

## Co- Learner Group

Each participant in the Parish Catechetical Leadership Program (PCLP) will invite 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 periodically to apply the material covered in the program to parish ministry 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 periodically 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 3-5 people with whom you work consistently.

- 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 to the Dept. of Catechesis. 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 periodically, 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.