

Benefits of a Men's Group

- Make friends among other parishioners
- Have fun
- Learn from one another
 - Become a better family member, husband, father, son, employee, and parish member
- Helps form stronger and happier families and marriages
- Provides tools to cope with the inevitable stresses inherent in the workplace
- Catalyzes the parish community
- Learn to integrate your faith in practical ways
- Practical answers for men facing today's challenge.
- Connection with local Catholic leaders and groups.

Lessons From Geese

- As each bird flaps its wings, it creates “uplift” for the bird following. By flying in a “V” formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if the bird flew alone.
 - Lesson: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.
- Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the “lifting power” of the bird immediately in front.
 - Lesson: If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go (and be willing to accept their help as well as give ours to others).

Lessons From Geese (continued)

- When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies at the point position.
 - Lesson: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and share Leadership. With people, as with geese, we are interdependent on each other.
- The geese information honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.
 - Lesson We need to make sure our honking from behind is encouraging. And not something else.

Lessons From Geese (continued)

- When a goose gets sick or wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own with another formation or catch up with the flock.
 - Lesson: If we have as much sense as geese we too will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

What Happens at Men's Fellowship Meetings

- The suit of a hectic life is cast aside for 120 minutes.
- Men pray, socialize, discuss their faith, praise God and sing.
- They support, affirm and share insights about the difficulties they encounter in both their home and work lives.
- Seek God's help in dealing with issues they confront every day.
- Strive to reinforce Christian Values in their home.
- Reach out to share those values with others and support those who are struggling to do the same.

Types of Men's Groups

- Scripture Meditation and Discussion
 - Example John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.
 - Joseph's dreams for his future were shattered when he found his betrothed was with child. Yet he did not hesitate to give up on his own dreams and hopes to accept God's will to mentor God's son.
 - We also have the responsibility to give up some of our dreams to mentor our children, other children, and other men, as God calls.
 - Reflection - What can St. Joseph's "yes" teach me about being willing to mentor my children, other children and men? How do you think Joseph mentored Jesus as a child? What is God's will and purpose for my life?

Types of Men's Groups (continued)

- Contemporary Issues
 - What does it mean to be a just man in today's society.
 - How do people see me at work?
 - What does chastity mean to a married man? A single man?
 - What does it mean to be a good parent?
 - What does it mean to develop a personal prayer life? What are my obstacles?
 - What are my priorities in life? In my family? In my prayer life?
 - What does community mean to me? What does Jesus teach us about community.
 - How do I respond when abortion is discussed? Catholicism? Premarital sex? Euthanasia? Death penalty? Prayer in schools? Single sex marriages?

Types of Men's Groups (continued)

- Parish Focused
 - Work closely with pastor. Insure men participate in all parish activities. Develop new parish initiatives.
- Family / Community Focused
 - Create agendas and invite speakers that help the men of the parish interact more meaningfully with their families I.e. catalyze change, establish the correct priorities, and maintain balance in their lives. Sponsor family / community centric events

Some Existing Men's groups

- First Friday Club - Worcester
- First Saturday Breakfast - several
- Knights of the Poor Farm - Leominster
- St Theresa's Men's Group - Harvard
- Men of St. Joseph - Manchester
- Credo Foundation - Chicago
- Catholic Men's Fellowship - Cincinnati

Possible Agendas

- Guest Speakers (Local, Diocesan or Regional)
- Scripture Meditation and Discussion
- Contemporary Topics
- Special Themes
- Video Tapes
- Special Mass Celebration
- Annual Reconciliation Service
- Special Family Meeting
- Special Witness or Sharing Presentations

Outside Resources

- Diocese
- Men of Saint Joseph
- New England Catholic Men's Conference
- National Men's Fellowship Organization
- Catholic Men's Fellowship
- Credo Foundation
- Daily Email
- Several Web Sites
- Brotherhood of Hope

- Romans 5:20-21

Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Law, by its nature, can only act as a lash, an x-ray and a halfway measure. Not only St. Paul knew this, so did the founders of the United States. They created a government based on the realistic assessment of human beings as both made in the image of God, yet fallen. "If men were virtuous," said James Madison, "there would be no need of government." Since we are not virtuous, or at any rate, not very virtuous, we need the cattle prod of law to herd us toward things like the common good and sharing our cookies. But the law of Moses was interested, not only in making sure that everybody shared their cookies, but in making sure that everyone was pleasing to God. The paradox of that law is that it could not do this. It could only function as an x-ray, telling us what was broken in our souls and dealing out punishment to us but not help to our souls. Like all diagnostics, it existed to be transcended, not by more diagnosis, but by healing. Therefore, it pointed beyond itself to the Healer, Jesus Christ. Today, if you discover a fault in your soul, remember that you are still in God's image and that the one who made you has given you not only the law to highlight the problem, but Jesus Christ to forgive you and change you into his image with your cooperation. Turn from the x-ray machine to the physician and thank God for his enormous gift!

Road to Success

- Pray that God will show you men who have the same desire.
- Collectively determine the type of group that suits the majority of your prospective members.
- Determine and publish a charter.
 - Mission / purpose etc.
 - Membership requirements.
 - Participation expectation.
- Publish a schedule.
 - Six month minimum.
- Plan your first event well.
- Leverage outside resources.
- Tweak as required.
- Don't stagnate.
 - NIH