

## Ongoing Formation

### **“Joy of the Gospel”**

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Group Study Program  
(Total time: two hours)

The theme for this session: **Pope Francis and Joy of the Gospel**

#### **You will need:**

- A Bible
- Music and/or Hymnal
- Computer to show a 9 min. Youtube clip from Bishop Robert Barron on “Pope Francis & the Joy of the Gospel” after the Hour of Adoration

#### **The opening invocation**

Leader: Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life,  
Response: Have mercy on us.  
Leader: Mary, Queen of Apostles,  
Response: Pray for us.  
Leader: St. Paul the Apostle,  
Response: Pray for us.

**An appropriate hymn is sung or played such as: “Here I Am Lord”**

*Silent prayer and reflection follow*

#### **In Honor of Jesus Truth**

#### **The Prayer before Reading Sacred Scripture**

##### **Together:**

Jesus Christ, Our Master,  
You are the Way, the Truth and the Life,  
Our one and supreme good.  
Send your Holy Spirit to teach us  
and remind us of what you have preached.  
Enkindle in us the fire of Your Divine love  
as you enkindled the hearts of the first apostles.

## **A reading from the Handbook for Pauline Cooperators:**

There are innumerable opportunities open to the laity for the exercise of their apostolate of evangelization and sanctification. The very testimony of their Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit has the power to draw all to belief and to God... However an apostolate of this kind does not consist only in the witness of one's way of life; a true apostle looks for opportunities to announce Christ by words addressed either to non-believers with a view to leading them to faith, or to the faithful with a view to instructing, strengthening, and encouraging them to a more fervent life.

*Choose different readers for each Bible passage.*

**-A reading from the Gospel of Luke: Lk 1:46-50**

**-A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians: Phil 4:4-9**

### **Pope Francis writes:**

from "The Joy of the Gospel" (n.21):

The Gospel joy which enlivens the community of the disciples is a missionary joy. The seventy-two disciples felt it as they returned from their mission (cf Lk 10:17). Jesus felt it when he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and praised the Father for revealing himself to the poor and the little ones (cf Lk 10:21). It was felt by the first converts who marveled to hear the apostles preaching "in the native language of each" (Acts 2:6) on the day of Pentecost. This joy is a sign that the Gospel has been proclaimed and is bearing fruit. Yet the drive to go forth and give, to go out from ourselves, to keep pressing forward in our sowing of the good seed, remains ever present. The Lord says: "Let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also, for that is why I came" (Mk 1:38). Once the seed has been sown in one place, Jesus does not stay behind to explain things or to perform more signs; the Spirit moves him to go forth to other towns.

### **1. In Honor of Jesus Way**

#### **Examination of Life:**

From "The Joy of the Gospel" by Pope Francis (n.24):

The Church which "goes forth" is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative; he has loved us first (cf 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads, and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father's infinite mercy. Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. The Lord gets involved and he involves his own, as he kneels to wash their feet. He tells his disciples: "You will be blessed if you do this" (Jn 13:17). An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others.

Evangelizers thus take on “the smell of the sheep” and the sheep are willing to hear their voice. An evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be. It is familiar with patient expectation and apostolic endurance.

*Time allotted: 10 minutes*

### **Prayer of Contrition Together:**

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

## **2. In Honor of Jesus Life**

### **Group Prayer:**

*Time Allotted: 20 minutes*

**Leader:** *The leader invites the group to offer spontaneous petitions. After each petition say:*

We pray to the Lord. (Response) Lord Hear our Prayer.

With the time that is remaining, pray the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary (choose a couple decades if there is a time constraint).

1. The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan
2. The Wedding at Cana
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom
4. The Transfiguration
5. The Institution of the Eucharist

**Conclude the time of prayer together with a song such as: “Moved by the Gospel, Let Us Move”**

### **Closing Invocations**

Jesus Master, Way, Truth and Life, Have *Mercy on us*  
Mary, Queen of the Apostles, *Pray for us*  
St. Paul the Apostle, *Pray for us*  
From all sin, *deliver us Lord*

**4. The group moves from the area of prayer to the meeting area.**

**5. Break**

Time Allotted: 10 minutes

**5. Viewing of Bishop Robert Barron's 9 min Youtube clip: "Pope Francis & the Joy of the Gospel" found on the following link: <https://youtu.be/1v8ZqVLY9V8>**

Starter Discussion Questions:

1. Pope Francis has an "evangelical urgency" in his bones. As a Pauline Cooperator, share a time when you felt this same urgency.
2. Think of someone you know who needs to receive the Good News of Joy. How and when will you reach out to them?

*Time Allotted: 40 minutes*

**7. Conclude with any announcements and announce the date, time and location of the next meeting.**

**References for further study**

Recommended Reading

- Pope Francis' document : The Joy of the Gospel
- Only Love Can Save Us : Letters, Homilies, and Talks of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio
- Morning Homilies by Pope Francis
- Forming Intentional Disciples by Sherry Weddell