

The Catholic Women's League of Canada Reading Group

Introduction

Many League members are interested in reading for a variety of purposes:

- to enhance their spiritual life
- for personal growth
- as a form of relaxation and entertainment
- as a learning tool



Unfortunately, it is sometimes difficult to find the kind of reading material to suit our purpose or to discuss a book we have especially enjoyed. There are many women in our councils who have a variety of books that they would like to share with others. So why not start a reading group?

What is a reading group?

A reading group is a group of interested and enthusiastic readers who meet on a regular basis to socialize and grow through sharing and discussing the subjects and issues covered in various publications.

The group should be composed of people we want to be with: accepting, validating and nurturing. This is a form of adult continuing education that exposes us to books we would not otherwise have the opportunity to read and discuss.

Procedure

To start up:

- At a council meeting, gather the names of members who would be interested in participating in such a group.
- Ask for a volunteer to coordinate the initial meeting.
- Set a date, time and place for the initial meeting.

At the initial meeting, those present can

- have a sharing session to indicate their reading priorities
- share book titles and authors they found of interest under the four areas listed under "Introduction"
- recommend a book and then give a short summary of its content, e.g., "This book gave me a lot to think about in my spiritual life as well as providing topics for meditation and reflection."
- form several different groups as different interests emerge, e.g., Christian child rearing, a specific author, a theme, etc. If so, the plenary group could then divide into smaller groups where a focus could be determined.
- draw up a list of books for consideration
- decide if they would like to share books
- decide if multiple copies of the same book will be purchased, then assign one person to obtain a group purchase rate

- decide how often to meet, what form the meetings will take, what book(s) will be read and discussed, if there will be a leader or if members will take turns as facilitator, and if refreshments will be served
- decide the date, time and place of the next meeting

At subsequent meetings:

Questions can be used to start the discussion (e.g., about the author's purpose in writing the book, the key message received, personal feelings about the book, social implications, symbols used, parts in the book a person did not understand, what a person agrees or disagrees with, what a person takes away from the reading of it, etc.)

Meetings should be from 1½ to 2 hours in length.

Suggested Prayer for a Reading Group

Heavenly Father, send forth Your Spirit to enlighten our minds and dispose our hearts to accept your truth. Help us to listen to one another with openness and honesty, eager to learn from the talents and intuitions that You have given each of us. Never let differences of opinion diminish our mutual esteem and love. May we leave this meeting with more knowledge and love for You and Your Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Enjoy and grow!