

FACILITATING A DIVORCE SUPPORT GROUP





- The Participant Kit: (Each participant must have one)
 - Admittance to the 13-week parish facilitated group
 - Recovering from Divorce Participant Guide
 - Divorced. Catholic. Now What? Book
 - Companion Workbook
 - Personal Journal
 - Prayers for Divorced Catholics Book
 - Daily Inspirations for Divorced Catholics Book
 - Subscription to the Daily Inspirations via email
 - Rosary





- Group Session:
 - 5 minutes: Opening Prayers
 - 5 minutes: Session Overview
 - 10-15 minutes: Watch Voices of Hope DVD Segment
 - 30-35 minutes: Group Discussion
 - 5 minutes: Wrap-up/Closing Prayer





• This method is a simple and straightforward way of consistently learning and living the Catholic faith — the key to healing from divorce.





• P - Pray: As you might expect, prayer is vital to your relationship with Christ and living your faith.





• R - Reflect: You can't live what you don't know. Reflect is learning your faith by reading the program materials, Scripture, and the Catechism.





• A - Act: As St. James said, "Faith without works is dead." (James 2:26) The Act component is about putting into action what you have learned.





• Y - You: Like any successful athlete knows, you must take care of your body. The You component is focused on doing the important things to reduce stress and restore peace.





• Review pages 51-54 for detailed explanation





- How to Use the P-R-A-Y Method:
 - Session Overviews start on page 75.
 - Breaks each session down into the P-R-A-Y components.
 - Encourage each participant to complete the session prior to the meeting.





- Setting Up the Meeting Place
 - Choose a comfortable meeting place.
 - Make it a sacred space by bringing:
 - a crucifix
 - statue of the Blessed Mother
 - a candle
 - a Bible
 - Bring kleenex
 - Provide soft drinks, coffee and snacks, if possible





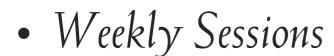
• Review the session as outlined in the Recovering from Divorce Sessions starting on page 73 of the Facilitator Guide prior to the session.





- The First Session
 - Share with the group your personal experience with divorce.
 - Ask each participant to share what they are comfortable sharing about their divorce.
 - Minimum:
 - Name
 - How many children, if any.
 - Separated? Divorced? How long?
 - What parish they attend
 - Expect tears





- Follow the format as outlined in the Recovering from Divorce Sessions in Facilitator Guide for each week.
- At the end of each session, be sure to announce the topic of the next week's session and encourage the group to prepare





- Bonding Within the Group
 - The openness and trust in the group promotes healing
 - Expect this bonding to overflow outside the group.
 - Christ works in this community.





- Celebrate with a Closing Mass
 - Have a Mass celebrated just for the group, if possible.
 - If you have to celebrate at a regularly scheduled Mass, ask the celebrate to recognize your group during the Prayers of the Faithful.
 - Have a social afterward to celebrate the group's success and healing.





- Identify and train facilitator.
- Host One Hour Recovering from Divorce Workshop 4-6 Weeks Before Starting Group.
 - Give 10 Keys to Recovering from Divorce presentation with video
 - Describe 13-Week divorce support program
 - Invite them to sign-up, pay fee, receive Participant Kit





- Run announcement in bulletin four consecutive weeks prior to start of group.
- Be sure to include phone number and email address of facilitator.
- Post posters around parish prior to bulletin announcement.





- Have refreshments and snacks
- Create a reverent environment (statues, crucifix, candles, tablecloth)
- Start on time and end promptly.
- 90 minute sessions are ideal.





- First (Introductory) Meeting:
 - Overview of program including guidelines
 - Distribution of materials
 - Introduction by facilitator and background
 - Introductions by participants
 - Have kleenex available!
 - Assign first session materials to review





- Tips for increasing participation:
 - Get surrounding parishes to post in their bulletin.
 - Post in diocesan newspaper.
 - Run ads on Facebook to reach those that have stopped attending Mass.
 - Offer childcare
 - Host on Wednesday evenings





- Most important: Has a zeal for souls.
- Cares about people who are experiencing divorce.
- Has a very hopeful attitude for how God is going to work in their life.





- Some Key Characteristics:
 - Charity
 - Empathy
 - Hopefulness
 - Knowledge of the Faith
 - A strong Catholic faith life





- Optimal Candidate:
 - Been divorced 3 or more years (time to heal)
 - Been through the annulment process
 - Strong knowledge of the Catholic faith
 - A strong Catholic faith life (not cafeteria)
 - A hopeful perspective (not bitter)





- Key Characteristic for a Group Leader who has NOT been divorced:
 - Strong Catholic faith life
 - Excellent understanding of Church's teaching on divorce.
 - Precise understanding of the annulment process.
 - Great compassion and zeal for souls



WHAT MAKES A GOOD PARTICIPANT?



• Ready to begin dealing with the issues regarding their divorce.

• Not too "raw" — outside the first 90 days.



WHO IS NOT A GOOD PARTICIPANT?



- Too "raw" in first 90 days
- Expresses intensity of emotion that makes other uncomfortable, is distracting, showing signs of mental instability. (meltdowns, tirades, distraught)

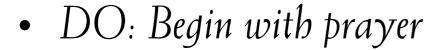


Do's and Don'ts for Starting a Group

- DO: Accept up to 15 people (8-12 ideal)
- DON'T: Lead a co-ed group
 - Participants are more comfortable in same gender groups
 - Removes temptation for romance (very vulnerable)
 - TIP: All together for teaching, separate for discussion.



Do's and Don'ts for Starting a Group



- Opening prayer to the Holy Spirit
- Decade of the Rosary
- DO: Encourage sharing
- DON'T: Allow monopolizers



Do's and Don'ts for Starting a Group



- DON'T: Allow new participants after third week.
- DO: Respect confidentiality
- DON'T: Allow participants to critique or advise other participants
- DO: Be ready with questions to start dialogue
- DON'T: Allow spouse-bashing



ENCOURAGE CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT

- Most participants will be filled with new found zeal for their faith.
- Encourage them to get involved in their parish.
- Encourage them to continue to maintain their newly formed faith-based friendships.



CONSIDER STARTING A SUSTAINING MINISTRY

- Offer spiritual, educational and social activities at least once month.
- Not for forming dating relationships.
- Provides a "safe" place to be social and maintain faith-based friendships.