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**Disciples in Mission – Evaluations for Cluster 21 – July 2008**


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\*\*As of July 6, 2008 – 38 individual evaluations were completed. 3 evaluations were done as a group.

\*\*Over 300 individuals met during the DM experience for Year I. Given the feedback we have received, it went very well. We do need to work on some things, such as developing a team of people to help with the planning and implementation and evaluation of the process. Since this was our first year, we learned much from this experience and look forward to having another round for the Lenten Season 2009. Many people have had a great experience, for some weather was a factor, for others, the opportunity to meet and reflect on the Sacred Scriptures and their faith was an enriching experience for them.

**1. As a result of participating in this small group....**

a. Do you have a greater knowledge of Scripture?

i. YES - 33

ii. NO - 3

iii. UNSURE - 1

iv. COMMENTS

1. Yes...I attend Bible Study every week at Cathedral Parish

2. Yes...I learned a lot about the Scriptures

3. Yes...To me, any Scripture study group provides an opportunity to learn

4. No...I was able to draw upon what I already know

5. Yes...I believe it is almost inevitable to read/hear Scripture with attention and not grow in understanding or be led to where greater understanding/knowledge could be found

6. Yes, much better - gloriously so.

7. Yes...I have a strong desire to know more and am interested in doing a bible study

8. Yes...anytime you intentionally spend time with the Word there is always growth.

9. Yes...very enlightening hearing others express their faith.

10. Yes...it helped me to understand them better.

11. Yes...I was expecting more instruction than I got. Sometimes the group skipped the Gospel reading because it was too long and they had all heard it so many times - I was too afraid to say that I hadn't!

12. Yes...I've now been through Cycles A, B and C and ready to go again.

13. Yes...It was very helpful for myself as I would have hoped it would be for my son too.

14. Yes...The study book was very good at segueing between Scripture and our modern society/lifestyles.

b. Do you see more clearly the value of faith sharing?

i. YES - 32

ii. NO - 2

iii. Unsure - 4

iv. COMMENTS

1. Unsure...I don't think this has changed for me

2. Unsure ...I have always valued faith sharing so I don't think that has increased for me

3. No...I have long known of its value, having experience with it beginning as a teenager

4. Yes...I have long been an adherent of "share the wealth" – the Word as well as goods. In looking around it becomes very apparent the need for both is daunting! Most especially the Word.

5. Unsure...It does depend on who is doing the faith sharing. Often those who are the most vocal are the most needy themselves. In many ways and there is too much self-focus, rather than how the Bible impacts and influences us. However, when an articulate, faith-filled person faith shares, it is a joy and an enlightenment for all of the group (certainly for me). A good facilitator is a necessity, and we were blessed to have one (Ralph Bolduc). I think I might have dropped out but for him.

6. Yes...our group will continue to meet
  7. Yes...I was able to share some experiences, and sometimes my close friends and housemates would also talk about the Gospels with one another
  8. Yes...I did this as a kid and we do it all the time in AA.
  9. Yes...Sharing our Faith is part of strengthening our beliefs and it helps us to grow as a family within God.
  10. Yes... I've always been a proponent of this type of activity. The Renew classes of several years ago were one of the most rewarding experiences I've had with my faith.
- c. Are you able to share your faith more easily?
- i. YES - 26
  - ii. NO - 9
  - iii. UNSURE - 3
  - iv. COMMENTS
    1. Unsure...I would like to do better at defending my faith
    2. Yes...I can share more easily with people
    3. Unsure...I can share easily already when with like-minded people
    4. No...I have never found it to be difficult
    5. Unsure...I still feel unsure of my ability to express my feelings
    6. Yes...very easily with receptive, like-minded individuals. However, have not "hidden my light" with others but have tried hard to gear the sharing to the recipients ability to receive and the best manner in which to do so. I believe this group experience will be of further help.
    7. Yes...we have planned to continue.
    8. No...Am basically shy and unsure and only share with those I know well, although at times when I feel comfortable with whatever we are sharing, I can contribute.
    9. Yes... The overwhelming comments were about the "re-learning" or new learning of Scripture. They all were completely caught up in it.
    10. No...it is not hard for me to share my faith, but there is always room for improvement.
    11. No... I have always been comfortable with faith sharing. The wording of question might not glean the kind of information you wish to receive.
    12. No...Expressing the love of my Catholic faith has always been easy for me, having been raised in a good home and educated in Catholic schools.
    13. Yes...I learned how to do that in the 20 years of Alcoholics Anonymous, where we talk a lot about a Higher Power and faith.
    14. Yes...especially good to focus on readings.
    15. It wasn't so much with my son, but among people that I interact with every day.
    16. No... This did not change my ability to do so. It was nice seeing some of the others in our group come out of their shells, however.

**2. How would you evaluate your overall experience as a small group participant?**

- a. Excellent - 26
- b. Very good - 6 - 1 (group leader)
- c. Good
- d. Fair - 5
- e. Poor
- f. COMMENTS
  - i. I have attended Bible Study at Cathedral for 2 years
  - ii. The people in my group that made it did very well to come participate in Disciples in Mission
  - iii. Very good...great group. Eager, open members.
  - iv. Excellent...anytime that Scripture is discussed I feel more enriched and more knowledgeable about my faith
  - v. Excellent...it was a wonderful experience to listen, and to share now and then, and I plan to continue our Bible Sharing next Fall with the hope that I will be able to share more openly and easily in the future.

- vi. Excellent...Everyone in our group, led very compassionately by Sr. Carol Jean, participated in an active way. We all shared our thoughts without being self-conscious about it. It was a very good experience.
- vii. Very good...This was new for me and I learned a lot. I also made a couple new friends which is always nice.
- viii. Fair...We had eight in the group but usually only four showed and we would not stay the whole time, usually just an hour.
- ix. Fair... In participating in this small group I was hoping that my son would be interested in sharing and learning more about Jesus, but it wasn't the right time for him to deepen his Faith and come to a better understanding of Christian Values. I keep trying!! So, for myself and son (family) who didn't participate, a small group wasn't ideal. Teens are a challenge to become involved, despite my efforts and example.
- x. Excellent... A great deal of the credit needs to go to our group leader, Pat. Sorry, I don't remember his last name.

**3. The most valuable part of this small group experience for me was...**

- Support given to one another; sharing our faith and how our lives in today's society still apply to God's message in Scripture
- A better understanding of the Scriptures, the value of everyone's input and experience, growing closer to the members of my group
- An opportunity to continue learning about my faith; the real meaning of the readings and the Gospel
- I learned a lot about how Christ died for our sins
- An ongoing opportunity to continue what our Bible Study Group does
- The opportunity to practice being a group leader. For someone who has no trouble sharing one's faith, it's more of a challenge to hold back so that others can share. That requires frequent opportunities to do just that.
- Sharing with others the interpretation of the Scriptures
- Being a part of the rich diversity of thought and multi-layered interpretation of Scripture by these wonderful seekers and sharers, many of whom are already "working in the vineyard."
- It has made me think more about the meaning of the Gospels and Psalms
- Listening to others express their feelings and experiences of what God's Word means to them. Their faith-sharing was powerful, a benefit to all in the group.
- Being accountable to reading and making the weekly gatherings
- Understanding the Bible more. It has always been beyond me and I never understood it well, even from years of homilies!
- St. Christopher's: Definitely getting people interested in Scripture and remembering the original learning of it and then applying it do experiences in their lives over the years.
- Getting to know other people from my church and cluster.
- Validation that there are other Catholics who think, feel, and live the same way. This was experienced in the way that we shared our thoughts. The group was small enough for intimate faith sharing and all participants had strong gifts of faith and loved the Universal Church!
- Sharing of our multi-level faith and hearing about others' faith experiences
- Sharing it with my grandchildren as I did the home program when able.
- Meeting new people of great faith.
- Being there and hearing the faith thoughts of the other participants.
- Discussing the readings to better understand what they mean.
- The ritual at the end and we prayed for each other.
- Learning and sharing about the Gospels
- Hearing perspectives from people of such varying Catholic and *non-Catholic* experience.
- Getting a chance to look at, reflect on and listen to Scripture with a group of peers

**4. The least valuable part of this small group experience for me was...**

- None
- No least valuable part (x 2)
- It was when I could not get there because of the weather, but I did read the Scripture, also when I wasn't there I felt like something was missing

- It was all valuable.
- The closing exercises, it takes time to be able to share comfortably with others
- The non-participation by the group in the recommended closing rituals. I feel as though we missed out on "possibilities." I do understand that not everyone is comfortable with new, different, or certain types of activities and didn't push the issue.
- (Fair) – Much of the time we were just a bunch of people with no scholarly knowledge of Scripture throwing out our opinions
- We decided not to do any of the symbolic activities (bowl of water, joining hands in circle, etc.) Discussing our faith was meaningful in itself. The other activities seemed a little condescending.
- A good facilitator is a necessity for me, as I believe it is for most people, for when Ralph was not there, the focus and impact changed for me; people had a tendency to go on about themselves rather than the Bible and how it impacts them in their daily lives.
- Any of the more formal aspect of it.
- It didn't continue
- None! We all wished to continue meeting, though ☺
- Home program - Inconsistent time with family.
- Missing sessions due to weather.
- I cannot think of anything negative or invaluable to my participation in this group.
- Not reading the long gospels.
- Having to call it quits at Easter!
- I don't have an answer for this---all of it was valuable in its own way.
- The hands in the water activity was hokey and made me feel uncomfortable

**5. Reflecting on our meetings during the six weeks of Lent 2008, the one thing I wish our group had done differently is...**

- It was great the way it was
- Nothing differently (x2)
- Next year when we start DM, we should get our workbooks a little earlier so that when we are all there we could get them right off and pay the person the amount of money it cost
- I did not give myself adequate preparation time to prepare the atmosphere. I prepared myself, but would like to do more with the environment. I might also like to suggest to the group to move the meeting around to different settings, if they would all be comfortable with that, and give them all a chance to host it at their homes.
- Continue!
- There was almost no mention of the Eucharist. I wish we had emphasized the Eucharist more.
- Nothing...our small group was great!
- I can't think of any; it was an outstanding group under Ralph's gentle and generous guidance.
- Probably prepare the Scripture readings with reflection before the gatherings more faithfully
- Made a date to continue sharing our faith
- Nothing came to our minds on the question. Everyone thought that it went very well, especially since the program was short (7 weeks) and once a week. Constant comment made – "we want...need more of this!"
- None – all expressed that they wanted more.
- Possibly continued on a monthly basis.
- Maybe rotate where we met to go to different houses?
- Read the long gospels and spend more time on them.
- Keep going after Easter as a weekly evening study.
- All use the same version of the Bible.
- Met more often

**6. Additional comments...**

- I would like to know more Church history – Ralph Bolduc has done an excellent job at that
- I thought the whole thing was excellent and I would come again next year – also, I like the Bible class itself
- I missed several meetings due to illness and it was my loss
- For the next time, I would like to have these evaluations during the sessions, so they can be completed before we break for the last time. We had a great sense of accomplishment for having run the

course to finish all six weeks, only to find out weeks later that we had not really completed because of this one more thing to do. Up until clicking the send button on this message this morning (6.9.08), I had not finished my responsibilities. That has been weighing heavy on me up until this morning. This is why it has taken so long to respond. Finishing the six weeks was challenging enough, and in my mind, we had completed it. So, thanks for your patience.

- Having been together for Bible Study for two years made the meetings easy. Very open and welcoming people
- Looking forward to June 14<sup>th</sup> !!:) – (our Cluster Reflection Day)
- Our group leader was good at keeping people focused.
- As a group leader, I appreciated how well-prepared everyone was. It made my job easier. Each week, members of the group became more comfortable sharing their faith, they had many positions, good discussions – a real thirst for understanding the Bible.
- Yes. I feel strongly that the “Disciples in Mission” song which we sung every Sunday was totally unnecessary. It seemed inappropriate to sing the prayer at the end of Mass, then sing the recessional hymn. (Cathedral). A simple prayer would have sufficed. I absolutely loved the *Disciples in Mission* program and would suggest a similar study during Advent. Books are not even necessary in my opinion. Reading and discussing the readings of the Mass is pretty much all we had time to accomplish during our study groups. Many thanks to all those who planned this program or helped out in any way. It was beneficial to my own faith and to the faith of my family.
- This class had a positive impact upon me in that it caused me to consider my actions as other would see me. Do they really see a difference in me being a Catholic Christian? I have begun to reflect more upon the Scriptures and speak more frequently to those I encounter about the benefits of having the Lord to rely on to see me through life. I expected that we would get “lessons” or how to evangelize, but I feel this was better than step one, etc. It seems this evangelization will come more naturally. I did enjoy the class and the opportunity to meet other committed Catholics.
- Overall, very positive experience. Good group leader. One small thing: I found the text/questions “light weight” and not deep. However, I suppose there has to be a common denominator (lowest common denominator) from which to start.
- This program pointed out to me that I truly needed a lot more “study of the Bible.” As my Action Plan – I will take it upon myself to actually set time for future reading of the Bible.
- I felt this group was very beneficial for me. It was run in a very comfortable way and the group leader, Dianne, did a tremendous job. She seemed to really understand where people were in their journey and was very conscientious of it. She made everyone feel comfortable and made it much easier to express their feelings. The time and length were just right and being in a small group was very beneficial.
- It was a worthwhile program – thought-provoking, informative and in many ways a good “review” and enlightening experience of the Bible readings and discussion thereof with regard to the various participants’ input, etc. Thank you.
- One and a half hours is a good amount of time but there were evenings that could have been extended to continue discussions. I think next time I would choose an earlier time for myself. Seven people is a perfect number. This group is a great spiritual booster.
- No, thank you.
- **One group’s comments:** We need more of this, what else can we do? It would be good to get some type of Bible study that took focused segments of the Bible and provided context around history, culture, etc. Spiritual growth is the focus though. It is good to know there is a part 2 and 3 to this training. We enjoyed each others’ company and perspectives (strong gifts of faith in this group). Intend to continue our meetings, maybe through summer months too. Validated that Thursdays were a good night for us to meet. The group thanked me for leadership but really, we shared leadership roles (readings, time keeping, faith sharing).
- Nothing was said at our last meeting about evaluating how things went. Perhaps the leader didn't check email in time, or maybe may have forgotten. In any case, I want to make only one suggestion. Our leader is a wonderful person with an enthusiastic spirit, but she would make an even better facilitator in the future if someone could tactfully communicate to her (maybe even in a group setting so as not to hurt her feelings) that the role of a facilitator is to see to it that everyone in the group has an opportunity to speak rather than jump in right away herself at every occasion. As we see it, she has the talent and personal gifts to do a good job but could benefit from a reminder about the facilitator's role.

- **One Group's comments:** Very educational - I realize I need and would appreciate a course on the Bible. This was a good start. It was very good to share our faith. I want to be open to others - to put to death "self". I am going away with "new life." The sessions helped me to know more about the Bible and I now have much more of an interest in it. God is always with us. I have learned more about His closeness as we read His Word. It was wonderful to experience faith through the eyes of others. I have deepened as a praying Christian. There were no negative comments or suggestions to improve the process. Thanks for your leadership.
- I enjoyed the Disciples in Mission Experience meetings that I attended. The breadth of knowledge and passion for Scripture shown by the group. The group leader shared their experiences of the Jewish faith and this added breadth to our discussion of Christianity. If any complaint could be made it would refer to the lack of ethnic diversity. I'm proud our Church congregation looks like the UN, the sessions I attended were pretty white. Any chance to recruit ethnic laypeople??
- I have attached your formal evaluation with summary comments for the group. They all enjoyed it. We met on Wednesdays, so a couple days were cancel because of weather. Overall the group was very hungry to learn more Scripture and, as I put it, to re-learn what they remember from many years ago in school. Probably because of movies and other interpretations in the everyday world, they seemed most excited about the Hebrew Scriptures. The really positive aspect was that once they heard and had Scripture explained and connected to Church teaching they were then able to share personal experience.
- We were a bit handicapped by the weather. Wednesdays seem to be difficult weather days this past year, but of course there is nothing we can really do about that. – *N.B. This was a common experience for those groups that met on Wednesdays this past Lenten Season (KJM)*
- We have had three meetings thus far with mixed results. In some ways, my plans were a bust and in others I have started something new in my life that is both good personally and in fellowship with others. Those that have joined me seem to share similar desires. In that sense, we are in fellowship together and seeking to understand the readings and personal faith. You should know that the greatest success is that I think this is only a slow start and that these weekly meetings will more than likely last longer than just the season of Lent.
- I feel that especially in the Portland churches, there is little opportunity to share our faith with other people in our church and cluster. We need more adult learning about our faith. So many are still "First Communion" Catholics. Let's have more of these opportunities to get to know our fellow church members and to learn more about our faith as adults. We go to Mass, never have much contact except during Communion to say "hello", shake the priest's hand on the way out and never see any of these people until the next week. There is no "community" especially at Cathedral.
- The program was popular. For me, someone who has attended lots of these types of programs, it didn't give me much. My group was loaded with introverts who spoke finally, after lengthy silences. It was an uncomfortable experience for me. I sense that my experience was not typical. I realize the Church has to do something to inspire her people. I guess starting with the lowest common denominator is the only way to begin. Just assume people have never opened their bible...and for the most part, sadly, this is true. But, we have to do something. *Disciples in Mission* is a fine start.
- Facilitator: All the members really enjoyed and were enriched by this experience. I really see the need for a continuation of this type of spiritual growth. I have seen great progress of spiritual journeys with a 10 week 19<sup>th</sup> Annotation Retreat. It is modeled after St. Ignatius. Sr. Marie May Lausier gives these 10 week retreats called the "Rivier Retreats" which is also modeled after the foundress of the Presentation of Mary sisters. I am an associate and did team up with her for the last retreat and it was amazing! The Spirit of God was abundant. People need the comfort and comraderie of small groups. They learn well. It is personal and makes God more personal for us. We all need more of the flaming of the fire of the Spirit of God!
- Facilitator: As a group leader I found the people very willing to share not always easy to keep to the topics both that is a given when you have people coming for a variety of needs. I would do this again.
- Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this faith-sharing group. I would do it again. Sr. Carol Jean did an outstanding job in leading our group, as did Fr. Kevin in organizing this experience. Well done, Fr. Kevin!
- This was a great experience for me!
- I plan to do it again next year and maybe join the RCIA group because I missed so much growing up.
- Yes, I was part of the *Disciples in Mission* RCIA group this year as a sponsor, last year I also served as a sponsor, and the year before as a Candidate myself. It wasn't formal with the booklets the first two

times, but we discussed the Lenten readings the same way. Each time, it was a beautiful and moving experience, and deepened the understanding of the Gospels I had from my childhood and teenage study in the Presbyterian church in Pittsburgh where I grew up. They were big on Bible study and I have always been grateful. Back then, too, there was a Bible reading every day in Public Schools, along with the Lord's prayer!! Amazing to think of this in today's world.

- Keep these types of activities coming! It might be even easier for people to make meetings if the sessions were held *not* at holiday time. Then again, perhaps most people are only inspired to participate when they are thinking about Advent or Lent—unfortunately.
- Michele was an inspired leader. We all felt comfortable together and were able to have deep conversations about our faith and values and lives mostly due to the safe environment that she set for us.