



Mary, Woman of Faith: Renewing Our Awareness

What the Small Communities Need to Know

1. Small communities can set a positive tenor in the parish for any discussion about Mary by being as inclusive and nonthreatening as possible. The intent is not to take away—or change—people’s devotion to Mary, but to present Mary in her right relationship to Christ, to the Church, to our lives. Mary is first and foremost a disciple of Jesus Christ and a companion for our journey in faith.
2. Small community members should be encouraged to listen and take notice that Mary is commemorated in every liturgy and specially honored throughout the liturgical year. What does this teach us about how the Church views Mary?
3. The small communities can be encouraged to look at the role of Mary in the wider community and ponder how her life, as a model for ours, can lead to more compassionate action.
4. Small communities, sensitive to the gifts within their own group, may want to look at other groups in the parish and develop a Marian outreach to them. For example, a small Christian community with several members already devoted to praying the rosary might volunteer for the parish school or religious education program to teach a session on praying the rosary. Or they might wish to visit senior citizens and pray with them.
5. Small communities interested in deepening their own relationship with Mary might want to use *At Prayer with Mary* from the RENEW IMPACT Series (Ordering information: phone: 1-888-433-3221; fax: 1-908-769-5660; Web site; <http://www.renewintl.org/Resources/Pages/atprayerimp.html> e-mail: Resources@renewintl.org). Marian devotional practices, particularly the rosary, are included in the chapter, “Concrete Approaches to Prayer,” in the book, *Small Christian Communities: A Vision of Hope for the 21st Century*.¹
6. Another way to learn more about prayer and Mary, with accompanying references to appropriate Church documents, is to use the downloadable Day of Reflection at www.ParishLife.com. It provides materials for a three-hour retreat experience on the topic, “Mary, Woman of Faith: Renewing Our Awareness.”

¹ Thomas A. Kleissler, Margo A. LeBert, Mary C. McGuinness, *Small Christian Communities: A Vision of Hope for the 21st Century* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), p. 243–244.