



## SMALL GROUPS FOR ADULTS AT SAINT ANNE

### Summary Description

“Small family groups who gather in their homes to gather around their experience of the Risen Lord and to share that experience through the building of a compassionate community.”

“We open our hearts and our homes to strengthen our relationship with Christ and each other while we build compassionate communities that ignite a flame of faith that burns brightly.”

#### Background:

- The Early Christian Communities were the first Basic Ecclesial Communities (“BEC’s” or “Small Groups”)
- These communities were not the synagogues but the “home churches” that served as the model for early Christians
- These small communities preceded the Universal Church as the first pastoral learning communities
- BECs became prevalent again in Latin America countries and Africa countries where the environment enabled an openness to the new vision of church that emerged from Vatican II.

#### Objectives:

- **Strengthening** – beliefs in God and God’s Kingdom which and making this a reality in the daily lives of our parishioners
- **Consolidating** the significance of the Church as a community of faithful by encouraging participation in creating a more compassionate world.
- **Training-** parishioners to make an active contribution to the Christians communities, thereby strengthening the laity
- **Leading-** the people of God, in the light of the Gospels toward the gradual acceptance of responsibility for social needs

#### Why this and Why NOW?

- It’s time for Saint Anne to start a new cycle of growth - Parishioners have asked what is next after our Lenten presentations and how can we grow their relationship with Christ and the Kingdom he proclaimed.
- We need to deepen and support our relationship with Jesus
- We have a hunger for relationships that provide learning and unconditional acceptance.

- Parishioners are asking for a greater sense of community and belonging
- Families are searching for ways to strengthen their faith together
- Staff is stable and has the capacity to support a new framework for spiritual growth
- Our Pope, Cardinal and Pastor are passionate about REINVIGORATING parishes and the Church of the future

### **What benefit is this for the Parish?**

- An opportunity for us to bring the Gospel into our daily lives
- A shortage of Priests creates a need for new leadership roles for laity
- We need to accelerate our growth in participation in the Sacraments and engagement
- A new way to engage families and youth
- The original churches were home churches which were original structure of the Church

### **What does a BEC look like?**

- Our parish provides a defined structure and process for forming and sustaining BECs.
- Faith Communities will be formed including individuals and 5 to 7 families
- Families will meet in one of the family homes regularly ( ie at least once a month.)
- Each group would have a Host family and a trained facilitator
- Each gathering will include:
  - 1) Welcome - Appreciating Christ in our midst
  - 2) Reading - Scripture and hearing God's Word
  - 3) Abiding – Letting Christ speak within us
  - 4) Silence – Awareness of God's presence
  - 5) Sharing – Talking about the things that have touched our hearts
  - 6) Action – Letting ourselves be inspired by God's Word
  - 7) Prayer – Closing with prayer

### **Future expectation?**

- BEC unites us with the Word of God at its core and constitutes our guiding principles
- BEC is a place of sharing and solidarity where human hardships are taken seriously
- BEC is a place of common prayer
- We will not replace existing ministries or programs the Parish
- BEC will deepen and support our relationship with Jesus