

PART THREE  
**SACRAMENTS**

*Signs that Call Us Forth*

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“I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since ‘no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord.’ The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step toward Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: ‘Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you.

I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more  
into your redeeming embrace.”

(Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, #3)

**DO NOT REPRODUCE**

## SENT TO SERVE LEADER NOTES

### PART 3: SACRAMENTS

#### Turn Your Meeting Room into a Sacred Space

Be assured that the atmosphere and feeling that your group will have starts before they even walk in the door. It is important you spend some time setting up the environment to ensure that participants feel welcome and are comfortable and that it focuses everyone on the sacred sharing that is about to take place.

We recommend that you start by putting the chairs in a circle or arranging the furniture in the room so that everyone can see each other easily. The circle itself creates a sense of connection immediately upon entering it. Be sure to check the technology that you are using to view the videos and songs before the meeting starts to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Next set up a coffee table or other small table in the center of your circle. Place a Bible opened to the particular Scripture that goes with each session and a lit candle on the table. Depending on your group and the availability of these items, you may want to place a palm, a bowl of holy water, or a cross on the table as well. You may also include items that are significant to your group or parish. On a side table, make sure that you have food and drink available to provide additional hospitality to your group.

Each “SLN #” Sacraments (Leader Note) corresponds to the sections in the booklet.

#### Strategies for Facilitating Your Group

##### SLN 1 The Name Game

- » Starting with the Group Leader, ask each person to say their name.
- » After a person has said their name, ask the group to repeat it in unison. (The repetition of the name reinforces it in the participants’ memories.)

- » After going around the circle once with names, add this element of challenge: Pick a person to start by saying their name.
- » Next go to the person seated next to them and ask them to say the name they just heard and then their own name.
- » The following person then has to say the previous two names before saying their own. Follow this pattern until the last person says all the names in the circle.
- » If at any point you see fear or reluctance on the part of someone in the circle, offer them the opportunity to “start over.” This means they only have to say their own name. The person seated next to them then starts the pattern over starting with the name of the person next to them only.

##### SLN 2 Opening Activities

These experiential activities are optional, but we highly encourage you to use them with your group for these reasons:

1. These activities are designed to get the participants thinking about the topic for that week’s session. For example, in Session 3, we are focusing on those who mourn, and doing the Balloons activity will provide an engaging introduction and highlight for participants after they go home for the week.
2. While some of the activities may seem a bit simple, they are designed to invite the group to laughter and playful discussion. During the large group discussion and the small group discipling portions of the session, participants will share from the heart. The experiential activities provide the counterbalance and sense of fun that coupled with the deeper sharing creates a truly connected community within your group.

**SACRAMENTS****SLN 2A Session 1: “M&Ms”**

For this session, you will need a large bag of M&Ms poured into a bowl. Each person takes an M&M out of the bowl. Ask each person to share with the group their name and their answer to the question corresponding to the color of their M&M:

- » Red: What is your favorite song? Why?
- » Green: How many people are in your family of origin? Who are your siblings?
- » Brown: Where would you like to travel and why?
- » Orange: What are you proud of about yourself?
- » Blue: Whom do you admire most? Why?
- » Yellow: What is something small that makes you happy?

After everyone has shared, pass the bowl around again and invite participants to enjoy the M&Ms.

**SLN 2B Session 2: “Miracle Meal”**

For this session, you will need a piece of pita bread in a basket.

- » Start by saying to the group, “Everyone feels inadequate in their lives at one point or another. We don’t think we’re good enough. We sometimes doubt that God will provide what we need. Let’s listen to what the Gospel says about this.”
- » Read the Scripture for this session, Matthew 14:14-21.
- » After brief reflection, explain to the group that, as we heard in the Gospel of Matthew, we are going to share a meal together.
- » Tear the pita bread in half and pass each half to the people on either side of you.
- » In turn, ask participants to tear off a piece and pass the remaining to the person next to them.
- » Collect the leftovers in the basket. Call attention to the group that even with one piece of pita bread, there was still more than enough for all, even leftovers!

**SLN 2C Session 3: “Unforgiveness & Being Bound”**

For this session, you will need ribbons that are at least 24 inches long for each participant.

- » Hand out a ribbon to each participant.
- » Tell the participants, “Think of a time in your life when you have been reluctant to forgive. On a scale of 1 to 10, what was your level of reluctance? (1-5 ‘I forgave easily.’ 6-10= ‘I had great difficulty forgiving.’)”
- » Instruct the participants that if their number was between 1-5 to wrap the ribbon around their wrists with their hands bound together and hold it tight. If their number was between 6-10, have them wrap the ribbon around their hands bound together and also wrap it around one of their legs and hold it tight. Say, “Imagine how difficult it would be if you were asked to move to the other side of the room.” (If you like a challenge, try it!).
- » Ask participants to share their number ranking and the emotional toll the situation took.
- » After everyone has shared, invite the participants to free themselves and keep the ribbon in remembrance.

**SLN 2D Session 4: “Balloons”**

For this session, you will need a balloon for each person in the group.

- » Hand out a balloon to each participant.
- » Ask the group to take a few minutes to silently think of a loss they have experienced.
- » Explain that the balloon can represent the loss each person was asked to think of a few moments ago.
- » Ask everyone to blow up the balloon to show how big that loss was to them. (If a participant cannot blow up a balloon, seek the help of another.)
- » Ask participants to look around the circle and take notice of the different sizes of balloons.
- » Point out that while there are many different sizes, one common theme is that everyone experiences loss. The experience of loss and suffering is an essential part of being human.

**SLN 2E Session 5: “Becoming One”**

- » At the end of the previous session, participants were invited to bring a picture of a married couple (either of themselves or another couple they love).
- » Tell the group, “This activity gets us thinking about the marriage vocation of becoming one.”
- » Go around the circle and invite participants to share who the couple is, when they got married, and something unique about their relationship.

**SN 2F Session 6: “Ball of Yarn”**

For this session, you will need a ball of yarn. The objective is to help participants to see that we are all connected and that Holy Orders designates certain people to serve the community in a particular way.

- » Start by naming some type of suffering or need in the world.
- » After naming this, pass the ball of yarn across the circle to another person, while still holding onto the end.
- » From there, each person names a suffering in the world and holding onto their piece of yarn passes the ball of yarn to another person across the circle.
- » This will create a visual image of a web with each person still holding onto their own strand of yarn as it gets passed around the circle several times signifying the suffering in the world.
- » At the end of this activity, make the point: “There is a lot of suffering in the world, but we are all connected in our call to serve.”
- » Pile the yarn on the sacred table as a sign of the suffering of world.

**SLN 3 Videos**

You will need a media device/player for these sessions. All videos needed for these sessions are available in the “Parish Pack” that includes the “NOOMA” DVDs. The videos may be available from other sources online, but this cannot be guaranteed and there may be ads.

**SLN 4 Small Group Discipling—Cluster Sharing**

Before giving any instructions, ask participants to form groups of two or three, and, if possible, to move their chairs so that they are sitting in smaller circles “knee to knee.” If you are in a space where moving chairs is not feasible, simply instruct the group to turn to their partners. The goal of this is that each group focuses only on each other and not on others around them. Explain that they will be sharing with each other their own stories. Give the group verbal cues for timing. For example, say, “I am going to give you 10 minutes to talk. Each person should be given three minutes to share his or her story. I will help you with this timing. You only need to focus on sharing and listening to each other’s stories.” After three and six minutes, announce, “You should be finishing up with the first person and moving on to the second (third) person’s sharing.” This process is to help ensure that all participants get a chance to speak and be heard.

**SLN 5 Small Group Discipling—Reporting Out**

When each group has finished sharing, call the participants back to the large group. Ask them to move their chairs back into the large circle as a way of refocusing the group on the whole. Ask groups to share some insight that came from listening to each other’s stories. Not all groups will need to share. Ask one person to write the insights on a large piece of newsprint or a whiteboard. If these are not available, it works just to repeat what each group said to emphasize each point. Help the group to identify any patterns, common experiences, or insights that emerge from this sharing.

**SLN 6 Songs**

Before the session, search for the song title and artist (listed at the end of the session) on YouTube, or your preferred streaming platform, and have it ready to play for the group.

**SLN 7 Prayer at the end of Session 6: Washing of Hands**

- » For this final prayer, you will need to prepare a bowl or basin, a pitcher of water, and a large towel.
- » Tell the group, “As our final prayer let us enact Jesus’ *Mandatum* to wash each other’s feet by washing each other’s hands as a response to the call to love and serve one another. After your hands are washed and dried by the person next to you in the circle, you will receive the cross, and you are invited to venerate it with a kiss or embrace and to speak your prayers of gratitude or petition aloud. We will wash each other’s hands in this fashion to emphasize our willingness to serve one another and our connection with God.”

**Also at the end of Session 6:**

At the end session 6, plan ahead to provide a few more delectable treats to celebrate the end of the three parts of our conversion journey. We are sent to serve in the goodness of the Lord!