

# CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY KENYA

## Meeting for Youth: Booklet One

### Meeting 1: LIVING CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY: 1

**Grace:** That we have a deeper sense of what being in CLC is all about.

#### Reflection

#### *A summary of the Christian Life Community (CLC) way*

Christian Life Community, a worldwide organization, is a way of life for lay Christians based in the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola and in the Catholic tradition. It is an integrated spirituality involving growing in relationship with God, community support, and Christian mission. At the heart of our spirituality is Ignatius' concern that we seek and find God in all things. Our way of life is oriented toward discovering who we are in relationship to God and, in light of our unique talents and gift, how God is calling us to respond in the concrete situation of our life. We gradually become more sensitive to the true, the deepest desires of our heart and to how God is speaking to us through them. The CLC way is not world denying but world affirming and seeks to build the Reign of God in today's world.

**Sharing:** *Please remember to use I not them, they, you, we, or us but I.* What draws you to CLC, why are you here today? What has captured your attention?

**Evaluation:** What was your experience during the meeting? Share some of your feelings.

#### Announcements:

### Meeting 2: LIVING CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY: 2

**Grace:** To rediscover the value of communication as an important component in building community.

**Exercise:** Use the ball of yarn, the one with it begins. Share 3 things they would want their group to know about you. Then toss it on.

## **Reflection: The Treasure I Give and Receive**

Sharing is a gift of you, who you are, how you feel, your hopes, your joys, your struggles and your attitudes. To share is a decision to love, with confidence, in those who love and care about us and want us to grow. It is to be open and honest. It is a time to speak from the heart and to listen from the heart. You are then asked to use “I”. Not you, we, they, or it but I. This helps one not to hide their true self. “I feel, I think, I desire,” One is also encouraged to avoid generalizations. Concretely expressing what pleases or disturbs self. When others share in a group, one should listen deeply; this is not the time to interrupt, make remarks, or comment. One is thus encouraged to turn off consciously their desire to be competitive or to criticize. The sharing of another can help one recognize their own feelings and attitudes. Sharing opens all of us to one another and strengthens our community. Some of those present may really be struggling to say what is in their hearts. One must be kind enough not to stifle them with jokes or interruptions. One is therefore encouraged not to preach, teach, judge, help, gossip or share other’s sharing.

**Sharing:** Reflect on what has happened in your life since the last meeting?

Is there one significant event that comes to mind? Where was God in it, what was he saying, how was he loving you?

**Evaluation:** What was your experience during the meeting? Share some of your feelings.

## **Announcements**

### **Meeting 3: LIVING CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY: 3**

**Grace:** That you may be able to be in touch with what you truly desire.

**Reflection:** *Everything starts with a desire.*

This exercise offers an approach to one’s own desires and longings, which in daily life, are often hidden under a cover of a ‘sense of realism’ or of discouragement. It reaches those layers in which our desires are rooted. To know this desire is of decisive importance for the personal dynamic of life. St. Ignatius of Loyola recommends *at the beginning of each prayer time to ask for what one desires and longs for*. The sharing of one’s own desires and wishes may also enhance mutual understanding and acceptance.

**Exercise:**

Choose a comfortable sitting position and close your eyes. Become aware of how you are present right now: what do you feel in your body? Become aware of your contact with the chair you are sitting on? Become aware of your legs, your feet touching the floor, your arms etc. Try to become silent and listen to the answer in yourself. Where are you coming from right now? Let your wishes, dreams, ideas, thoughts simply enter your mind, notwithstanding whether or not they seem realistic or reasonable to you. Now we open our eyes and write down what we were in touch with. Before sharing with the others, take time to ponder: *What it means to you*

**Sharing:** What has touched you from the exercise?

**Evaluation:** Was the time spent agreeable?

**Announcements****Meeting 4: LIVING CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY: 4****PRAYER OF AWARENESS – *Steps for reviewing the day.***

This most important ‘Quarter of an hour of St. Ignatius of Loyola’ will be a help for living our lives with God attentively, and for finding Him in all things. What St. Ignatius often said is true: ‘We shall do what helps us most and experience will confirm this.’

**To be present**

Be aware of the presence of God in everything around you. Be present to the God of your life who, in Jesus Christ is Present for you. Be aware, perhaps with amazement and thanksgiving, that you are alive. Be there before Him with your body. Be there before Him with your presence, that is, with what is affecting and moving you now. Be silent.

**To ask for light**

Ask for the opens to see and admit, in His light, the reality of this day, to be ready to recognize what he wants to show you today.

**To look over the day**

1. With greater openness, not yet judging or explaining, turn to the events and happenings of this day in you, that is, what has happened today.

2. Now you are ready to review the day by hour, place by place and encounter by encounter. In doing so, you can simply state the facts.
3. Are there things you need to look at more closely?
4. There is no need to be complete but it is important to dwell upon that which you feel strongly about. Feelings (joy, anger, fear etc.) and thoughts that accompany particular situations or that may emerge unexpectedly.
5. Try to notice how the Holy Spirit was at work in the movements leading to greater love, faith and hope. Where did the 'enemy', the evil spirit of selfishness, mistrust and discouragement try to take over? What is the Lord trying to tell you through this?

**To bring before God what you experienced – You may ask yourself the following: -**

1. What were the movements in me: joy, concern, impatience, sadness etc.?
2. What has been good in me?
3. What is still unresolved in me, what wound, what guilt etc.?

**After reflecting on the questions: -**

1. Newly entrust yourself, and those involved to God.
2. Praise him, thank Him and ask Him for the gift of reconciliation, and any other gift according to what concerns you now have in confidence. *For our Lord really takes care of you as you are now.*

**To accept the next day**

What moves you into looking at the next day: - plans, events, encounters, hopes, fears etc., you entrust all to God. Ask for strength to receive the “only necessary thing”. For trust and confidence, for determination, for that which is right now important to you, and where you are drawn.

**Sharing:** Looking back at your day/week what were you in touch with

**Evaluations:** What was helpful? What could have been done better?

**Announcements**

**Note:** *In CLC you will be shown over time that there are many ways to make the prayer o awareness. Gradually, you will find the way that is just right for you, a way that helps you know yourself before God and enables you to be grateful, be discerning and be committed. You will probably find that the way you pray the prayer of awareness evolves over time as you grow in the CLC way*

## **Meeting 5: SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA: 1**

*At the age of sixty-two, Ignatius looked back on his past. After much hesitation he dictated the story of his life to an intimate friend. These confidences were destined to raise questions in the hearts of people.*

### **The Young Ignatius**

In his Youth Ignatius was a soldier, proud of himself, a vain young man. He was no different from other young men of his time. He was moved by a great desire to succeed and marked by courage. During a battle with the French, his commander against his better judgment was prevailed upon by Ignatius to hold out, risking his own life and that of his companions including Ignatius. They were forced to fight in self-defense and Ignatius fell, badly wounded, one leg completely broken; the others surrendered and the French seized the fortress. But they had consideration for the wounded Ignatius and had him carried to his home. That meant more than a hundred kilometers in a litter – it meant pain, loss of blood, the prospect of death. And all that what was the purpose? That was the first check in his life. Immobilized at home, seriously ill, Ignatius awaited the final outcome. The doctors gave up hope and he received the last sacrament, he took a turn for the better and began to regain the strength. Through these events, God confronted him. Where he had expected reward, money, honor, praise, he had experienced nothing but failure, sickness, and shame. A veritable crossroads in his life. The Lord was bidding his time.

**Sharing in smaller groups:** - What has touched you from St. Ignatius Life – relate to your own life experience?

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. How has God met you personally? What did you experience on those occasions?
2. How did you try to develop your personality (intelligence, will conscience, freedom?)  
What do you think is the best way of doing this?
3. Do you share the decisive moments of your life with your friends?
4. How do you accept failures in your life calmly without yielding despair?
5. What qualities do you possess that would help you to build a better world? Are you spontaneous? A leader? One who questions? Considerate of others? Prudent?
6. Do you remind yourself that there is something beyond human knowledge and the wisdom of God that surpasses these?

**Sharing in the large Group:** - After reflecting on the questions, share ONE thing that you were able to be in touch with

### **Evaluation and Announcements**

## **Further reading**

### ***Ignatian Insight***

“For everyone must keep in mind that in all that concerns the spiritual life his progress will be in proportion to his surrender of self-love and of his own will and interests. (Ex. 189).

### ***Meditating with the Word of God***

**Mk. 8:31-37** “You think as men think, not as God thinks”

“Anyone who wishes to be a follower of mine must deny himself behind.” “Whosoever cares for his own safety is lost.”

## **Meeting 6: SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA: 2**

*For in reading the life of our Lord and of the saints, he stopped to think, reasoning within himself, “What if I should do this which St. Francis did; and this which St. Dominic did?” Thus he pondered over many things that he found good, always proposing to himself what was difficult and burdensome; and as he so proposed, it seemed easy for him to accomplish it. But he did no more than to argue with himself, saying, “St. Dominic did this, therefore I have to do it,” These thoughts also lasted a good while...” (7)*

### **Reflections During His illness**

Ignatius had to spend long months convalescing from his illness. The bones of his leg were not well set. One bone below the knee overlapped the other so that the leg was shorter. The bone protruded so much that it was an ugly sight. He was unable to stand it because he was set on a worldly career and he thought that this would deform him. Having asked the surgeons if it could be cut away, he decided to have it done. He chose to make himself a martyr to his own pride. He bore that terrible pain with his customary endurance. It seems incredible! The pain amounted to torture but he would put up with anything for the sake of his appearance and future. The world and its fashions indeed demanded a lot! God was still biding his time. Ignatius’ illness lasted many months and thus he began to read. In the library he could find only two books: a life of Christ and lives of Saints, these were indeed strange heroes for him! His enforced solitude and silence led him to reflect on his past. He was tormented by two conflicting ideas. On one hand the thought of imitating Christ and His Saints, doing deeds of valor of God; and on the other hand, military service, worldly exploits, great deeds that would feed his pride and vanity. Again and again, these thoughts came “until wearied out, he gave up thinking and occupied himself with other matters.” For a young person with a large heart, even enforced solitude can be fruitful, and so in Ignatius’ mind, the struggle went on. On the one hand pleasure and on the other hand conscience that would not keep quiet. A new vision had dawned in his heart.

**Sharing in smaller groups:** - What has touched you from St. Ignatius' life – relate to your own experience?

### **Reflection Questions**

1. Are you afraid of solitude, silence, reflection?
2. Have you heard the voice of Christ within you? Do you desire to follow Him? Relate one such experience.
3. Have you experienced a conflict between the inspiration of Christ and your own desire? How did it end? Why?
4. How do you feel about giving up your plans?

**Sharing in the Large Group:** After reflecting on the questions, share ONE thing that you were able to be in touch with

### **Evaluation and Announcements**

### **Further Reading**

#### ***Ignatian Insight***

“It follows that man is to make use of created things in so far as they help him in the attainment of his end. He must rid himself of them in so far as they prove a hindrance to him.” **EX. 23**

#### ***Meditating with the word of God***

**Mk 10**”17-27 “The rich young man “one thing you lack.”

**Mk 7:13-14** “The gate that leads to life is small and narrow”.

### **Meeting 7: SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA: 3**

*“Some thoughts left him sad others joyful. Little by little he came to recognize the difference between the spirits that were stirring, one from the devil, and the other from God. From this lesson he derived a little light, and began to think more earnestly about his past life and about the great need he had to do penance for” (8,9)*

## **Choice of Direction for His Life**

As Ignatius looked back on all the contacts and struggles of his life, he became more aware of different thoughts coming to his mind. He noticed that there were some which initially made him happy but later left him feeling sad (to attain honors, to be esteemed by the world). Others brought him joy and stayed with him for a very long time (to go to Jerusalem barefoot, to fast, and to do penance). He began to probe deeper, to analyze his thoughts weighing his good and his selfish desires. He was now ready to face reality and not deceive himself anymore. From the window of his room, Ignatius gazed at the countryside and was carried away in his imagination to places and events of his past: street duels, court cases, the desire of show and esteem, boasting and daring, the outward appearance of a perfect night in the human ideal, tall empty dreams without substance. All the time, Ignatius was hiding from God, fleeing from Him. *He was soon to discover his authentic (true) desire.* As the illness dragged, he continued to read and meditate for hours and hours. Jesus touched him and set his heart on fire, inspiring him to return to God as a “pilgrim” by new paths. Ignatius was a sincere man. His generous nature prevailed. Grace transformed him and filled him with the desire of being reconciled with god, with his own fellow men, with himself.

**Sharing in smaller groups:** - What has touched you from St. Ignatius Life? Relate to your own experience.

## **Reflection Questions**

1. What have been your feelings, thoughts when you have desired riches, fame or maybe just getting a degree?
2. Does what you desire make you feel peaceful?
3. Which of these desires come back most frequently?
4. Do you experience strong desires which lay hold of you and make you disturbed?
5. Do you find Christ in your inner “pilgrimage”, through meditation and the reflection of the events of your life?

**Sharing in the large group:** - after reflecting on the questions, share ONE thing that you were in touch with.

## **Evaluation and Announcements**

### **Further Reading**

#### ***Ignatian Insight.***

In every good choice, our intention must be simple. I must consider only the end for which I am created, that is, for the praise of God our Lord and for the salvation of my soul. Hence, whatever I choose must help me to this end for which I am created. I must not subject and fit the end to the means, but the means to the end. **(Ex. 169)**



### *Meditating with the word of God*

Mt. 1:1-11 Jesus was then led away by the spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He answered: “A man cannot live on bread alone; he lives on every Word that God utters.”

#### **Meeting 8: SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA: 4**

*“His brother took him to one room and then another, and with much feeling begged him not to throw himself away and to consider what hopes had been replaced in him by the people, and how much he could achieve and other such words, all with the pose of dissuading him from his good intentions. But he answered in such a way that without departing from the truth, for he was now very scrupulous about that, he slipped away from his brother.” (12)*

#### **Ignatius Leaves His Family**

Ignatius came from a family of twelve, he was the youngest. The change in him provoked a crisis in the family, he began to get worried. Although Ignatius was twenty-five years old and independent, he had already caused the family a good deal of anxiety. Taking his stand on the Gospel, Ignatius faced his attitude with courage. “No one is worthy of me who cares more for father and mother than for me; no one is worthy of me who does not take up their cross and walk in my footsteps. By gaining their life, a person will lose it; by losing their life for my sake, they will gain it.” (Mt. 10:37-39). He was determined to hold on, to give up everything and to realize his ideal. He wanted to follow Christ closely, to become like him through and through even in his outward behavior. He would do that first of all in solitude and then in the company of others as the Holy Spirit would lead him.

His eldest brother was a prudent man and therefore could not help but be doubtful about his brother’s plan. In his anxiety he first of all questioned Ignatius alone and then held a family council. He was afraid too of what others would say. Then there were hopes his brother had placed in him, that he would help the family. Ignatius was aware of his gifts. He knew he had succeeded in the world as a courtier, a soldier; he had been esteemed by his superiors and loved by his inferiors, respected even by his enemies. But he longed to serve God. He had the necessary qualities: health intelligence, a strong personality. He was deeply spiritually motivated and had also the strength of will to commit himself. So there was his pilgrimage by leaving his family.

**Sharing in smaller groups:** - What has touched you from St. Ignatius Life? Relate to your own life experience.

## Reflection Questions

1. Do you find it a challenge to go against what your family, your peers/friends are doing or want you to become? Or can you gently explain to them your decisions, your ideals?
2. Have you made decisions that have meant breaking away from your family, friends, peers, in order to follow Christ?
3. Have you found yourself in a situation where you have been afraid of what people may say, and even change your manner of acting or your ideals?

**Sharing in the large group:** - What is the one thing that has touched you most as you were reflecting on the questions?

## Evaluation and Announcements

### Further Reading

#### *Ignatian Insight*

In every good choice, our intention must be simple. I must consider only the end for which I am created, that is, for the praise of God our Lord and for the salvation of my soul. Hence, whatever I choose must help me to this end for which I am created. I must not subject and fit the end to the means, but the means to the end. (Ex. 169)

#### *Meditating with the word of God*

Mt. 1:1-11 Jesus was then led away by the spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He answered: "A man cannot live on bread alone; he lives on every Word that God utters."

## Meeting 9:

## FAITH

**Grace:** To grow more in appreciating faith as a relationship with Christ.

**Scripture:** Read the following passage aloud Luke 7:1-10. *The faith of others*

**Sharing:** What touches you from the gospel passage?

**Reflection:** Spend 10minutes looking back at how you practiced your faith by using your talents this week (s)

**Sharing:** What strikes you from your reflection of the past week/s?

**Evaluation:** What was helpful in the meeting; what could be improved?

### **Announcements and Closing Prayer**

**Further Reading:** *More scriptures on faith*

Ephesians 3:17, Col 3:10, 2Cor. 5:2, 1Cor. 6:15, 1Cor, 2:16, Ephesians 3:12, Col. 3:1

**Hebrews 11:1** – “Faith is the foundation of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen.”

**Aphorism:** *Faith* is a response to God’s self-revelation and response to God’s love and commitment to us.

## **Meeting 10: THE WAY: Another Method for**

### **THE PRAYER OF LOVING AWARENESS**

#### **Review of a Stretch of the Road**

This may be used repeatedly after certain duration of time. For example, after a month or at the end of a semester

#### **Reflect on the following**

1. A road is a path which meanders through the countryside. It can be wet, dry, shady, burning-hot, lonely etc. When you think of your life as a road you are on, what are some of your thoughts and feelings?
2. Might they be feelings of departure; enthusiasm; pain and sweat; longing for home and for a refreshing shower; or homecoming; among others?
3. The call to be a Christian means: Life becomes a “Way”.
4. In the New Testament a very interesting name once appears; in **Acts 9:2** the Christians are simply called: “*Who belonged to the way.*” This designation is not accidental.

5. This is seen: -
  - ***In Abraham:*** the temptation in Egypt (Genesis 12)
  - ***In Israel:*** The way through the desert, again, the return to Egypt as a temptation: “As we sat by our flesh pots”.
  - ***In Jesus:*** Himself and His invitation: “follow me”.
  - ***In the \Church:*** Church as the wondering people of God
  - ***The painful side:*** Old wines tastes better than new wine
  - ***And yet:*** Yahweh is a God who travels along, who leads the way and who follows after |(as a pillar of fire, as a cloud)
6. “Way” is a theological concept in the Old and New testaments. Hence, we realize that the movements in our lives, are phases of the “way”,
7. The events, accidents, details, even the misunderstood details of our lives, are no small episodes disconnected from the whole, and therefore misunderstood. But phases of a “Way”.
8. Things and events simply belong together, even if the interconnectedness of details and events cannot be readily seen. God can work in ways that only become clear over time.

### **Exercise:**

Draw a part of your life as “Way” you have travelled – try to look at life simply under the presupposition that it is a “way”. Learn to read life as a “Way” or a journey. *What is your road like? What road are you on?* Mark the situations which had a special impact on you. Refer to your dairy if you have to. *What do you experience: joy, bitterness, grief?*

**Sharing:** What have you experienced on your “Way”? Share as far as you want to.

**Evaluations:** What was helpful? What could have been done better?

### **Announcements**