

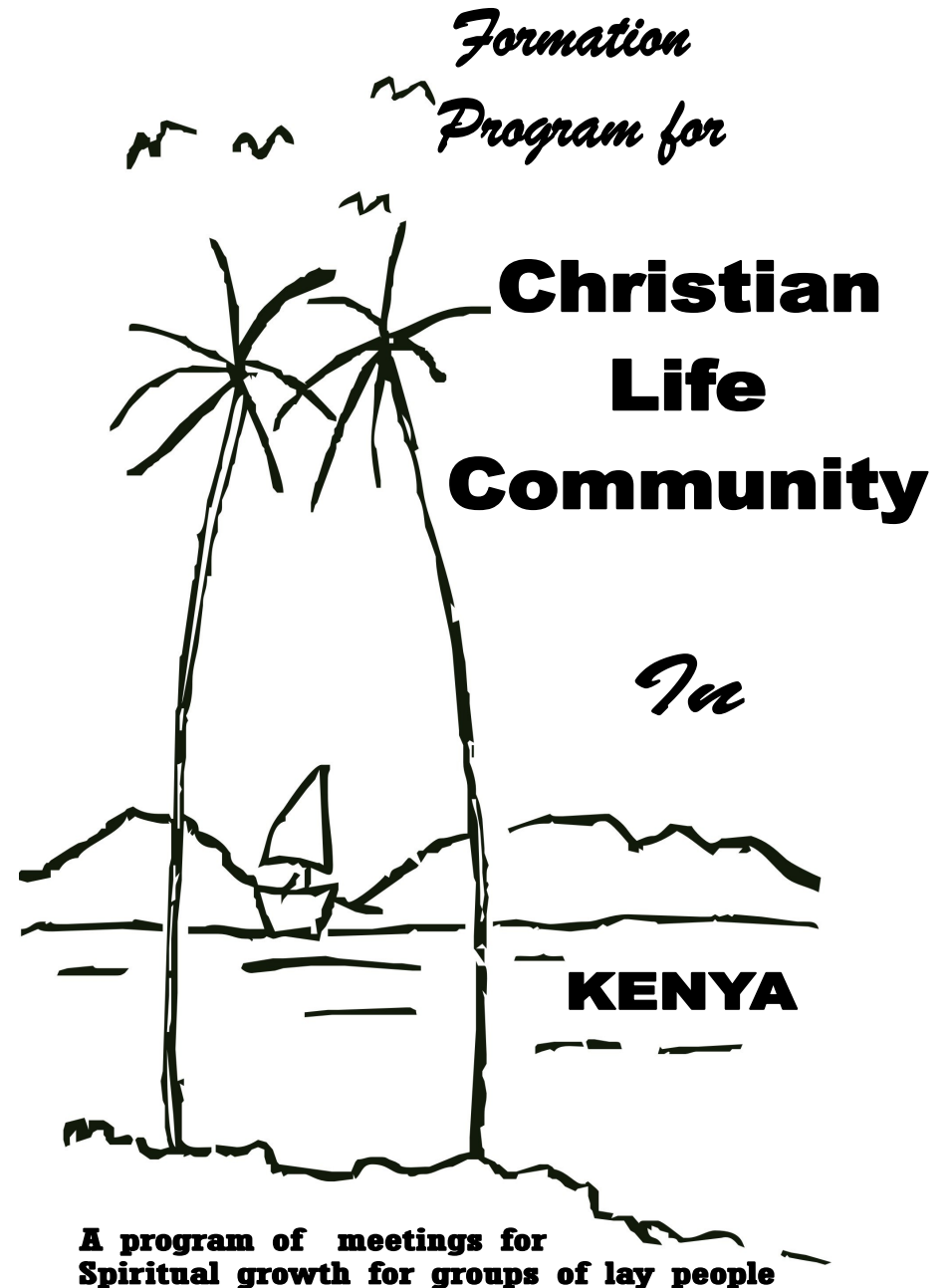
Christian Life Community



This symbol for CLC has X over the P, (for the Greek, Christos) and the inserted M as we are under the Patronage of Mary.

The curved line illustrates a movement forward to **ONE WORLD COMMUNITY**, hence the globe.

Hence, Christian Life Community (**CLC**) in English, Communauté de Vie Chrétienne in French (**CVX**), and Comunidad de Vida Cristiana (**CVX**), in Spanish



**A program of meetings for
Spiritual growth for groups of lay people**

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2. What personal growth do you notice about yourself?

3. How has the experience of this cycle affected the group?

4. What direction do we now take as a CLC community?

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Make repetitions of the passages from the Community Cycle which affected you most, either positively or negatively.

COMMUNITY

MEETING 6: EVALUATION BY THE COMMUNITY

GRACE: That we may see how the Holy Spirit is guiding us to grow as a community and to continue our formation.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: Glory and Praise”, “Spirit of God”

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 1:6-11. (The One who began this good work in you will continue to complete it). Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

We have completed a cycle on community.

We now want to judge where we are and to choose what we, as a group, will do next.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. What has been your experience of this cycle?

PREFACE

In Christian Life Community, if we are to live our CLC Way of Life well, we need to be well formed in what it means to be a member of CLC. We formed in many ways in CLC Kenya: participating in periodic Area Formation Weekends or Days, reading *progresio* from the CLC World Community, the Kenya CLC *Clarion* and other CLC newsletters which are made available to us, our experiences of making the full Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and renewing ourselves in a yearly experience of the Spiritual Exercises, regular spiritual direction, and daily prayer. But, probably the most important ongoing way we are formed in CLC is through what occurs at the meetings of our small communities.

Various attempts have been made to provide materials for the meetings of our small communities, particularly in their early stages of formation, over the years. We were fortunate in 1997 to be introduced to the *Formation Programme for Christian Life Communities* in Nigeria and to adapt it to our own needs. We are most grateful to CLC Nigeria for the invitation to adapt and use their material, clearly the fruit of much insightful work.

The one section which is original to our Manual is Spirituality Cycle C on the Discernment of Spirits, this was prepared by Peter McIsaac, SJ., and we are most grateful to him for his insightful treatment.

We are grateful to National Formation Team for their efforts to keep revising this manual since 1997 so that it can meet the needs of the members of CLC Kenya.

For your convenience, the *Formation Programme* is being presented in two parts for the first time.

May the Holy Spirit bless the use of this Manual for the formation of CLC Kenya as an effective community on mission.

Edel Churu Ebalé, President
Christian Life COMMUNITY Kenya
The Feast of St. Ignatius Loyola, 2005

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This manual, which provides material for use in CLC small community meetings, will generally be used by adult groups which were introduced to CLC through our small booklet, "A Period of Introduction to CLC," and decided to form a CLC group. The meeting outlines are given in cycles. Each cycle begins at a basic level and leads the community through an ordered progression of material to deeper levels of understanding and practice:

SPIRITUAL CYCLES

- A. Some forms of prayer – an explanation of three different forms of Ignatian prayer
- B. Some Themes from the Spiritual Exercises – material at the heart of Ignatian Spirituality.
- C. The Discernment of Spirits – explicitly introduces Ignatian discernment even though members have already engaged in discernment through the other cycles.

MISSION

- A. Service as an Essential Element of Christianity – to learn how central service is for the CLC Way of Life.
- B. Peoples' Work in Their Apostolic Activity – for transforming ordinary work into apostolic action.
- C. To tackle an Unjust Structure – guidance for concrete work

COMMUNITY CYCLE – for the community to focus on its identity as a community of Disciples of Christ.

The ordering of the cycles is to alternate Spirituality Cycles and mission Cycles with the Community Cycle occurring after Spirituality Cycle b. Experience over the last one and a half years indicates the importance of balancing our growth in spirituality and in mission. Of course, the reality of Community Cycle is placed at the middle of this formation programme. When a community has completed these cycles, it will be able to set its own agenda in accord with its own needs; for example: to go through a papal encyclical, to do the Spiritual Exercises as a group, to consider who to change a particular structure in society, etc.

2. What need in the world-at-large is also a need in your own neighbourhood? Explain.

3. What can you do to meet this need in your neighbourhood? Explain.

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Jn 20:19-23, Lk 24:44-49

COMMUNITY

MEETING 5: ACTING AS APOSTLES TODAY

GRACE: That we may see ourselves as a community on mission.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “Here I am Lord”, “Make Us Thy Messengers”, “Whatsoever You Do”

SCRIPTURE: Acts 6:1-6 (The decision to have assistants). Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

Jesus trained His disciples by giving them special instruction (Mk 4:10-13; Mt 10), sent them out to get training, and after the resurrection sent them out as His ambassadors of the Good News. We in Christian Life Communities are not communities that are focused on ourselves and only look after our own members. We are called to care for all in the community; and also to extend our care and our service to the entire world. Wherever there is a need, we want to assist (Mt 24:40). So, we see how we can be of service in our neighbourhood and throughout the world. We think globally and act locally.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Do you have a vision that Christians serve all people not just yourselves or other Christians? Explain.

THE FORMAT OF THIS PROGRAMME

The format for meetings is designed to be simple, clear, and uniform in order to know how to progress through the meetings. Each meeting will take about one-and one-half to two hours, exclusive of time for informal sharing.

The statement of the **TOPIC** orientates the community for the meeting.

The leader of the meeting reads the **GRACE**; we pray for what we desire. We recognize that God gives us what we need. At the end of the meeting, we check to see if we attained this grace and in what specific ways, or some other grace might have been received.

The community may begin by singing a **HYMN**. St. Augustine says that the one who sings well prays twice. A group may sing 1 or 2 verses at the beginning of the meeting and others at the end. For the **OPENNING PRAYER**, a member of the community will ask God for the grace which is desired. This is spontaneous and short; it is to neither long-winded nor a speech (3 minutes. Note: approximate lengths of time are listed in parentheses to guide the group through the meeting).

In **LIFE SHARING** each member mentions (1). What has happened in his/her life since the community last met, and (2) how he/she sees God as a part of these experiences. This sharing helps the community to bond or knit more closely together and indicates how each member “finds God in all things” (Comments and discussion of what the individual person has said are out of order at this time; they may be taken up **AFTER** the meeting.) (15-20)

A **SCRIPTURE** passage appropriate to the topic is listed. One member reads the passage aloud and clearly. After 2 minutes of silent reflection, each member may share what this passage means to him/her; the speaker uses the first person singular (15-20)

The leader asks a member to read the **EXPLANATION** of the topic clearly. The explanation gives a simple but detailed understanding of the topic which will lead the group into the questions for reflection. The leader will give the members sufficient time of quiet (3-10 min.) to reflect prayerfully upon the questions. The members may jot down their reflection in the space provided on the page. After the time of reflection, the leader will invite the members to speak their reflection. This too is a **SHARING**, not a discussion. Generally, each member should share only one of their reflection and not necessarily on each question. When the sharing has been completed, the leader will ask the members, "What did you hear while the others were speaking?" this question enables the community to note if a consensus is emerging from their prayerful reflection. If so, then what the members will decide to do is what arises from the prayer (25-30)

An **ACTION RESPONSE** is an integral part of Christian sharing. It is one thing to attain an understanding of a topic; it is another to put this into practice. The leader allows time for the members to state how they will individually or communally put the topic into practice in their daily lives (7-10)

EVALUATION is most important if the community is to progress and develop. To evaluate this meeting, ask:

1. What points need improvement? Make sure something is done about each point.
2. What has been good or helpful?
3. Was the grace of the meeting, or some other grace, received?
In what way(s)?
The evaluation should include what the **GUIDE** sees happening in the community (5-6)

ANNOUNCEMENTS are to be handled quickly. What are the community's issues and future events? What plans have to be made or worked on? What items have come from Area, National, Regional or World CLC? The place and leader of the next meeting are named (5-10)

2. List the ways in which as a community plan together.

3. List the ways in which you as a community work together.

4. List the ways in which you as a community serve together.

5. List the ways in which you a community play together.

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Acts. 2:42-47, Acts 4:32-37, Acts 11:19-26, Acts 13:1-3, Jn 17:20-26

COMMUNITY

MEETING 4: BECOMING CHURCH – A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

GRACE: That we may be drawn together because of our common faith.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “We are One in the Spirit”

SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:1-21 (The first Pentecost). Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

In African communities, members help one another in growing up, getting educated, getting employment, getting married, solving problems, etc.

As members of the Christian religion, we have inspired by the words and deeds of Jesus. We believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief we will have life in His name (Jn 20:31). WE believe; therefore, we can come together as a community of believers. We can pray together, plan together, and recreate together.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. List the ways in which you as a community pray together.

The **CLOSING PRAYER OR HYMN** concludes the meeting. This spontaneous prayer highlights what has happened during the meeting and gives thanks to God. Another hymn or the remaining verses of the opening hymn may be sung (1-3)

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT SESSION: Scripture passages are listed to assist member in their daily prayer. They can serve to continue the theme of the present meeting and to lead into the theme of the next meeting.

Many communities have a **SOCIAL** after the meeting (or in some cases before the meeting). The point is to build relationships in the community through informal sharing and enjoying one another’s company. Sometimes a group might want to arrange some refreshments.

Note Well: After Spirituality Cycle A, the parts of the meeting which are generally the same for each meeting are not listed in the meeting outline unless there is some special direction for that meeting.

Adaptations: Over time communities should feel free to adapt the meeting format to what serves them best. In particular, some groups find that it is important for them to spend much more time in **LIFE SHARING** than the 15-20 minutes suggested for this part of the meeting. Without making the meeting too long, deeper sharing is encouraged. Groups that meet weekly might want to consider alternating between LIFE SHARING meetings and thematic meetings. Other groups might find it important to set aside a meeting for **LIFE SHARING** from time to time.

SPIRITUALITY A

MEETING 1: PRAYER OF AWARENESS (CONSCIOUSNESS EXAMEN)

GRACE: That we may be deeply aware of God's activity in our lives.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: "Asante, Bwana Yesu," Father, we adore you"

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:3-14. Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

The Examination of **CONSCIENCE** is a review of one's good and sinful actions in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. But the Examination of **CONSCIOUSNESS** is a review of God's activity in one's life; by practicing it daily, one becomes more and more aware or conscious of God's presence and working in one's life (in fact, since so many of us are traumatized by school examinations, it is better to use the name, "Prayer of Awareness").

A story is told about Ignatius Loyola. A rector, concerned that the Jesuits in his community were not praying, wrote to Ignatius for advice. Ignatius prayed and then responded that he could understand that the Jesuits, engaged in apostolic activity, did not have time for long prayer; but **they are not to omit the Prayer of Awareness**. Ignatius was concerned that his men would not lose the ability of 'seeking and finding God in all things'.

The Prayer of Awareness is simple and natural, taking about 15 minutes. It can be made in five steps. One should not rush; spending the entire time in gratitude can be very fruitful. In place of the Questions for Reflection, the leader will guide the members through this prayer:

1. THANKSGIVING

Look at the past day. How has God gifted you during the last day?.... In your life, work, relationships?...

Take time to be thankful for each gift. Gratefulness is the heart of prayer.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Which one of the above passages speaks most to you about Jesus? Explain.

2. What do all of these passages tell you about Jesus? Explain.

3. After the sharing: What have you learned from the sharing by others? Explain

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Lk 7:1-10, Lk 7:11-17, Jn 2:13-22, Jn 10:1-18, Jn 15:1-10, Jn 17:6-19

COMMUNITY

MEETING 3: DISCIPLESHIP – THE WORKS OF JESUS

GRACE: That we may know who Jesus is by what He did.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “Lord of the Dance.” “O Sacred Head Surrounded”, “Where You There”

SCRIPTURE: See below under Explanation of Topic

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

In the last meeting, we looked at what Jesus said. Now we look at what Jesus did to see what effect His deeds have upon us.

Mt 7:28-29 The crowds were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Mt 17:2 He was transfigured before them.

Mt 14:19 Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds.

Mk 4:41 They were filled with awe and said: “What manner of man is this whom even the wind and sea obey”.

Mk 5:41 Little girl, I say to you: Arise.

Lk 10:38 He entered a village where a woman named Martha welcomed Him.

Lk 22:17 He took the cup, gave thanks, and said: “Take this and share it among yourselves.”

Lk 23:26 After laying the cross upon him (Simon), they made him carry it behind Jesus.

Jn 11:43 “Lazarus, come out.”

Jn 19:30 When Jesus had taken the wine, he said: “It is finished.” And bowing His head, He handed over the spirit.

Jn 20:19 Jesus came and stood in their midst and said: “Peace be with you.”

2. ASKING FOR LIGHT:

Prayer for the Holy Spirit’s light to see yourself as God sees you, as a sinner and yet God’s beloved child, and to respond to God’s leading.

3. REVIEW OF THE DAY:

In going over the events of the day in your life, work and relationships, ask yourself:

Where have you felt peace, love, joy or another positive feeling in your day?..... Where have you felt drawn closer to God and increased in faith in God?.... Remember the feeling, and consider what God might be saying to you through it....

Where have you felt negative, distracted, tempted or otherwise drawn away from God and away from faith, hope and love?.... Consider what this experience is saying to you....

4. TURNING TO GOD

Where you have failed to see God or responded poorly, ask God/s forgiveness. Where you were aware of God or responded well, express gratitude.

5. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Look ahead and decide how you will act tomorrow. If there is something negative, how can I correct it for tomorrow? Where there is something positive, how can I continue in the same way tomorrow? Close with an Our Father as this helps us to keep remembering our relationship with God, the Giver of each day’s gifts.

GROUP SHARING: Share from this experience of the Prayer of Awareness.

ACTION RESPONSE: How will I/we put this topic into practice?

EVALUATION OF THE MEETING: How was the grace achieved? Did the community grow through the sharing?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING PRAYER OR HYMN

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Col. 1:3-8, Col. 1:9-14, Col. 1:15-23, Col. 1:24-29, Lk. 12:4-12, Lk. 12:13-22

SPIRITUALITY A

Note: A person experienced in the difference between Meditation and Contemplation should lead this and the next meeting. If no one is presently available, it is probably better to wait.

MEETING 2: REFLECTION ON SCRIPTURE (MEDITATION)

GRACE: That we may learn to use the Word of God as a prime source of our prayer.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “Christ Be Beside Me”, “ The King of Glory”

LIFE SHARING: What has happened in your life?
How has God a part of those experiences?

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 103. After the explanation of the topic, let the leader present this passage as a group meditation.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC C:

Scripture is one important starting point for prayer. The reason for this is that Scripture is the Word of God. God has spoken to us and revealed Himself to the world (Heb 1:1-2). When one responds to this Word, one finds oneself in dialogue with God; this conversation is prayer. By using Scripture, one recognizes that God speaks FIRST, then one responds to God.

One method of using the Scriptures is simply a reflection or meditation, which means ‘to think about prayerfully’, on the Word of God. One selects a passage from the Bible, then goes through it line by line or verse by verse and spends as much time with each line or verse as is profitable before going on to the next verse. Such questions as the following can be used: What is God saying in this passage? What is God saying to me? How do I feel about this passage? In answering these questions, one is responding to God.

One can use any passage from the Bible for meditation, but passages that take the form of a prayer such as Psalm, or the form

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Which one of the above passages speaks most to you about Jesus? Explain.
2. What do all of these passages tell you about Jesus? Explain.
3. After the sharing: What have you learned from the sharing by the others? Explain.

TO PREPARE FOE THE NEXT MEETING: Lk 12:13-21, Lk 12:22-34, Lk 23:43, Mk 1:14-15, Mk 1:21-28, Mk 1:29-31

COMMUNITY

MEETING 2: DISCIPLESHIP – THE WORDS OF JESUS

GRACE: That we may know who Jesus is by what He says.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “Seek Ye First”, “I am the Resurrection and the Life”.

SCRIPTURE: see below under Explanation of topic.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

We believe that Jesus is alive and in our midst. He has invited us to follow Him. He is the model for our life. We shall look at His words and teachings to see what they say to us.

Mt 5:3 How blessed are the poor in the spirit, theirs is the Kingdom of heaven

Mt 5:7 How blessed are the merciful; they shall obtain mercy.

Mt 5:44 Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you.

Mt 11:28-30 Come to me all who labour and are heavy burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart: and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.

Mk 2:28 The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

Mk 10:45 The Son of Man came to serve, not to be served.

Mk 14:36 Not my will, but yours, be done.

Lk 22:34 Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.

Jn 6:35 I am the bread of Life.

Jn 10:14 I am the Good Shepherd. I know my sheep, and mine know me.

Jn 11:25 I am the Resurrection and the Life.

Jn 15:5 I am the Vine, you are the branches.

of a reflection, such as a passage of St. Paul are especially good for this.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION after the group meditation:

1. What strikes you most in this passage?

2. What is God saying to you in this passage?

3. How do you feel about what God is saying to you?

GROUP SHARING: Each share what you would like of your reflections.

ACTION RESPONSE: How will I/we put this topic into practice?

EVALUATION OF THE MEETING: How was the grace achieved? What did I like about the meeting? Do I see areas for improvement?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING PRAYER OR HYMN

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Mk. 9:2-8, Mk. 9:14-29, Mt. 13:44-50, Mk. 2:1-12, Mk. 4:35-43

SPIRITUALILTY A

MEETING 3: PLACING ONESELF IN THE SCENE (IGNATIAN CONTEMPLATION)

(**Note:** If you do not have a guide or anyone present who has learned this form of prayer, or probably would be better to skip this meeting, and invite a CLC leader to introduce contemplation on a later occasion)

GRACE: That we may benefit from this imaginative way of using the Scriptures for our prayer.

OPENNING HYMN AND PRAYER: “Jesus the Lord”, “We are the Light of the World”, “I am the Resurrection”.

LIFE SHARING: What has happened in your life?
How has God been part of those experiences?

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

In this way, one imagines the scene as it takes place right now, not 2000 years ago. As one “sets the stage,” one places self within the scene. In this way, one sees the event as it unfolds; one hears the words which are spoken; and one reacts to the actions. By imagining oneself present at the event, one allows the event – especially a story about Christ – to have its effect on one NOW. One then reflects upon self, thinking: what does this event mean? What does this event mean to me? How do I feel about this event? One speaks to God about these thoughts and feelings. (This way of praying is a form of contemplation, and it enables one to absorb the attributes and values of God.)

Placing yourself in the scene is like ‘stepping in’ to become part of the action in a TV drama or movie, rather than observing from ‘outside the screen’. In such a situation, one may desire to associate more closely with the action by taking the role of one of the disciples. In this way, one hears the words of Jesus addressed directly to self; one can absorb Jesus’ attitudes and value more easily. If one should become most daring, one might take the role of Jesus Himself. This type of role-playing is neither presumptuous nor irreverent; it allows the person to absorb Jesus’ ways by

2. How does Jesus continue to inspire you? Explain.

TO PREPARE FOE THE NEXT MEETING: Lk 24:34, Mt 28:16-20, Rom 6:1-11, Mt 5:17-20, Mt 5:12-26, Mt 5:27-30.

COMMUNITY

MEETING 1: PRESENCE

GRACE: That we may realize that Jesus, though risen, is always present with us and that we are called to seek him in all things.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “Keep in Mind”, “I am the Resurrection and the Life”.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 139:18 (I am risen, and still with you). Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF THE TOPIC:

In African Spirituality, ancestors remain with their living descendants. They are honoured because they are an example of how to live and because they continue to influence us.

Jesus is our Prime Ancestor; He is the first-born of the dead. He continues to inspire us with His gift of life, His teachings, His death, and His resurrection. He gives us hope that, if we live as He did, we shall do the good NOW, and we shall be raised from the dead.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. In what ways is Jesus present to you?

getting into His skin and walking around in His sandals. This type of contemplative prayer leads one to a very close following of Christ.

SCRIPTURE: Mathew 14:22-33. After the explanation of the topic, let the leader use this passage to lead the group in a contemplation.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION: (After the contemplation):

1. What does this passage mean?
2. What does this passage mean TO YOU?
3. How do you feel about this passage?
4. Speak to God about your thoughts and your feelings.

GROUP SHARING: Each share what you would like of your reflections

ACTION RESPONSE: How will I/we put this topic into practice?

EVALUATION OF THE MEETING: How was the grace achieved? What did I like about the meeting? What needs improving?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING PRAYER OR HYMN

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Mk 8:31-33
Mk. 8:34-38, Mk. 10:13-16

SPIRITUALITY A

MEETING 4: EVALUATION BY THE COMMUNITY

GRACE: That we may appreciate what the Holy Spirit has been saying to us through this cycle.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: "Spirit of the living God",
Abba, Father"

LIFE SHARING: What has happened in your life?
How has God been a part of those experiences?

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 29:11-15 (I have plans in mind for you.)
Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

We have completed a cycle on Spirituality regarding some forms of prayer.

We now want to review what we have learned so that we can incorporate it into our lives in an ongoing way.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. What has been your experience of this cycle?

2. What personal growth do you notice about yourself?

3. How has the experience of this cycle affected the group?

4. What direction do you now take as a CLC? (Note: Do you desire to make the Spiritual Exercises either as an individual or as a community?)

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: St. Ignatius calls praying over a passage a second time a **Repetition**, but a repetition involves concentrating on the places where I previously drew the most fruit or where I found difficulty. Make a repetition of the passages which were most important for you over the course of this Cycle.

SPIRITUALITY B

MEETING7: EVALUATION BY THE COMMUNITY

GRACE: That we may live God's love more deeply.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: "Spirit of the living God",
"Abba, Father".

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 29:11-15 (I have plans in mind for you).
Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

We have completed a Cycle on Spirituality regarding themes of the Ignatian Exercises.

We now want to review what we have learned so that we can incorporate it into our lives in an ongoing way.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. What has been your experience of this cycle?

2. What personal growth do you notice about yourself?

3. In what ways has this cycle enabled the group to grow?

GROUP SHARING: Let each share the results of your reflection.

ACTION RESPONSE: How will I/we put this topic into practice?

EVALUATION: Do you think you received the grace of this meeting?

What was your experience like?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING PRAYER OR HYMN

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: We pray again using the passages which meant the most to you, or choose other passages and pray either according to the form of meditation or of Ignatian Contemplation.

MISSION A

Note: In order to progress well and to gain the most from Mission Cycle A, it is important that you be concrete and actually discern a service that you will do. This will work best if this is done by the group as a whole. It can be a one-time service; in fact, groups and individual members are usually not ready for commitment to a prolonged service at this point.

MEETING 1: WHY SERVICE?

GRACE: That we understand that Service is an integral part of the Christian life.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “We are One in the Spirit”

SCRIPTURE: John 13:12-20 (Jesus washes the feet of His disciples.)
Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

When we are baptized, our ears are touched so that we may hear the Word of God, and our mouths are touched so that we may proclaim what we have heard.

So, a person becomes a missionary by reason of baptism.

Jesus taught His disciples and then sent them out two-by-two to gain some apostolic experience (Mk 6:7-13); upon their return, Jesus invited them to reflect upon their experiences (Mk 6:30-33); after the Resurrection, Jesus sent them out as Apostles to proclaim the Good News (Mk 16:15-16).

Jesus gives us an example that we are to serve others as He did (Jn 13:12-20)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. What are your feelings regarding the fact that each Christian is to be an apostle?

2. How do you see God acting in your life today?

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Ps 145, Ps 147, Eph 3:14-17, Mk 8:31-33, Mk 8:34-38, Mk 10:13-16

SPIRITUALITY B

MEETING 6: FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS

GRACE: That we may recognize that God is at work in all events, in all people, and especially in our own lives today.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “Take, Lord, Receive”, “Dwelling Place”, “All of my life”

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 19:1-7 (The heavens declares the glory of God) Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

African Spirituality holds the sacredness of nature and the environment. This is so, because God is the Creator of all life and because God is actively present in the world.

Ignatius Loyola asks retreatants to pray over four points;

1. God has blessed us with every thing that we have;
2. God is present in His gifts;
3. God works for us in all these gifts;
4. God is both the giver and the gift.

The Prayer of Awareness in the ordinary way of keeping this activity of God in mind.

QUESTIONS FRO REFLECTION:

1. List the gifts which God has given to you.

1. Do you sense that Jesus is urging you to serve others much more?

2. What skill(s) can you use to help others?

- 3.

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Jas 2:1-13, Jas 2:14-26
Jas 5:1-6, Lk 3:10-14, Lk 10:29-37

MISSION A

MEETING 2: WHAT SERVICE CAN I/WE DO?

GRACE: That we may see how I/we can serve others.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: "Whatsoever you Do"

SCRIPTURE: Mathew 25:31-46 (Whatsoever you do to one of these....).

Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

In Kenya, people have many problems. Some have no proper shelter in the slums and on the streets. Others do not have enough to eat, some are without jobs and money. Indeed, many people are overwhelmed by numerous socio-economic pressures that they end up losing hope. People have so many needs that we could not meet all of them. That could discourage a person from doing anything. But if each person does one thing, together they get the entire job done.

So, what do we do? We look around. We gather information. We judge the response which each situation calls for and we offer our contribution.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Who in your neighbourhood is hungry, thirsty, poor, out down, discouraged?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Do I ever find myself following the progression of temptations? Where is my particular weakness or pitfall?
2. Can I see myself developing according to the progression of being challenged to follow Christ? Can I see myself right now at one of the stages of the progression?
3. Where I am weak, do I stay stuck on the side of Satan? Or am I able to open myself to relying on the grace of Christ?

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Mt 12:22-27, Eph6:10-20, 1 Cor 6:1-11, 1Jn 4:1-6, Ps 136, Ps 139, Ps 144

SPIRITUALITY B

MEETING 5: TWO MASTERS

GRACE: That we may know the ways of Satan so that we may avoid them and that we may know the ways of Jesus so that we may embrace them.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: "Seek Ye First", "Jesus the Lord"

SCRIPTURE: Mathew 6:24 (Not one can serve two masters). Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

African in general believe in the existence of God and of the devil. But many Africans fear the devil and obey him instead of God simply because they do not know the saving power of God. Christians recognize that Jesus has overcome sin, death and Satan. Ignatius found that there is a progression in temptations; people are tempted to riches (the yearning for money and for things), then to honours (recognition, name, titles), and then to pride (one no longer needs God). At this point, the person has put self at the centre of the universe and so easily falls prey to all kinds of sins.

Ignatius found that there is a similar but opposite progression when people are challenged by Jesus. Jesus invites people to poverty (Go, sell what you have; freedom from material things), to ridicule (They will persecute you as they persecuted me; following Christ is more important than my reputation), and to humility (I do always the will of Him who sent me; God and Christ are at the centre of my life). Thus, one's focus is on Christ, the person living in his love, open to receiving his grace and growing in all the virtues.

2. Are there groups of people who are not being treated fairly?

3. Does any of these situations affect a large group of people and/or a large area of your neighbourhood?

4. Share with the group from your prayer what you feel called to.

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Mt 10:5-15, Mt 10:40-42, Mt 5:13-16, Deut 30:15-20, 1 Jn 3:14-18

MISSION A

MEETING 3: A CHOICE OF WHAT WE DO

GRACE: That we may have the courage to choose what God wants us to do

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “The Cry of the Poor”, “Spirit of the Living God”

SCRIPTURE: Acts 22:10 (Lord, what would you have me do?). Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

The choice of what we do for our Service is an important as the work we choose. Ignatius of Loyola had a criterion for choosing such work: ‘What is more universal is more divine’. What affects a greater number of people or a larger area of society is more God-like.

In the last meeting, we looked at the situation around us which call for attention and correction. In this meeting, we want to choose what God wants us to do. We bring the information together, pray, and ask God: What do You want us to do? We call this process discernment.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION: (After a person shares on Qn 1 -3, other members of the group are invited to give feedback (Qn 4))

1. Does the information from the last meeting lead to toward a specific action? If so, what?

2. Do you find yourself desiring to follow Jesus more closely? Explain.

3. Are there any areas of your life where you find it a struggle to follow Jesus? Explain.

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Mt 5:38-42, Mt 5:43-48, Mk 10:35-45, Lk 4:1-13, Lk 6:17-49.

SPIRITUALITY B

MEETING 4: FOLLOWING CHRIST

GRACE: That we may know Jesus more intimately, love Him more ardently, and follow Him more closely.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “Day by Day”

SCRIPTURE: Mark 1:16-20 (Come follow me) Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

We Africans reverence our ancestors as generators of our life and as models for how to live life.

Jesus is our Prime Ancestor. He has life from the Father. He has come that we might have life and have it abundantly (Jn 10:10). He is our elder brother (Heb 2:11), who teaches us how to live. (Mt 5-7; Mk 8-10; Lk 12) who suffers for us (Jn 3:16). He invites us to follow Him (Mk 1:16-20), to be His companion (Lk 22:15-16), to suffer with Him (Mk 10:38), and to be raised with Him (Rom 6:3-11).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. What attracts you to Jesus? Explain.

2. In prayer, each asks: “Lord, what would you have made me do?”

3. Share with your group what you feel called to in your prayer.

4. Let other members give feedback on what you feel called to.

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Lk 10:38-42, Lk 9:52, Lk 14:28-30, Mt 7:24-27

MISSION A

MEETING 4: WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN OUR WORK?

GRACE: That we may honestly evaluate the service we have begun.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “Sent Forth By God’s Blessing”

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 1:6-11(The one who began this good work in you will continue to complete it). Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

We have done some service in Jesus’ name. Is it really what Jesus would want us to do? Is it really how Jesus would want us to do?.

We will use the Pastoral Circle to help us look at what we have done, evaluate it, make recommendations, and choose with greater confidence. (It might be necessary to allow two meeting to this topic in order to give time for each member to have to receive feedback.)

1. EXPERIENCE

4. DECISION

2. ANALYSIS

3. FAITH REFLECTION

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. What has been your experience of service?

2. Can you think of any areas of your life where you struggle to be free to do God’s will?

3. Can you think of any “attachments” which could prevent your inner freedom?

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Gal 5:13-18, Gal 5:19-25, Rom 8:1-13, Mk 8:31-33, Mk 8:34-38, 1 Jn 3:4-10

SPIRITUALITY B

MEETING 3: INNER FREEDOM

GRACE: That we may experience interior freedom.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “Nainua Moyo Wangu”, “It’s a Long Road to Freedom”, “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God”

SCRIPTURE: John 8:31-36 (The truth shall make you free). Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

Kenya attained independence in 1963. The struggle for freedom was all about attaining power to make our own choices. Despite “freedom”, Kenyans have many external factors e.g. power, position, wealth which influence the choices they make.

Fr. Anthony de Mello tells a wonderful story to illustrate interior freedom. A man was looking for the biggest diamond in the world. He would not be happy until he possessed it and its wealth. One day he saw an older man with a diamond twice the size of the biggest one he had even seen. He demanded the diamond from the older man, who simply gave it to him. The man went home happy and wealthy; but very soon he became confused and unhappy. On the next morning he went back to the older man, returned the diamond, and said: “Give me that which enables you to give this diamond away.”

St. Ignatius speaks of “attachments” as preventing our inner freedom to let our deepest desires lead us to God’s will. So many things can be attachments in our lives from money, prestige and power to a certain kind of self-image, perfectionism, relationship. It is anything we would have trouble letting go of even to embrace God’s will.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Can you think of any areas of your life where you have moved to greater inner freedom?

2. Analyze where they have been successful and unsuccessful.

3. As a result of your discernment what do you think God is calling you to regarding your service? (Note: Recommendations could be to stop the work, to continue as it is, to change what or how you do the work).

4. As a result of your reflection, what do you now DECIDE to do?

5. How do you think members can support your mission. Also, let members share how they think they can support you.

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING? Jas 1:22-25, 1 Jn 3:17, 1 Jn 3:11-18, Jn 15:9-11, Jn 15:12-17

MISSION A

MEETING: 5: EVALUATION BY THE COMMUNITY

GRACE: That we may integrate service in our daily lives.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “Glory and Praise”, “All of My Life?”

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 29:11-15 (I have plans in mind for you). Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

We have completed a cycle on Service regarding the need to integrate Service into our daily lives.

We now want to review what we have learned so that we can incorporate it into our lives in an ongoing way.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. What has been your experience of this cycle?

2. Do you tend to think that you have to prove yourself to God to make yourself worthy of God's love, or are you able to let God love you as a sinner?

3. Have you ever experienced that God loves you as a sinner?

4. Does your experience of forgiveness enable you to forgive others? And to serve others?

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Lk 5:1-11, Lk 7:36-50, Jn 8:1-11, Mk 10:17-31, Mt 13:45-46

SPIRITUALITY B: A LOVED SINNER

GRACE: That we may see ourselves as sinners yet loved by God.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “Have Mercy Lord”, “Draw Near, O Lord, Our God”, “Yes, I shall Arise”, “Grant to Us, O Lord”, or “Kyrie” from Misa Kariobangi, Misa Fadhili, etc.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 23:39-43 (The repentant thief). Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION OF TOPIC:

God created the world as something good. (Gen. 1 & 2). We have harmed God’s creation and order by our sins. (Gen. 3). Our world is not what it should be due to human sins. We are each affected by the reality of sin around us, and we ourselves make the situation worse by the harm that the sins of each of us contribute to making the situation worse.

God does not stop loving us and frees us from sin. (Rom. 4:25). The Good News is that God, who reveals to us our sins and our sinfulness, does not dwell on our sins but on us. God reaches out to each of us precisely as a sinner. He does love us just as we are in spite of our sins. His love is stronger than our sins, and God is loving Father. In His forgiveness, he invites us to live in his love in a way that will enable us to move more and more into a life where we are living less a life of sin and more a life of love which is empowered by God’s grace.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Does your awareness of your sinfulness and sins tend to isolate you or to draw you to open yourself to God to receive His forgiving love?

2. What personal growth do you notice about yourself?

3. How has the experience of this cycle affected the group?

4. How can we better integrate mission into our daily lives, both personally and communally?

TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Col 3:12-17, Is 55:1-5, Is 55:6-11

SPIRITUALITY B

MEETING 1: I WAS MADE IN LOVE

GRACE: That we may see ourselves as made in love.

OPENING HYMN AND PRAYER: “How Great Thou Art”

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 2:4b-7. Share what this passage means to you.

EXPLANATION PF TOPIC:

African Spirituality holds that God is the Creator of all life, the Great Immense, the Prime Ancestor.

“Human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by means of doing this to save their souls.” (Sp.Ex. #23)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. How do I see myself as related:
 - to the other things of the earth?
 - to the Creator?

2. Do I experience God as loving me? How?

3. How do I want to relate to God?

TO PRPEARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING: Ps 104:1-23, Ps 104:24-35, Lk 15:11-32, Amos 2:6-8, Rom 5:1-11