

# Growing into Christian Community: Stages of Group Development

## *Links and Resources*

### Scripture

(Passages cited in the text are from *New Revised Standard Version Bible, Catholic Edition*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993.)

Psalms 133	A Vision of a Blessed Community
Mark 10:43–45	Servant Leadership
John 10:1–13	Jesus the Good Shepherd
John 15:1–10, 12–13	Jesus' Call to Love One Another
John 17:20–23	Jesus' Prayer for Unity
Romans 12:3–18	New Life in Christ
1 Corinthians 12	Many Members in One Body
Ephesians 1:15–23	Paul's Prayer for Unity in the Body of Christ
Ephesians 4:1–16	Unity and Diversity
Philippians 1:27–2:18	Paul's Instructions for Community Relations

### Conciliar Documents

*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et spes)*, Part One, Chapter IV.

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_cons\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html)

Chapter IV is devoted to the "Role of the Church in the Modern World."

*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen gentium)*, Chapter 1–2, 4.

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html)

These chapters unpack the role of the Church and specifically deal with the role of the laity in the Church.

*Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (Apostolicam actuositatem)*.

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19651118\\_apostolicam-actuositatem\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html)

The entire document gives a solid overview of the role of the laity in the mission of the Church.

### Papal Documents

*The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People (Christifideles laici)* (December 30, 1988), John Paul II.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_30121988\\_christifideles-laici\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici_en.html)

Presents an awareness of the baptismal call to ministry that makes the Church both sign and instrument of God's presence. We are the Body of Christ, called to sanctify the world from within.

*The Church in America (Ecclesia in America)* (January 1999), apostolic exhortation by John Paul II.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_22011999\\_ecclesia-in-america\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_22011999_ecclesia-in-america_en.html)

This document is addressed to the Church in North, Central, and South America. Section 41 speaks directly to the renewal of parishes and the importance of small communities.

## **Catechism of the Catholic Church**

<http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p123a9p4.htm>

#898–909      The vocation of lay people.

## **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Documents**

*Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium* (November 1995). United States Catholic Conference, Inc.

[www.usccb.org/laity/calleden.htm](http://www.usccb.org/laity/calleden.htm)

An anniversary booklet with a clear vision of the importance of lay ministry in its many forms.

## ***Small Christian Communities: A Vision of Hope for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

Chapter 7, *Small Christian Communities*, discusses the commitment of small Christian community members and the essential elements of community.

Chapter 10, *Ministry of Small Community Leadership*, focuses on the role of small community leaders and the training recommended for the ministry of small community leadership.

Chapter 14, *Concrete Approaches to Prayer*, provides practical assistance to small communities regarding the importance of prayer within the community.

Chapter 15, *Concrete Approaches to Mission*, offers help to small communities seeking to understand their role in the mission of the Church.

## **Books**

Baranowski, Arthur R. *Creating Small Faith Communities: A Plan for Restructuring the Parish and Renewing Parish Life*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1988. Details one vision of how parishes can experience spiritual and corporate renewal by being re-structured into small Christian communities.

Brown, Rupert. *Group Processes: Dynamics Within and Between Groups*. New York: Blackwell Publishers, 2000. People's lives are inescapably bound up with the groups to which they belong at home, at work, and at play. A comprehensive and illustrated study of behavior in group settings.

Conger, Jay A. *Spirit at Work: Discovering the Spirituality in Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994. A readable presentation on how spirituality influences the development of leadership.

- Elias, John L. *Psychology and Religious Education*. Melbourne, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 1990. A succinct summary of modern psychological theories and some of their implications for religious education/catechesis in dioceses, church organizations, and training programs for various ministries.
- Erikson, Erik. *Childhood and Society*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1993. The role of psychology in the world, and the role of childhood in our social worlds. It's a combination of the clinical, the social, and the developmental psychology that underpins all of small group developmental theory, and thus all of our efforts at building small Christian communities.
- Fleischer, Barbara J. *Facilitating for Growth: A Guide for Scripture Study Groups and Small Christian Communities*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993. Makes the insights of the social psychology of small faith-oriented groups accessible to lay people.
- Forsyth, Donelson R. *Group Dynamics*. New York: Blackwell Publishers, 2000. Most comprehensive treatment of small groups available. Uses real-life case studies to analyze group behavior and dynamics.
- Fowler, James W. *Stages of Faith*. San Francisco: Harper, 1995. A comprehensive study of the adult faith formation process. Fowler presents a developmental process, which can assist small communities in understanding the spiritual growth process, and how it plays into the growth and development of a community.
- Greenleaf, Robert K. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983. A spiritual journey that points out a leader's authentic sources of legitimate power during competitive stages.
- Johnson, David W., and Frank P. Johnson. *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1999. Resource from the sciences of sociology and psychology to help one develop deeper understanding of small groups' behavior, relationships, and organization.
- Keating, Charles, J. *Dealing With Difficult People: How You Can Come Out on Top in Personality Conflicts*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1984. Practical guide on how to cope with different types of people in the midst of relational trials.
- Keating, Charles, J. *The Leadership Book*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995. Examines theories of management and how they may be applied to church groups.
- McBride, Neal F. *How to Lead Small Groups*. Colorado Springs: NAV Press, 1992. Step-by-step guidance and practical exercises to help group leaders understand and guide the dynamic growth of small church-related groups.
- Sofield, Loughlan, ST, and Carroll Juliano, SHCJ. *Collaboration: Uniting Our Gifts in Ministry*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2000. Shows that effective small community leadership and collaboration require a collaborative spirituality and specific skills such as group leadership, dealing with conflict, and learning to confront.
- Sofield, Loughlan, ST and Carroll Juliano, SHCJ. *Collaborative Ministry: Skills and Guidelines*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1987. All baptized persons are called to ministry, and we must shift from individual to mutual endeavors if we hope to bear fruit for the Church and the world.
- Sofield, Loughlan, ST and Rosine Hammett, CSC. *Inside Christian Community*. New York: Jesuit Educational Center for Human Development, 1981. Special sections are the "Stages of Development of Community" and "Group Dynamics" for Christian communities and small groups.
- Sofield, Loughlan, ST, Carroll Juliano, SHCJ, and Rosine Hammett, CSC. *Building Community: Christian, Caring, Vital*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1998. A practical workbook that describes the

developmental stages of community and provides a model for understanding dynamics in a community.

Vandenakker, John Paul. *Small Christian Communities and the Parish*. Franklin, WI: Sheed & Ward, 1995. Examines the pastoral and theological implications of the movements toward small Christian community in North America.

## RENEW International Resources

Kleissler, Thomas A., Margo A. LeBert, and Mary C. McGuinness, *Resources for Small Christian Communities*, Revised and Updated. Plainfield, NJ: RENEW International, 1997.  
<http://www.renewintl.org/Resources/Pages/vohaddreflec.html>  
A very hands-on manual that provides practical tools and insights for the ongoing growth and development of small Christian communities.

*RENEW 2000 & Beyond/Leadership Book*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997.  
A practical guide for the development of leaders within small Christian communities. Offers insights into group dynamics and the tasks of the leader as a group grows into a community. (To order: tel. 1-800-218-1903; fax: (201) 825-8345; e-mail: [paulistp@pipeline.com](mailto:paulistp@pipeline.com).)

## Web Site Links

[www.buenavista.org/essentials.htm](http://www.buenavista.org/essentials.htm)

A four-booklet series on community, scripture-based witness, justice and outreach, and prayer and ritual. Each booklet contains six sessions that include prayer, scripture, reflection, and faith sharing.

[www.jesuit.ie/prayer](http://www.jesuit.ie/prayer)

Daily Prayer and online spiritual direction, produced by the Irish Jesuits— creates sacred space in each day by offering ten minutes of prayer with the help of onscreen guidance and specially chosen Scripture. Personal spiritual growth is the foundation for growth in small groups.

<http://www.nd.edu/~icl/study.html>

Institute for Church Life at Notre Dame University which published a landmark study on parish life.

[www.renewintl.org](http://www.renewintl.org)

Web site of RENEW International; see particularly [www.renewintl.org/FaithSharing/index.htm](http://www.renewintl.org/FaithSharing/index.htm) which contains materials for faith sharing and suggested action, in small Christian communities.