

Co- Learner Group

Each participant in the Parish Catechetical Leadership Program (PCLP) should invite anywhere between 3-5 individuals into formation as a group of co-learners for the parish in which they minister. Co-learners are members of the parish with a vital interest in successful parish life and ministry. The group should be diverse and should be large enough to accomplish its work. The co-learner group will meet after each PCLP session to learn, to apply the learning to the parish situation and to work on the project.

Tips for inviting co-learners

- **Someone who likes to learn**
- **People who are interested in seeing the program succeed**
- **One parish staff member**
- **Someone supportive and who can challenge you**
- **Diversity: men/women; young and older; different occupations**
- Approach them personally
- Be enthusiastic about the program and the opportunity you have to improve something in the parish
- Identify something about the person that leads you to invite them.
 - ~You are always learning new things
 - ~ I really value your opinion
 - ~You seem to understand the parish culture

Explain that the group will meet once a month for an hour and a half, to discuss items and work on the project.

5 Steps to Forming a Co-Learner Group

The co-learner group is one of the most unique components of the training. Each participant is asked to form a group of co-learners. The idea is to have a core group of at least 4-8 people with whom you work consistently.

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| Stage 1 | Invite individuals from the parish to be on your co-learner group. Approach people with the opportunity, and tell them why you are asking them |
| Stage 2 | Gather the group to introduce them to one another and explain what they will do. Have a conversation to evaluate the parish program informally. What is missing? What needs improvement? |
| Stage 3 | Find out informally the times and days that will work best for the group, set a schedule to meet after each PCLP session. |
| Stage 4 | Submit the co-learner member list along with a schedule of meetings to the Dept. of Catechesis (Date to be announced.) Co-learners are welcome to attend a session along with you. Please RSVP to the Dept. of Catechesis if co-learners plan to attend. |

Model of a Co-Learner Session

The co-learners would meet with you regularly after each session, for about 90 minutes. Prepare carefully for the presentation of material and project development.

10 minutes	Begin with prayer
15-20 minutes	Share information on the presented topic
30 minutes	Discuss the implications for your ministry / project How can you use what you have learned?
20 minutes	Discuss / organize for work on the selected project Close with prayer Fellowship if time permits

Group Development

Different models have been developed to name and describe the stages of group development. A model which is especially helpful is called “Cogs Ladder.” The model has five stages.

- 1. The Polite Stage** Becoming acquainted and experiencing first impressions. Members feel inadequate, are cautious about revealing themselves; want to be liked; very dependent on the group leader
- 2. Why we are Here Stage** Group tries to define its goals and purposes by discussion, clarification, internalization; there may be hidden agendas; group identity is low; group will work out ground rules, boundaries, etc.
- 3. Power Stage** Individuals consciously or unconsciously question how they can influence the group; differences may surface; address questions by working toward a common vision of community through shared prayer and reflection
- 4. Co-operation stage** This stage holds the greatest possibility for attitudinal changes. When group members really listen to one another and are open to different opinions and ideas, they share at a deeper level, trusting in the acceptance of the group. Creative thinking is encouraged and critiqued in a spirit of give and take. A group uses the strengths and skills of various members to accomplish tasks. All have ownership of decisions; group identity is extraordinary; works together
- 5. Esprit stage** Group experiences high spirit of unity and group morale. Loyalty and pleasure in being together; emotional ties are strong; trust level high. May be reluctant to accept new members and disturb harmony. Can backslide to earlier stages as they avoid conflict or any dynamic that resembles confrontation.