

Reconnect Groups

Rebuilding community after pandemic



A LEADER'S GUIDE

Thank you so much for your interest in hosting your very own four-week Reconnect Group! We hope it will be an experience that will bring much life-giving joy for you and your group members.

What is a Reconnect Group?

Reconnect Groups are brief four-week groups held both digitally and in-person which aim to provide an opportunity to regather as a community, become reacquainted with others, and share one's personal experience living through a once-in-a-century pandemic.

What Do I Need to Host a Group?

Digital Groups

1. A video conferencing platform
2. A reliable internet connection
3. Headphones (if in a loud environment)
4. Downloads of the session outlines

In-Person Groups

1. A meeting location (public or private)
2. Any desired hospitality (snacks, beverages, etc.)
3. A laptop or tablet if showing session videos
4. Printed copies of the session outlines

How Do I Host a Group?

We have done everything we could to make hosting a Reconnect Group as simple of a process as possible. Simply follow the three steps of **PRAY, PREPARE, PROCEED**.

PRAY

As the host of a Reconnect Group, you are enabling God to reach into the lives of those whom you will be hosting. You are in no way, shape, or form, responsible for changing anyone's life. Though we "plant and water", it is God who "causes the growth." Therefore spend some time before launching your Group, asking the Holy Spirit to guide the right people to your group and to be present during your gatherings.

PREPARE

The key to a smooth and successful gathering, is to be prepared. Read over the session outline, preview the personal story or video, and jot down your own personal responses to the provided discussion questions. This will allow you to have a feel for the gathering even before it takes place. On the day of your gathering be sure to arrive at your digital or in-person meeting place in advance to address any technical or environmental issues.

PROCEED

The final step is to host. Follow the prompts listed on the session outline. Quick tips on leading small groups: 1. Don't do it alone 2. Just be you 3. Be prepared ahead of time 4. Be patient when asking questions 4. Break into smaller groups if necessary 5. Let others lead the discussion questions on occasion 6. Enjoy the journey 7. You are not alone; God is with you!

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SESSION ONE: LOSS & ENCOURAGEMENT

II Corinthians 1:3-4 *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God."*

WELCOME | PRAYER | INTROS - (3-4 min)

Hello everyone and welcome! I am so glad that you could join us for our first Reconnect Group gathering. It is my hope that during this time together, that we will have the opportunity to relax, get to know each other on a more personal level, and share in some great discussion.

That being said, I would like to take a moment to share some expectations for this group.

1. What is shared here, stays here (*unless there is a risk of harm to self or others*).
2. Everyone is invited to participate, but no one is obligated.
3. We are respectful to the shared thoughts, insights, and reflections of others.
4. We seek to give everyone their fair share of time to contribute to the group.

Let us open this session in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to be present:

"Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen."

ICEBREAKER QUESTION - (10 min)

[Insert icebreaker question here]

SHORT REFLECTION OR VIDEO - (8 min)

Purpose of Session: Listen to how participants experienced loss. Show empathy. Reflection piece will be provided as a supplement to outline.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - (35 min)

1. What was it like for you watching the pandemic rapidly spreading across the globe?
2. What was the most difficult disruption or loss that the pandemic had in your life? Why?
3. How did you notice the pandemic affecting your physical, mental, or emotional well-being?
4. How were you encouraged by God and how do you feel this changes you or gives you new insights, affects your relationships with God and others or your journey as a disciple?

CLOSING & PRAYER - (5 min)

Thank you all so much for sharing your thoughts and insights with the group today! It was such a joy to spend this time together with you all. As we bring this gathering to a close, I would like to ask if there are any intentions that anyone would like to bring to prayer? If so, please feel free to speak them aloud now. If you would prefer to keep them to yourself, that is okay too.

(After a time of intention sharing, lead the following prayer below)

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to gather and reconnect as a parish community. For all those intentions shared, and those which remain in the silence of our hearts, we offer them to you and to your merciful compassion, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

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SESSION TWO: NEW BEGINNINGS

II Corinthians 5:17 *“So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.”*

WELCOME | PRAYER - (3 min)

Hello everyone and welcome! I am so glad that you could join us for our second Reconnect Group gathering. I would like to take a moment to remind us of our group expectations:

1. What is shared here, stays here (*unless there is a risk of harm to self or others*).
2. Everyone is invited to participate, but no one is obligated.
3. We are respectful to the shared thoughts, insights, and reflections of others.
4. We seek to give everyone their fair share of time to contribute to the group.

Let us open this session in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to be present:

“Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.”

ICEBREAKER QUESTION - (10 min)

[Insert icebreaker question here]

SHORT REFLECTION OR VIDEO - (8 min)

Purpose of Session: Discussing how lockdown and mitigation during pandemic brought about positive change. Reflection piece will be provided as a supplement to outline.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - (35 min)

1. How did the pandemic transform what things you value or prioritize in your daily life?
2. What was the most surprising thing you learned about yourself or others during quarantine?
3. Did you see God in this pandemic? His blessings? Or did you struggle to see God?
4. Did your relationship with God change? If so, how?

CLOSING & PRAYER - (5 min)

Thank you all so much for sharing your thoughts and insights with the group today! It was such a joy to spend this time together with you all. As we bring this gathering to a close, I would like to ask if there are any intentions that anyone would like to bring to prayer? If so, please feel free to speak them aloud now. If you would prefer to keep them to yourself, that is okay too.

(After a time of intention sharing, lead the following prayer below)

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SESSION THREE: ACCOMPANIED BY OTHERS

Ecccl 4:9-10 "Two are better than one: they get a good wage for their labor. If the one falls, the other will lift up his companion."

WELCOME | PRAYER - (2 min)

Hello everyone and welcome! I am so glad that you could join us for our third Reconnect Group gathering. I would like to take a moment to remind us of our group expectations:

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2. Everyone is invited to participate, but no one is obligated.
3. We are respectful to the shared thoughts, insights, and reflections of others.
4. We seek to give everyone their fair share of time to contribute to the group.

Let us open this session in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to be present:

"Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen."

ICEBREAKER QUESTION - (10 min)

[Insert icebreaker question here]

SHORT REFLECTION OR VIDEO - (8 min)

Purpose of Session: Feeling helped and equipped with each new threshold or challenge of life. Reflection piece will be provided as a supplement to outline.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - (35 min)

1. Where do you go for the answers? Who do you trust most and why?
2. Did you grow up in a family or do you live in a household where those who are closest to you check in with one another? Family dinner or other daily shared experiences?
3. Was there any safe space to be vulnerable enough to share your accomplishments and failures? If so, what was it?
4. With any new threshold in your life (i.e. newly engaged, married, parent, divorced, widowed, etc.) who is that trusted person that helps you? How has faith in God helped you in such times?

CLOSING & PRAYER - (5 min)

Thank you all so much for sharing your thoughts and insights with the group today! It was such a joy to spend this time together with you all. As we bring this gathering to a close, I would like to ask if there are any intentions that anyone would like to bring to prayer? If so, please feel free to speak them aloud now. If you would prefer to keep them to yourself, that is okay too.

(After a time of intention sharing, lead the following prayer below)

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to gather and reconnect as a parish community. For all those intentions shared, and those which remain in the silence of our hearts, we offer them to you and to your merciful compassion, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

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SESSION FOUR: ACCOMPANIED BY JESUS

Jeremiah 29:11-13 *"For I know well the plans I have in mind for you," says the LORD, "plans for your welfare, not for woe! plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, when you go to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me"*

WELCOME | PRAYER - (2 min)

Hello everyone and welcome! I am so glad that you could join us for our fourth Reconnect Group gathering. I would like to take a moment to remind us of our group expectations:

1. What is shared here, stays here (*unless there is a risk of harm to self or others*).
2. Everyone is invited to participate, but no one is obligated.
3. We are respectful to the shared thoughts, insights, and reflections of others.
4. We seek to give everyone their fair share of time to contribute to the group.

Let us open this session in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to be present:

"Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen."

ICEBREAKER QUESTION - (10 min)

[Insert icebreaker question here]

SHORT REFLECTION OR VIDEO - (8 min)

Purpose of Session: Explore ways how faith in Jesus can be relevant in your life going forward. Reflection piece will be provided as a supplement to outline.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - (35 min)

1. Has living through this pandemic caused you to lean more heavily on God, or less? Why?
2. Why have you chosen to continue or strengthen your friendship with Jesus?
3. How would you describe your current friendship with Jesus? Where do you encounter him in life?
4. What would a deeper friendship with Jesus look like for you and your life?

CLOSING & PRAYER - (5 min)

Thank you all so much for sharing your thoughts and insights with the group today! It was such a joy to spend this time together with you all. As we bring this gathering to a close, I would like to ask if there are any intentions that anyone would like to bring to prayer? If so, please feel free to speak them aloud now. If you would prefer to keep them to yourself, that is okay too.

(After a time of intention sharing, lead the following prayer below)

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to gather and reconnect as a parish community. For all those intentions shared, and those which remain in the silence of our hearts, we offer them to you and to your merciful compassion, though Christ Our Lord. Amen.
