal, you might want to use the same system as the Bible to indicate the chapter and verse being written. For example:

P:1 for Preface 1
Chapter 3:2 for Chapter 3, verse 2

After the meeting, have someone enter on a computer the verses written. Use the title of each chapter as it appears in this book. A similar design to the one used in this book could also be used for each verse. This will help the community to have a well-presented and easy-to-read journal.



Overview

Objectives

- To reflect on our experience as a community of Jesus' disciples and to start to write our community journal
- To celebrate the road we have traveled and to initiate a stage of commitment as an evangelizing and missionary community

Program

Commentary for the initial journey (30 minutes)

Opening prayer (30 minutes)

- A. Preparation for the meditation
- B. Meditation in small communities
- C. Meditation as a community of communities

Part A: Reflection on John 21:1–14

Session 1: The small community and the Galilean community (2 hours)

Session 2: Jesus is present in our community and in our life (45 minutes)

Session 3: Jesus teaches us to serve the community (1 hour)

Session 4: Let us tend Jesus' sheep (45 minutes)

Part B: Revision of life and growth of the community

Session 5: Circular structure in the small community (1 hour, 15 minutes)

Session 6: Incarnation of the Gospel in life (1 hour, 30 minutes)

Session 7: Fruits, stones, and flowers of new life (1 hour, 15 minutes)

Session 8: Celebration of commitment and sending forth to be leaven in the world (45 minutes)

Session 9: Evaluation (45 minutes)


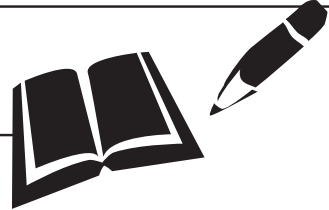
Preparation

Form the leadership teams needed for the initial journey with members from the different small communities that will attend. The program is designed for a weekend. If you plan to hold the initial journey in a single day, you will need to adapt the program according to your needs. Document 1, “Leadership and Service in Activities as a Community of Communities,” on pages 153–159, can serve as a guide when organizing the teams and their tasks. Here are specific jobs that have to be carried out in advance by some of the teams:

- The *coordinating team* asks all the small communities to bring their community name and the symbol or logo displayed on a board or a banner. (Usually Hispanic groups and communities have a name and a symbol or logo.)

- The *drama team* prepares a 15-minute skit based on John 21:1–14. They do their best to highlight important details and to reflect the attitudes of Jesus and Peter.
- The *secretarial team* prepares a three-ring binder for each small community to serve as its community journal. The first sheet of paper should be the title page, modeled from the illustration on page 18. The team places in the binder about fifteen sheets of white paper (some unlined and some lined) for the initial journey and the first few community meetings.
- The *registration team* preassigns participants to intercommunity groups. The participants will work in those groups whenever the process requires it. This team also prepares a list of all the participants to be used in session 4.
- The *panel team* studies document 2, “Interrelation and Integration of Five Dimensions of Young Adults’ Lives,” on pages 160–165, and reviews the chapters of the mentioned books in the preparation section of session 6, on page 30. Afterward the team decides on an appropriate way to do the presentation.

Community Journal


(name of your community)

Just as Jesus called his disciples in Galilee,
he called us to start our journey
as a small community of prophets of hope,
in the city of _____,
in the state of _____, in the year _____.

The community was first formed by
(state their names):

Today our community has the following members
(state their names):

The symbol of our community is (draw your symbol):



Commentary for the initial journey

A member of the coordinating team gives the orientation to the initial journey as follows:

- gives an overview of the initial journey
- asks each small community to present itself by its name and its symbol or logo
- distributes to each small community a three-ring binder for its community journal and explains that the journal follows the style of the book of the Acts of the Apostles
- allows 20 minutes for the small communities to elect a facilitator for reflections, a facilitator for prayer, a secretary, and a timekeeper
- asks the elected people to form the facilitators' team and prepare immediately to facilitate the first session. Meanwhile the remaining participants can sing or go through a warm-up exercise

Opening prayer

Preparation. The liturgy team brings out appropriate containers, kitchen towels, and the following ingredients for *each* small community. Make sure there is an oven at the retreat house, otherwise it will be necessary to bring electric ovens to bake one or two small loaves of bread (5 inches long) that will be prepared by each small community. The bread will be taken to the altar as the offering during the celebration and may be shared at the end.

Ingredients (ten small loaves)

- 4 cups all-purpose wheat flour
- 2 envelopes yeast
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup warm milk
- $4\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons margarine
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon salt
- 3 eggs
- 2 tablespoons of artificial flavoring (vanilla or orange)
margarine
- milk (to brush on top of the bread)
- sugar (to sprinkle on top of the bread)

Meditation while the bread is being made

A. Preparation for the meditation

The liturgy team carries out the following tasks:

- prepares an altar with the image of the risen Christ, a Bible, candles, and matches
- asks all the small communities to come together and sing a song about the mission to evangelize
- plays some background instrumental music and distributes to each small community the ingredients listed above (each community will work independently)
- invites a participant to read the parable of the yeast (Mark 3:13–15)

B. Meditation in small communities

The prayer facilitator invites the communities to make their bread dough with the cooperation of each member, while he or she guides them through the following meditation:

- *Place the bowl on the table.* The bowl represents the planet Earth, where we live, and which is inhabited by billions of people.
- *Put three cups of flour in the bowl and add the yeast.* Flour is the symbol of the society in which we live, of our immediate environment. Yeast represents each one of us living in that environment. We are so small in relation to the society in which we live that we cannot distinguish ourselves at first sight. However, God has placed us here and has given each one of us a mission.
- *Add the milk.* Such nutritionally rich liquid symbolizes the water of our Baptism and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Holy Spirit help us to accept God's will. We should always ask for them humbly and with confidence. These gifts are wisdom, courage, understanding, right judgment, knowledge, reverence, and wonder and awe in God's presence. Let us think of them while we pour the milk, which reminds us of the richness of our Baptism.
- *Soften the margarine with the fingers and put it in the bowl.* Margarine represents Mary, who with her love and maternal care smooths out all the difficulties and roughness we come across in our life.
- *Knead dough with the hands.* This action represents the efforts we have to make in order for the action of the Holy Spirit to reach the different environments where we live.

- *Add the sugar, the salt, and the eggs.* These ingredients are symbols of the different talents God has given each one of us to use in service of humankind. Keep on kneading the dough.
- *Add flavoring (orange or vanilla).* The flavoring symbolizes the assistance a community always needs from other people—an adviser, a lecturer, a priest, and so on. (It is recommended that an adviser pour the flavoring if he or she is present).
- *Slowly add the last cup of flour to the dough.* The dough will have a very smooth consistency, and it will not be sticky. In the same manner that we continue kneading the dough to the end, we must continue improving ourselves and working for the Kingdom of God.
- *Make a ball with the dough, and cover the surface with margarine. Put the dough in a bowl and place it in a warm place, cover it with a damp kitchen towel (not wet). Let it rise for one hour.* The conditions needed for yeast to ferment the dough symbolize the care and time every maturation process needs. Set a small amount of dough aside to be used in the celebration of commitment.
- *Shape the bread. Brush each loaf with milk and sprinkle sugar on it.* The purpose of this step is to make the bread more attractive and fanciful, representing the testimony we give when we, by God's grace, become transforming agents in our environment.
- *Bake the bread for 15 minutes at 350°.* The fire, which will turn the dough into bread, is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit with the sanctity of the Christian people, makes possible the presence of the Kingdom of God on Earth.

C. Meditation as a community of communities

Once all the communities are gathered, the prayer facilitator invites several participants to share what part of the meditation affected them the most and how they relate it to their daily life, giving some examples of the transformation obtained by God's action through them. Conclude with the same song used to begin the meditation.

Part A: Reflection on John 21:1–14

Session 1: The small community and the Galilean community

Instructions. In this session the communities write the preface of their community journal. It is important for *all* the participants to take note of the “verses” their community is writing so that they will be able to share them with the members of other small communities.

1. Have the drama team present the skit it has prepared.
2. Tell the participants to gather in small communities to reflect on the following questions related to the drama:
 - What aspects of this Gospel story does your small community most identify with and why?
 - What message can most help your small community to look deeply into your mission as leaven in the world?
 - Read John 21:1–14 aloud to understand its message better and to enrich your reflection. What would you like to add to your reflection after reading the passage?
3. Elect a person to be responsible for keeping your community journal. This person will be called the journalkeeper to differentiate him or her from the person in charge of secretarial functions. Choose another person as a substitute journalkeeper.
4. Write the first three verses of the prologue of the community journal in a style similar to verses in the Bible. Complete verses 2 and 3 based on your experience as a community. For example:
 - ✎1 Today, the ___ day of the year of the Lord _____, we are starting our community journal with this reflection:
 - ✎2 We identify with Jesus’ Galilean community because . . .
 - ✎3 We can learn from Jesus and from his community that . . .
5. Recall the people who have been like Peter in your small community because they have inspired others by their example or their invitation.
 - Dialog about the times when the energizing strength of these “Peters” has been felt in your small community. If these people are present, thank them.
 - Invite the people identified as Peter to express when they felt their companions saying most strongly, “We will go with you” (John 21:3).

- ✎4 Write as verse 4 some occasion when you felt the strength of the *animador/a* in your small community.
- ✎5 Write as verse 5 some occasion when the *animador/a* felt the support of your small community.

6. Read John 21:3–6.

7. In groups of three, recall some occasion when it seemed that Jesus was not present with your community, a time when you would say as the Gospel says, “That night they caught nothing” (John 21:3). Also recall how, with the help or guidance of someone and the effort of the whole community, you were able to achieve an abundant catch (John 21:10–11).

8. Return to your community and share your recalled experiences with one another. Write key words about each experience on a sheet of newsprint.

9. Divide your community into two groups of roughly equal size. Direct each group to choose a difficult experience that the community has had and to reflect on in the following way:

- Ask yourselves: How and through whom did Jesus help our small community to come out of that difficult moment? What did we learn from that experience?
- Write a paragraph that summarizes your reflections.

10. Regather as a community and ask one volunteer from each small group to read aloud the paragraph its group has written.

- ✎6 Write as paragraph 6 in your community journal the two paragraphs you just read as a community.

Session 2: Jesus is present in our community and in our life

A. Intercommunity reflection

1. Gather in intercommunity groups, as formed by the registration team prior to the initial journey. Have the participants introduce themselves to one another. Then elect two facilitators: one for reflection and the other for prayer. Also choose a secretary and a timekeeper for all your intercommunity group meetings.

2. Invite one representative from each community to read the preface of his or her small community’s journal. As the prefaces are

being read, try to identify experiences that the communities have in common and experiences that are unique to each small community.

3. After all the prefaces have been read, discuss everyone's experiences by focusing on these questions:

- What values did your community discover in remembering and writing some aspects of its history?
- Why is it important that various communities share some of their histories?
- What experiences did the communities have in common?
- What unique experiences did different communities have?

B. Prayer on the presence of Jesus among us

1. The prayer facilitator explains that the prayer will be conducted in the intercommunity groups. Then he or she invites everyone to form a circle, bow their head, close their eyes, and hold hands.

2. Next, the facilitator says aloud, "It is the Lord!" (John 21:7), and squeezes the hands of the people standing on both sides of her or him, who respond, "It is the Lord!" They then squeeze the hands of the people standing next to them. This process continues until all members of the intercommunity group have exclaimed, "It is the Lord!" and all are holding one another's hands tightly. At the end, everyone says together six times, each time in a lower voice, "It is the Lord!"

3. Individually, recall an occasion when someone helped you discover God's presence in a difficult moment. Think about what would have happened in your life if that person had not helped you discover God's presence. Ask yourself:

- What were the positive consequences of discovering God's presence?

Have a few people share what they have recalled. Then offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God, who becomes present through different people when we are in need.

Session 3: Jesus teaches us to serve the community

1. Gather in your small communities to analyze the same Gospel text from two perspectives: mutual service and the presence of the risen Jesus.

2. Read aloud John 21:9–14 with service in mind.

3. Jesus taught us to serve our brothers and sisters. According to your experience in your community:

- Give examples of when your small community or its members embodied a serving Jesus who is attentive to other people's needs.
- What type of service do the members of your community need? Which services can you render among yourselves? For which services do you need outside help?
- Some people are used to receiving everything, expecting others to do things for them and giving very little. How can you help people to see the needs of their brothers and sisters and to prepare to serve them?

Community spirit requires coresponsibility and mutual service. Yet some people serve without allowing others to do so or without knowing how to motivate and empower others to serve. How can you help one another to value and foster service and coresponsibility in your community?

4. When we recognize the good deeds done by someone, we are helping to increase good, and we are helping others to learn from that person's example:

✎ Write as verse 7 one of the testimonies of service related by a member of your small community.

✎ Write as verse 8 some occasion when all the members of your small community worked as a team the way Jesus did with his disciples.

5. Read aloud John 21:9–14 again, this time thinking of the presence of the risen Jesus.

6. Your small community has likely had moments of intimacy when you felt united in spirit, undertaking actions together and celebrating your oneness. To illustrate this, form groups of three or



four members each. Direct each group to draw a picture that shows the union of the community. It is important for each person to add something to the drawing. The message and the participation of all are more important than the artistic quality of your drawing. When you are finished, share your drawing with the whole community, and select the one you wish to include in the community journal, which will be presented in the final celebration of the journey.

Session 4: Let us tend Jesus' sheep

Instructions. This reflection is to be done in the meeting room or chapel where the initial journey was initiated.

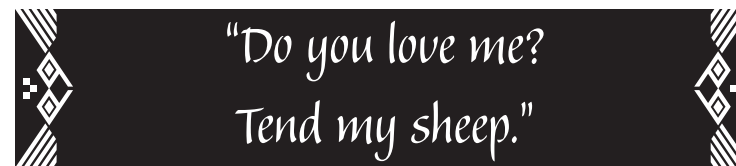
1. Have the facilitator explain how the reflection will take place (see step 3 below).
2. Invite a volunteer to read aloud John 21:15–19.
3. Direct one participant to assume the role of Jesus according to the following instructions:

Jesus sits by the altar with a list of all the participants' names. Jesus calls each person by first and last name and asks him or her, "Do you love me?" The person should respond like Peter, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you" (John 21:15). After responding, the participant should approach the altar and sit on the floor near Jesus. Allow a moment of silence between the responses.

When everybody is near the altar, the person representing Jesus invites everyone to reflect in silence on these questions, pausing between each question:

- In what actions have you shown me your love and responded to my plea, "Tend my sheep"?
- What have you done for your neighbor at work, school, in your family, and in your neighborhood?
- If you have a special ministry, how are you serving people?

After a few minutes, the person representing Jesus stands up, leaves the circle, and says, "Each and every one of you, follow me!" Then Jesus leaves the meeting room and heads outside, followed by all the participants. There Jesus points to a distant spot with his or her hand, and says: "A small community must not be closed into itself! If you really love me, your mission is to go into the world and reach out to others in need. I invite you to pray for 2 minutes while



thinking about what these words of mine imply: 'Do you love me? Follow me! Tend my sheep.'"

Part B: Revision of life and growth of the community

Session 5: Circular structure in the small community

A. The communitarian circle and other types of group structures

Instructions. This orientation may be presented as a large-group reflection, or it can be done in the small communities. In the latter case, someone in each community can read the commentary aloud, or everyone can read in silence.

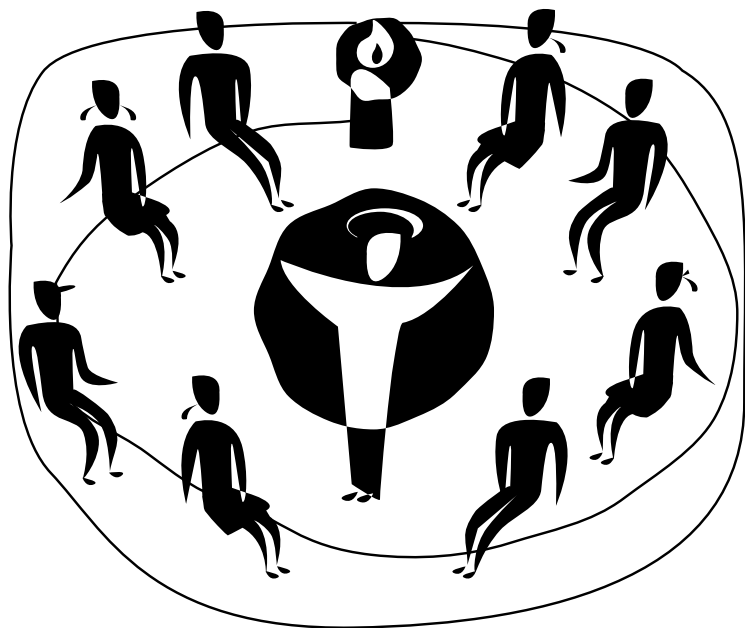
Jesus wants a united community, especially when facing adversity in the world. He makes this very clear in his prayer to the Father.

Read John 17:21–26.

Despite Jesus' desire for diversity, different temperaments and opinions, complexes and prejudices, and human weaknesses and flaws usually make community life difficult. But these difficulties are also opportunities for growth. That is why small communities must be structured in such a way that Jesus is their center and all members feel Jesus' love, mercy, wisdom, and authority with the same degree of closeness.

A circle with Jesus in the center symbolizes a community in which all members have equal access to Jesus. When a serious conflict occurs, praying in a circle with an image of Jesus in the center is one way to begin to resolve the conflict. Then the appropriate psychosocial techniques can be used. But first we should place ourselves in the attitude of Jesus' disciples—eager to resolve the differences that break up our unity as the Body of Christ and as followers

who are humbly looking together for a way to solve the problem and to grow as a community.



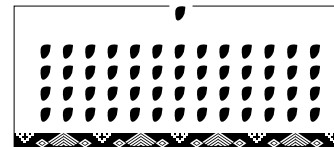
Some small communities have difficulties because their structure does not respond to the needs and goals of a small faith community. The following are examples of structures that may be useful in other social settings, but are inappropriate for community life:

1. *Pyramidal structure.* This structure is typical of institutions in which responsibility falls on a person according to the hierarchy of position in the pyramid, like in

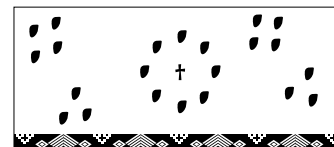


the Army. This structure hurts the community because it assumes that one or several members are superior to others, and, as a result, the superiors make unilateral decisions affecting all the members.

2. *Classroom structure.* This structure is used in academic institutions or other situations when information needs to be transmitted to a large group of people. However, it is detrimental to the community when one member assumes the role of teacher in the life of the community, believing that she or he is the only person with divine wisdom, and ignoring the presence of the Spirit in others.



3. *Clique structure.* This structure is common in clubs and groups with specific interests. It is detrimental to the community when several members unite according to their own likes and particular interests, thus creating barriers that separate people from one another. This structure can cause divisions and destructive rivalries, as well as marginalization of certain community members.



B. Small-community reflection

1. Form groups of three or four members each. Review the communitarian circle structure and the structures that are detrimental to community life. Visualize Jesus in each type of structure. Then answer these questions:

- Where do you see Jesus in these structures? What problems result from Jesus not being at the center of these structures?
- What is the structure of your community now? Does it require any adjustments? If so, what type of changes are required, and what does everyone suggest in order to achieve the changes?

2. Gather as small communities. Invite each group to share its reflections with the community. Write members' suggested changes on a sheet of newsprint. Then decide what you are going to do to improve the way you are working together. If need be, pick a time or a special meeting to dialog about your community's structure and to find ways to improve it.

C. Intercommunity reflection

Meet in intercommunity groups to talk about the need for a circular structure in the community. Take notes on the observations others share that might be of use in your small community, so that you can have a follow-up after the initial journey. Reflect together on these questions:

- How has learning to work in a circular structure helped you in your personal life and in your participation in society?
- What challenges have you faced in trying to work within a circular structure? How have you overcome these challenges?

Session 6: Incarnation of the Gospel in life

Preparation. This session is structured around a panel discussion. The five-person panel needs to prepare ahead of time. Each person on the panel should present one of the five dimensions of young adults' lives, using as a guide document 2, "Interrelation and Integration of Five Dimensions of Young Adults' Lives," pages 160–165, and the books *Hispanic Young People and the Church's Pastoral Response* and *Evangelization of Hispanic Young People*, from the Prophets of Hope series. In addition, the illustrations on pages 162, 164, and 165 of this book should be reproduced on newsprint so that all the participants can see them during the panel discussion.

1. Introduce the panelists. Explain the goal of the panel and what will be done after the panel discussion.

2. Proceed with the presentation.

3. Get together with your intercommunity group and discuss how your community has helped you to relate your faith with your life. Keep the posted illustrations in mind as you talk. These questions may help facilitate your discussion:

- At the personal level, in what dimensions have you strongly promoted the relation between faith and life? Why? Through what type of actions have you done this?
- What is the most difficult dimension to evangelize? Why?
- How can a community overcome the difficulties encountered in its evangelization efforts? Share positive experiences.

4. Prepare a report to be presented in the large-group session: Select two dimensions of life in which your group found it relatively

easy to interrelate faith and life. Give two examples of how this was done. Then choose one of the dimensions of life that was the most difficult to evangelize, and share the challenges met.

5. Come back together as a large group and proceed with the sharing of reports.

Session 7: Fruits, stones, and flowers of new life

Preparation. The facilitators' team brings enough fruits, stones, and flowers that have been cut out of colored construction paper so that each small community may have five of each symbol.

A. Small-community reflection

1. Subdivide the small community into three groups of roughly equal size. Give group 1 paper fruits; group 2, paper stones; and group 3, paper flowers. Explain what will be done and ask each of the groups to assign one person to take notes:

- *Group 1* will identify the five main fruits it has seen its community produce either within the community or in the community's mission in the world.
- *Group 2* will identify the five main setbacks the community has faced—either within the community or in the community's mission in the world—that have not yet been overcome.
- *Group 3* will identify five setbacks it has overcome in its community life or in its mission in the world—setbacks that have generated new life.

2. Have each group write on its paper symbols the fruits, setbacks, or former setbacks (setbacks it was able to overcome) that it identified. Tell each group to appoint a person to present its symbols during the liturgy.



B. Intercommunity reflection

1. Form three groups according to the group designations assigned in the previous exercise; for example, all the fruits form one group, the stones a second group, and the flowers a third group. If the groups are very large, split them each in half so that all the participants have an opportunity to share a community experience.

2. Encourage each person to share a community experience of fruits or setbacks.

3. Analyze the experiences that are shared. Take notes on those experiences so that you can take them back to your own community. Discuss the following questions:

Fruit group

- What aspects of the Gospel can you discover in these experiences?
- How have you shared these experiences of the Good News with other people?
- If you have not shared these experiences, how can you begin to share them now?
- What signs of new life have sprung forth from these experiences?

Stones group

- What have you done to overcome these difficulties?
- Why do you think your actions have been unsuccessful?
- What are some new ways you can try to overcome these difficulties?
- What help do you need in order to succeed (e.g., help from your adviser, information, some special course)?

Flowers group

- What did your community do to overcome these setbacks?
- What did these experiences teach you? What benefits did you derive from them?
- What does your community need to do if you come across similar situations in the future?
- What advice would you give to communities just getting started?

4. Go back to your small communities and share the most valuable insights you have gained from the intercommunity reflection.

5. Write the last part of the preface in your community journal as testimonies or suggestions received in your dialog with members of other communities:

✎9 Write as verse 9 an edifying experience that was shared by members of another community.

✎10 Write as verse 10 some good advice you heard from members of other communities.

✎11 Write as verse 11 a sentence to conclude the preface.

Session 8: Celebration of commitment and sending forth to be leaven in the world

Preparation. Bring to the prayer area the preface of the community journal that was written by each community, including the drawings that emerged from the intercommunity reflection in session 3.

1. The prayer begins with a song of surrender into the hands of the Lord.

2. The prayer facilitator invites someone to read aloud Mark 3:13–15. Then the whole group meditates in silence for a few minutes.

3. Each community prays in the following manner: a delegate picks up the bowl containing the bread dough that was prepared by his or her community and then set aside (not baked). The delegate gives a piece of dough to everyone and invites them to hold it in their open hands while praying spontaneously about their mission as leaven in the world.

4. The facilitator invites two representatives from each community to come to the altar. One person from each community offers its community journal, prays for the life of the community, and remains by the altar. The other person from each community carries its drawings, places them on the altar, and goes back to her or his seat.

5. The representatives who stayed by the altar extend their hands over the community and give the blessing while the facilitator prays in the following way:

Today we are initiating a stage of in-depth probing and community growth. We are reviewing our history as a community, and we are reflecting on our mission in the world. Now the Lord is blessing us and sending us forth to be leaven of the Gospel with joy and energy, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

6. The prayer concludes with everyone sharing the baked bread and singing the same song sung at the beginning of the initial journey or the song sung at the start of the celebration.

Session 9: Evaluation

Distribute the written evaluation form designed for the initial journey, which can be found in appendix 3, “Evaluation Forms,” on pages 212–213. This form may be photocopied. Give the participants 20 minutes to complete it. Then facilitate a 25-minute session in which the participants share their responses.