

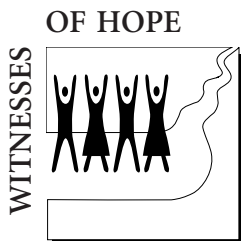
◆ Agents of Hope ◆

Manual 2

Leaven in the World: Growing in Community Life

Leaven in the World Editorial Team

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Introduction



Leaven in the World: Growing in Community Life is the second manual in the Agents of Hope series. It is designed for small communities of single young adults aged eighteen and over who have a growing faith commitment and at least two years of experience as a community. It is also suitable for groups of Hispanic *jóvenes* and for other pastoral settings in which a strong community life has been established. The manual's goal is to encourage small-community members to reflect on their life as a Christian community and to further their community's maturation process, according to the Prophets of Hope model.

Leaven in the World is especially suitable for communities formed through use of the manual *Dawn on the Horizon*, and whose members have a good understanding of their vocation and mission in the spirit of the books *In Covenant with God* and *Followers of Jesus*, from the Builders of Hope series. The community will need to determine the most appropriate time to enter this phase of reflection on their community life, accomplished through a discernment process, preferably under the guidance of their adviser. To visualize this manual's role in the Prophets of Hope model, see appendix 1, "Prophets of Hope Process," pages 207–209, and appendix 2, "Witnesses of Hope Collection," pages 210–211.

A profound communitarian experience goes hand in hand with the ideal of forging a civilization of love, justice, peace, truth, and liberty. Small communities of young adults are cells of hope in the creation of this civilization of love. The reflections and activities in this manual encourage a dialog that is deep, open, and intimate

among community members, a dialog that helps them mature as individuals and as a community of faith.

The experiences of the first Christian communities, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and in some of the Epistles (letters written by the Apostles to persons or communities), serve as a basis for the formation process used in this manual.

The objectives of this process are as follows:

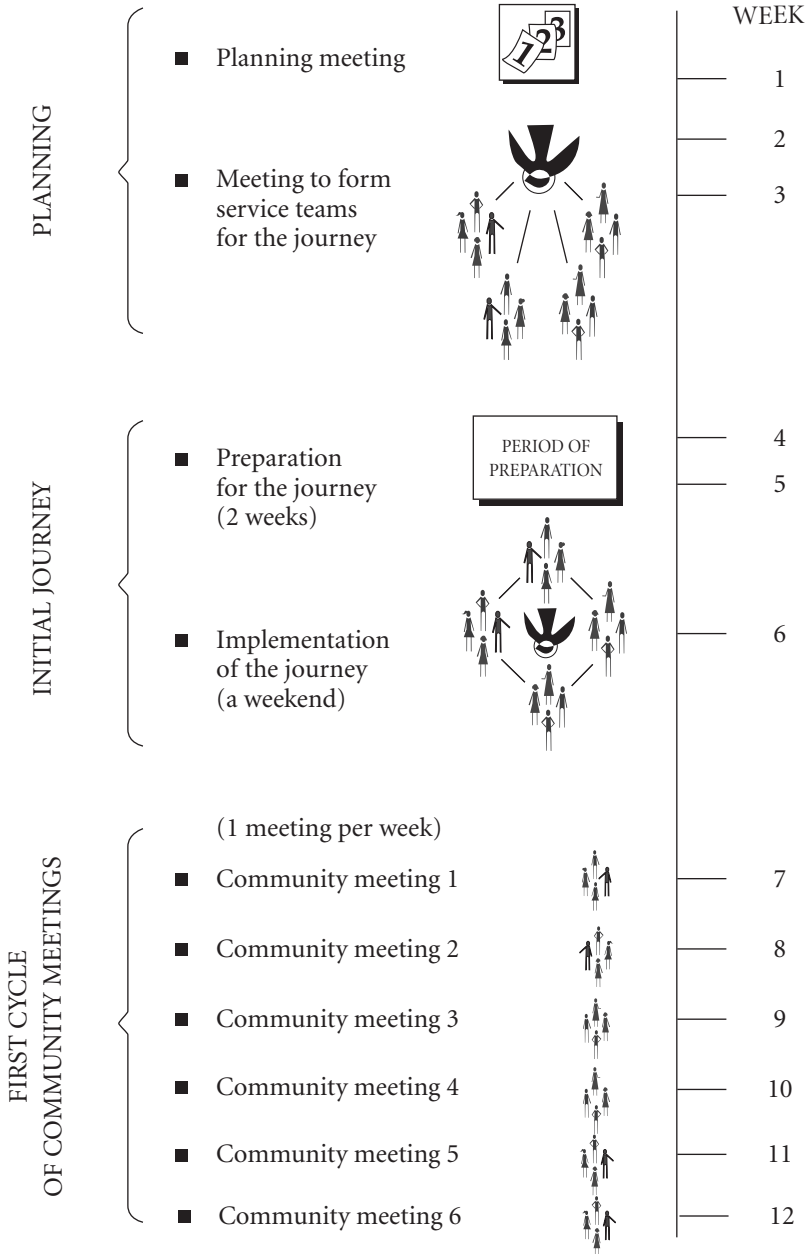
- to foster a sound and rewarding small-community experience that helps the community develop and grow
- to help community members integrate what they live and learn in their small communities into their daily lives by challenging them to assume their mission as leaven in the world
- to prepare community members to create new communities and work with them in their initial stages of formation

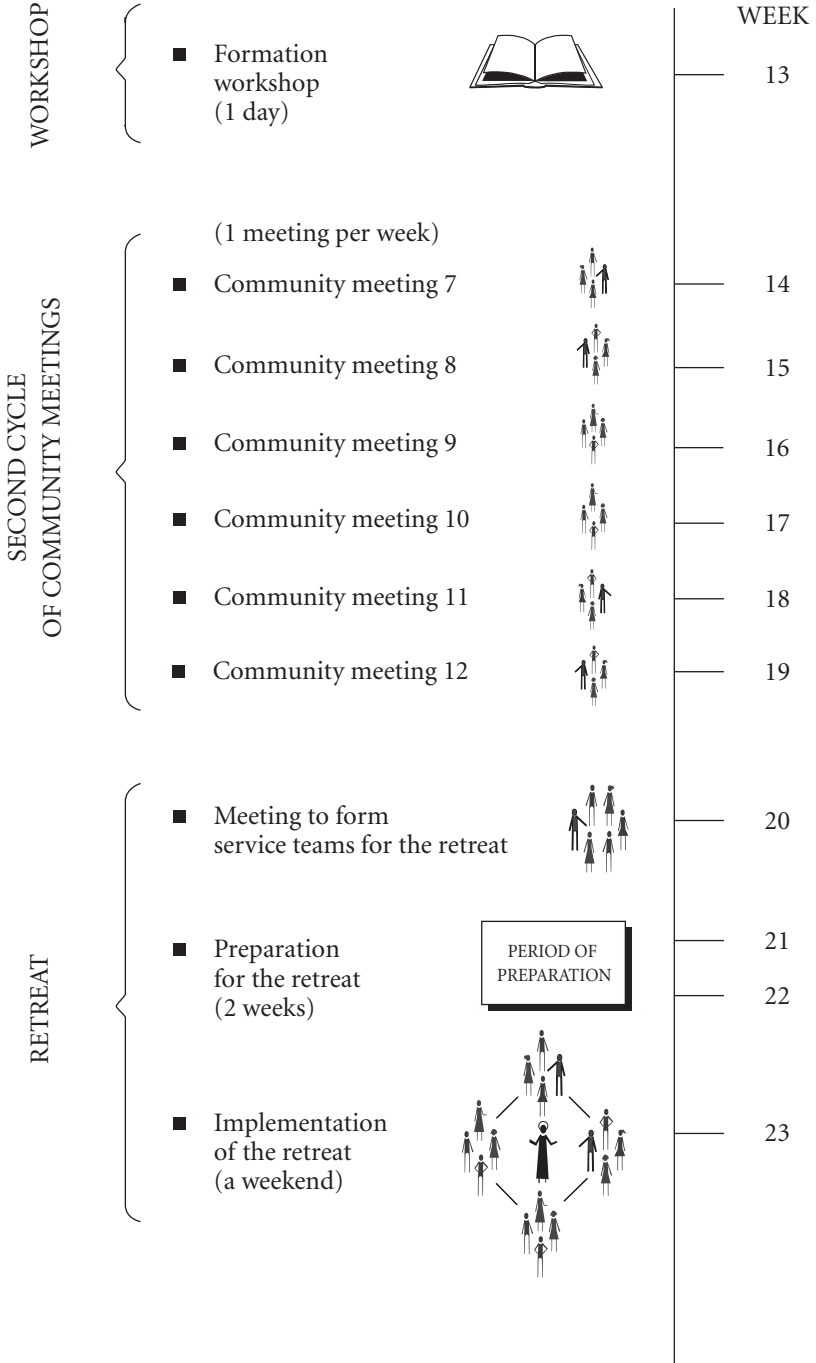
Process

The general process of *Leaven in the World* is similar to the one used in manual 1, *Dawn on the Horizon* and in the books *In Covenant with God* and *Followers of Jesus*. The process consists of an initial journey in which the young adults begin to reflect on their community's life history; two cycles of community meetings focused on various aspects of community life; a formation workshop on the role of leadership in communitarian processes; and a retreat in which the participants first reflect on their communitarian and missionary experiences in light of the life of Saint Paul and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and then undergo a discernment stage to determine whether God is calling them to help in the formation of other small communities.

The manual also contains eight documents that offer information that is necessary for the comprehension and reflection on the themes in the community meetings and formation workshop. In addition, three appendices are included: the first one presents the Prophets of Hope process, the second presents a chart of the Witnesses of Hope collection, and the third contains the evaluation forms.

Process and Scheduling: Leaven in the World





Methodology

Leaven in the World follows a methodology based on a holistic perspective of the development of a small Christian community of young adults; a critical analysis of its communal reality in light of the New Testament, especially the Acts of the Apostles; personal and communal prayer; and formation-in-action processes.


Having community members keep a community journal is part of the process presented in this manual. The journal writing follows the style of the Acts of the Apostles and begins during the initial journey and continues throughout the entire process. By articulating in their journal their experiences as a community, the participants will become aware of the Gospel values they have acquired in their small community. They will then be better prepared to incorporate these values into their daily lives and their mission in the world.

Instructions for keeping the community journal

1. Elect a community member to serve as keeper of the community journal. The journalkeeper is responsible for taking notes on what the community has decided to write in its journal and for transcribing these notes into a clean draft that will be reviewed in community meetings 6 and 12.

2. Invest a half hour per community meeting in identifying the experiences and ideas that the community wants to record in its journal. If the meeting is divided into two sessions, it is important to write the most important ideas from both reflections.

3. Have the journalkeeper be responsible for incorporating into the journal any corrections the community might make along the way, and for making a final copy available to each community member. Ideally all community members would have their own final copy to refer to during the retreat. If final copies have not been completed, then a rough draft should be taken to the retreat in case the community wants to refer to it.

4. The verses that will be written in the preface and in each chapter of the community journal are indicated with this illustration: . When writing the journal, you might want to use the same system as the Bible to indicate the chapter and verse being written. For example:

P:1 for Preface 1
Chapter 3:2 for Chapter 3, verse 2

After the meeting, have someone enter on a computer the verses written. Use the title of each chapter as it appears in this book. A similar design to the one used in this book could also be used for each verse. This will help the community to have a well-presented and easy-to-read journal.

Initial Journey



The Small Community as Leaven in the World

Overview

Objectives

- To reflect on our experience as a community of Jesus' disciples and to start to write our community journal
- To celebrate the road we have traveled and to initiate a stage of commitment as an evangelizing and missionary community

Community Meeting

1

The Acts of Today's Apostles

Overview

Objectives

- To dialog about the presence of the Holy Spirit in our small community
- To explore how to make history consciously, guided by the vision of the Reign of God
- To continue to write the history of our community with the Acts of the Apostles as a model

Plan for the meeting

Opening prayer

Commentaries

1. Making and documenting history
2. Growing as a community

Community prayer: We are witnesses of the risen Jesus

Community journal: Chapter 1, "We are apostles today"



Let's begin with a prayer

The facilitator invites the participants to enter into a spirit of prayer. Then he or she reads aloud the objectives of the meeting and asks the participants to pray spontaneously, keeping the objectives in mind.

Commentaries

1. Making and documenting history

God has been present in the journey of our small community, has inspired our meetings and socials, has helped us to become a community of Jesus' followers, and has motivated us to undertake apostolic actions. This is part of the history of salvation, and we are coauthors of that history with God, as we saw in the initial journey.

As a major inspiration for this beautiful work of making history with God, we will study a few passages of the Acts of the Apostles. This book contains many accounts of men and women who are in love with Christ. They left indelible marks in history because they transformed it radically by changing the course of the Roman Empire. We are here today because of what they did, and we are anxious to continue Jesus' mission.

Making history as Christians implies four types of action:

1. Following the path of life with faith in God and commitment to the mission of Jesus
2. Creating a Christian lifestyle that intentionally leaves imprints other people can follow
3. Making decisions that have a positive effect on our own life and on society
4. Showing, with the testimony of our life, meaningful ideals that are worth our investment of devotion, time, resources, and effort

The Acts of the Apostles was written between 60 and 90 C.E. Luke is thought to be its author. Acts is likely a continuation of

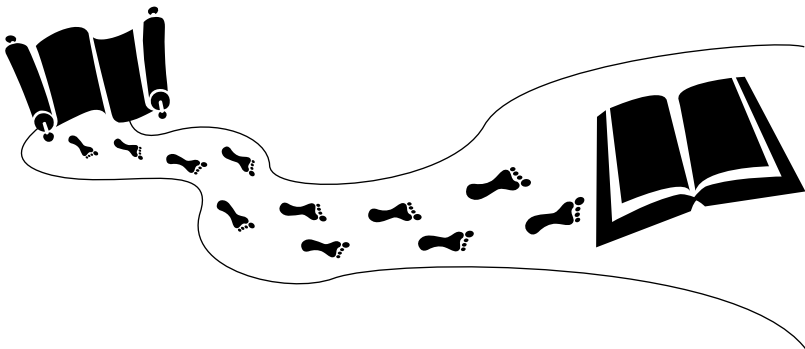
Luke's Gospel, because Acts 1:1 mentions a previous book and the books share many similarities and connections.

- *Read Luke 1:1–4 and Acts of the Apostles 1:1–5.* Note the similarities between the books and the fact that both books are addressed to Theophilus.
- *Read Luke 24:46–51 and Acts of the Apostles 1:6–11.* Notice the sequence of events.

Luke, a physician, was Paul's follower and faithful companion. Luke belonged to the second generation of Christians, and he became acquainted with Christ through the missionary action of Jesus' disciples. Luke devoted time to writing a congruent history of the activity of some of the Apostles and of the establishment of quite a few Christian communities, first in Jerusalem and then in other parts of the known world of that time. Thanks to Luke, we know something about the early communities.

- *Read Acts of the Apostles 13:46–52.*

Just as Luke related the struggles, successes, and challenges that early Christians experienced in the newborn church, it is important for each small community to do the same. The preface of your community journal, written during the initial journey, was your first effort to gather significant facts about your history, to learn to see these facts as salvation history and as part of the history of the church. In this stage of formation, we will explore that history in depth, and we will continue to write the book of acts of your community with three goals in mind: (1) to discover the presence of the Holy Spirit in the community, (2) to learn from the experiences the community has lived, and (3) to see the importance of



making history consciously as we are guided by the vision of the Reign of God. It will be an unforgettable experience!

Reflection

Have the secretary take notes on your reflections on the following questions. Some of these notes will make up the first chapter of your community journal.

- Go over the four types of action through which we make history with God mentioned before. Arrange the actions according to the way you have lived them in your community. Rate with a 4 the type of action you lived most intensely and faithfully, and rate with a 1 the type of action that you most need to intensify or work on.
- What attracts you the most about making history with God?
- What is the value of writing facts and reflections of your community for yourselves and for other communities of young adults in the United States?
- How would you use accounts written by other communities? What might these accounts say to future generations?

2. Growing as a community

In this first meeting, it is essential to review how the roles that facilitate the functioning of our community are being carried out so that we can improve them and thus reinforce the community. In order for the formation workshop on leadership to bear fruit, it is important that from now on we be more conscious of how to carry out our roles in the community. Material to accompany this commentary is found in documents 3, “The Mission of *Animadores* of Small Communities,” and 4, “Rotating Roles in Small Communities,” on pages 166–174 and 175–179, respectively.

Reflection on the *animadores*’ role

- Read document 3 in silence, paying special attention to what is pertinent to your community.
- Go through the discernment process to decide if the same person should continue as *animador/a* for another year or if it is advisable to ask someone else to perform this service.
- Make some recommendations to your *animador/a* according to your experience and to the content of document 4.

Reflection on the roles of coordinators, facilitators, timekeepers, and secretaries

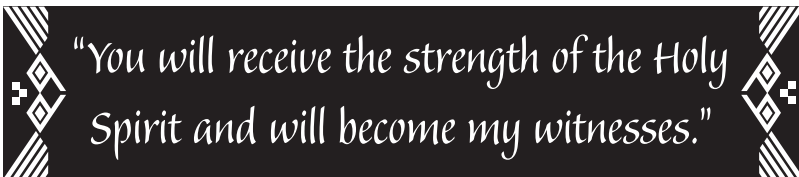
- Read document 4 in silence, paying special attention to what is pertinent to your community.
- Discuss the manner in which the functions of coordinators, facilitators, timekeepers, and secretaries have been carried out so far.
- Take notes on the conclusions of your reflections. These conclusions will be used in the formation workshop.

Community prayer: We are witnesses of the risen Jesus

Preparation. Bring four candles, matches, a tape or CD of soft music, a tape or CD player, markers, and a piece of newsprint with the following verse written across the top half: “Jesus said to his disciples, ‘You will receive the power of the Holy Spirit, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth’” (adapted from Acts of the Apostles 1:8).

1. Form four small groups of approximately the same size and give each one a candle. Ask them to form circles. Post the sheet of newsprint with the verse written on it so that all can see it, and explain how the prayer will be conducted. Then play the soft music, observe a few moments of silence, and invite everyone to place themselves in the presence of God.

2. In each small group, have one person read aloud the verse from the posted sheet of newsprint and then, while passing the candle to the person on his or her right, say to him or her, “Receive this light as a sign of the power the Holy Spirit gives you so that you can give witness to Jesus.” The person who receives the candle should



repeat the same words while passing the candle to the person on his or her right, and so on all the way around the circle.

3. Reflect in silence on God's invitation to each person in those words from the Acts of the Apostles. Those who want to may write, on the bottom half of the newsprint, where they feel called by the Holy Spirit to be witnesses of Jesus alive among us today.

4. End with a song that has as its theme witnessing or spreading the Good News to others.

5. At the end of each meeting, the community will write a chapter of its community journal. Before starting to write it, review the instructions in the introduction, pages 13–14. It is important to remember that the objective is to discover how the Holy Spirit guides and encourages the community to continue the history of salvation and to be builders of the civilization of love.

Community Journal



CHAPTER 1, “We are apostles today”



1 Testimonies of faith

Document two actions in which your community has collaborated to help a person change the direction of his or her life, overcoming a problem or improving his or her quality of life.



2 Acts of life

Summarize in writing your reflection on how you each have carried out your various roles in the community. First mention what you have done well, and then list the aspects that need improvement.

Reflection

Summarize in writing your reflection on the usefulness of documenting your community's history for yourselves and for others.

Resolution

Write your goals for this stage of formation and growth in community life, and make one or two resolutions to try to ensure that you will achieve these ideals.

Sign of commitment

Place on a table a Bible, opened to the Acts of the Apostles, and also your community journal. Direct everyone to write a sentence in the community journal about their commitment to continue to make history with God. Ask everyone to sign their name to their commitment.



Document

1

Leadership and Service in Activities as a Community of Communities

The Prophets of Hope process proposes three types of activities to be done as a community of communities at the beginning, middle, and end of each stage of formation: *initial journey*, *formation workshop*, and *retreat*. In addition, communities often organize intercommunity liturgies, pastoral actions, and cultural or social activities.

To make sure that the preparation and implementation of all activities is done with a spirit of community and coresponsibility, it is necessary to have a planning meeting prior to each activity. The purpose of the planning meeting is to organize for the event and to form the service teams that will work toward its fruition. Ideally all the members of the communities that will be participating in the event should attend the planning meeting, and the service teams should be composed of young adults from different communities. This way of working promotes a spirit of *pastoral de conjunto*; it allows people to meet members of other communities and to contribute their talents to performing services.

When having everyone attend is not possible, each community assumes the functions of a service team and sends one or two delegates to the planning meeting. To encourage the development and the coresponsibility of all young adults, the *animadores* of the communities should not be selected as delegates. It is recommended that community meetings be canceled during the preparation of community of communities events. This allows community members to focus their time and energy on preparation for the event.

Document

2

Interrelation and Integration of Five Dimensions of Young Adults' Lives

The Prophets of Hope model analyzes five dimensions of young adults' lives, and offers a method by which youth can integrate these dimensions into their lives, thus incarnating the Gospel in them. The five dimensions are intimately related and influence them constantly. They are (1) personal development, (2) interpersonal relationships, (3) culture, (4) society, and (5) the life of faith. The young adult is the center and the principal actor in every one of these dimensions, which influence the formation of his or her personality and help to give meaning to his or her life.

At the moment of conception, every person starts living out these five dimensions. Before birth he or she lives them out through the parents, mainly through the mother. During childhood, parents also have a strong influence. Starting at adolescence, society plays an important role, too; the individual starts taking the five dimensions of reality into his or her own hands. Later the dimensions continue to take shape in the young person, and they are integrated into the personality through the familial, sociocultural, and religious aspects of life. Every Christian is also called to incarnate the Gospel in all five of these life dimensions.

A brief description of each dimension follows. For greater detail, see chapters 1 through 5 of *Hispanic Young People and the Church's Pastoral Response*, volume 1 of Prophets of Hope, and the process of evangelization for each dimension in chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 of *The Evangelization of Hispanic Youth*, volume 2 of Prophets of Hope.

Document

3

The Mission of *Animadores* of Small Communities

Animadores of small communities have a very important role. Thus when they are chosen for this ministry, it is natural for them to ask themselves: What do I have to do? What are the demands made on me by the ministry that God is entrusting to me through my brothers and sisters? Do I have the necessary qualities and skills to carry out this ministry satisfactorily? Considering my personal limitations, how will I be able to encourage my companions? How can I best do this work? To answer such questions, this document describes the ideal that good *animadores* must keep in mind; it specifies the tasks involved in the ministry; it shows how God gives *animadores* the graces they need; it proposes a process of identifying an *animador/a*; and it includes a prayer that may guide *animadores* in their relationship with God.

When reading this document, the level of experience of the *animador/a* and the development stage of the community must be kept in mind. Similar to the way a technician, a lawyer, or a schoolteacher improves through on-the-job practice, *animadores*, with help from others, learn how to execute their role based on their experience and to confront challenges and correct their mistakes.

Document

4

Rotating Roles in Small Communities

The Prophets of Hope model emphasizes rotating the roles of coordinator, facilitator, secretary, and timekeeper with three objectives in mind: (1) to emphasize the coresponsibility of all the community's members; (2) to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate, and to avoid the monopolization of roles; and (3) to give all members of the community the opportunity to develop the various skills associated with each role. Typically all people are able to carry out these roles. The community should motivate its members to contribute, while being careful not to force people into a role they are not ready to fill.

The coordinator's role

Coordinators are responsible for preparing, organizing, and moderating the meetings or other activities of the community so that they flow smoothly. Coordinators have to delegate members to serve as facilitators, secretaries, and timekeepers who oversee different parts of the meeting or activity.

A. Coordinators' responsibilities

- Read in advance the material related to the community meeting or activity that they will coordinate, in order to prepare this material and to determine how many facilitators are needed and the reflections and prayers they need to facilitate.

Document

5

Different Forms of Personal Prayer

Praying means going into the depth of our self to find God and to fortify our relationship with him. We have multiple capacities and abilities that help us to stretch our relationship with God through various forms of praying.

This document is focused on the different forms of personal prayer, which are illustrated on page 182. Liturgical prayer, which is the summit of Christian prayer, is dealt with in book 4, *Committed as Church*.

With prayer, as with food, we like different types. When we are healthy, we eat differently than when we are sick. The same is true of prayer. At times we are so filled with joy that we feel like listening to happy music, singing, and dancing for the Lord. At other times we prefer soft music; and on occasion, we simply long to rest in our God in total silence or to meditate on God's word. Sometimes we have beautiful thoughts to communicate with God. Other times we can barely repeat, "Lord, have mercy on me," or implore the Lord, as Jesus did before dying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

What matters is knowing how to prepare prayer "menus" for different moments in life and to give ourselves the time and space to get in contact with God, who loves us and is with us. It is only when we get out of our routine to find a place and a time for prayer, as Jesus used to do (Mark 1:35; Luke 22:39–40), that we will be able to learn how to pray and to enjoy prayer.

Several prayer paths are described below. Because the Holy Spirit dwelling in each of us guides us in prayer toward intimacy with

Document

6

Advisers in the Prophets of Hope Model

The main role of advisers in small communities is to promote a process of human maturation and Christian growth in young adults—a process that leads them to assume their vocation as laypeople in the church and in the world. Advisers are adults with a clear vocation for pastoral work with young adults. Advisers must have the ability to empower young adults and enough pastoral experience to advise them. The adviser's function is indispensable, especially during the first stages of a community, at times of transition, and in crisis situations. The core of an adviser's work consists of supporting and guiding the community, especially through the *animador/a*. Advisers are not members of the small community, but often serve as general coordinators of events done as a community of communities.

Advisers' functions

The focus and the spirit of advisers in carrying out their work is as important as the advice they offer. Advisers journey with the members of small communities, they respect the community's formation process, and they perform these five key functions:

Advisers are educators in the faith

Advisers are people with a deep spiritual life. They have a theoretical foundation, intellectual preparation, and practical experience in the

Document

7

Reflection on Human Development and Christian Growth

A rosebud is beautiful and filled with hope from the moment it appears. When we see the tiny bud, we can say, “What a pretty rose we are going to have!” The same is true of people. Every stage of life has its own form of maturation. When life is well lived, each phase prepares us for the next one. Likewise, the current phase integrates the fruits of the previous phase.

The process of human development and Christian growth takes place slowly, as we integrate previous phases of our life and gradually change our emphasis toward the next phase. This is a spiral process, not a linear one. Often, characteristic elements from previous phases that are not completely developed have to be taken up again. We have to rework them, develop them, and integrate them into our life. The developmental changes that characterize each phase are not the only ones that happen during that phase, nor are they necessarily exclusive to it.

This document focuses on the three major stages of a young person’s process of maturation: early infancy and childhood, preadolescence and adolescence, and young adulthood. Each stage contains a small description of the developmental phases that make up the stage, along with some reflection questions.

The objective of this document is to help young people reflect on certain aspects of the human development and Christian growth process. Other books in the Witnesses of Hope collection present opportunities to reflect on this process from different perspectives.

Instructions. Individuals should read the following text slowly from beginning to end, without pausing to answer the questions,

Document

8

The Formation and Growth Process of a Small Community

Every small Christian community is rooted in the baptismal covenant that unites all its members in one Spirit, one faith, and one mission. Small communities of young adults have as a common ideal the living of the Gospel, the establishment of the Reign of God in society, and the evangelization of others. This ideal can be fulfilled through a formation-in-action process based on the pastoral circle “being-seeing-judging-acting-evaluating-celebrating” (Prophets of Hope, volume 3, *The Prophets of Hope Model*, pp. 46–51).

This document presents the formation and growth process that occurs as members of a small community live their baptismal covenant, mature as Christians, and assume their evangelizing mission. The first part presents the process of maturation of a small community. The second part states the growth characteristics of a small community.

A. Formation and growth process of a small community

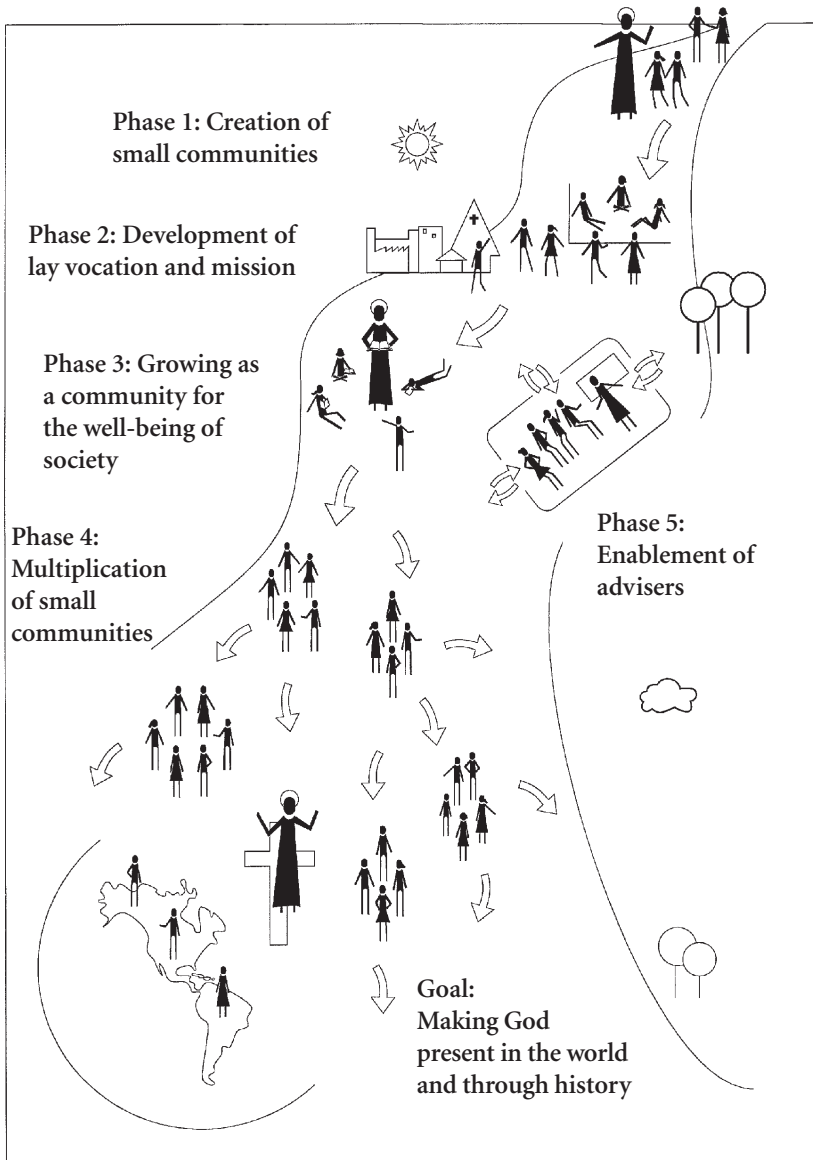
The community maturation process thrives as these six dimensions of life develop and integrate within a small community: (1) encounter with the word of God, (2) personal conversion and Christian lifestyle, (3) love and service toward our neighbor, (4) coresponsibility and shared leadership, (5) Christian praxis, (6) prayer and celebration in community. All these dimensions are centered in Jesus and are intimately interrelated. A small community may originally form



Appendix 1



Prophets of Hope Process



The process of the Prophets of Hope model is made up of five related phases that encourage young Hispanics to live their Christian faith in the ecclesial, social, civic, and cultural spheres of society. These phases are:

Phase 1: Creation of small communities

The objectives of this phase are *(a)* to establish one or more small communities in a particular location, and *(b)* to initiate the participants into a communitarian type of reflection that will make them conscious of their evangelizing mission and motivate them to assume it.

Phase 2: Development of lay vocation and mission

The objective of this phase is to help the participants develop lay vocation and mission on the personal and community levels. This is accomplished in five stages that help them gradually fulfill their vision, formation, and commitment as Catholic Christians.

- Stage 1: Young people discover the presence of God in their life and listen to God's invitation to love one another and accept the salvation of Jesus.
- Stage 2: Young people come to know Jesus and interact with him as disciples—personally and in the community.
- Stage 3: Young people discern their vocation in life, study life's challenges, and become aware of their role in history.
- Stage 4: Young people come to know the church better, participate more actively in its sacramental and ministerial life, and begin their mission as lay evangelizers in the world.
- Stage 5: Young people undertake a lifelong project for themselves and the community that trains them to create a culture based on Gospel values.

Phase 3:

Growing as a community for the well-being of society

The objectives of this phase are: *(a)* to foster the growth and development of the small communities in such a way that the necessary conditions for a fulfilling communitarian experience are created; *(b)* to incarnate the communitarian experience in the lives of the participants, so that all they learn or live in the small community becomes

an integral part of their daily life; and (c) to prepare leaders to create new communities and work with these communities in the initial stages.

Young people should decide, through a process of community discernment, when it is appropriate to enter this phase. Retreats that take place at the end of each formation phase help with this discernment.

Phase 4: Multiplication of small communities

The objective of this phase is to build new small communities based on the experiences of those people who are already members of an established small community.

This phase may be repeated each year, or when people feel God is calling them to build a new community for a particular group of older adolescents or young adults. New communities also spring up from older communities that have grown too large for members to relate personally to one another or to participate fully in the group reflections. In these cases, each community should continue the process in which it was involved before splitting.

Phase 5: Enablement of advisers

The objective of this phase is to train people who want to be advisers for the small communities. It is important to keep in mind that the advisers are not members of the small communities, and, ideally, they are people who have been through the Prophets of Hope process.



Appendix 2



Witnesses of Hope Collection

Series	Titles	Objectives	Phases of the Process
Prophets of Hope	Volume 1 <i>Hispanic Young People and the Church's Pastoral Response</i>	Analyzes the personal, social, cultural, and religious reality of Hispanic <i>jóvenes</i> , and the response of the church to their pastoral needs	Enablement of leaders and advisers
	Volume 2 <i>Evangelization of Hispanic Young People</i>	Focuses on the evangelization of Hispanic <i>jóvenes</i> , the model of evangelization used in small communities, and the role of Mary in evangelization	
	Volume 3 <i>The Prophets of Hope Model: A Weekend Workshop</i>	Offers a process for experiencing the Prophets of Hope model and learning its pastoral-theological foundations	
Agents of Hope	Manual 1 <i>Dawn on the Horizon: Creating Small Communities</i>	Aids in the creation of small communities through a formation-in-action process lived and facilitated by people sixteen to twenty-four years of age	Initial experience of the Prophets of Hope model
	Manual 2 <i>Leaven in the World: Growing in Community Life</i>	Helps the participants appreciate the meaning of community life and enables them to take responsibility for their own communities	Creation and multiplication of small communities
	Manual 3 <i>Servants of the Reign of God: Advising Small Communities</i>	Helps train adults as leaders and advisers of small communities through an active formation process and pastoral practice	Growing as a community for the well-being of society

Series	Titles	Objectives	Phases of the Process
	Book 1 <i>In Covenant with God</i>	Fosters the vocation and mission of the members of the community in the history of salvation from a theological and anthropological perspective	Development of lay vocation and mission
	Book 2 <i>Followers of Jesus</i>	Fosters the vocation and mission of the members of the community as disciples from a christological perspective	
Builders of Hope	Book 3 <i>Acting Through History</i>	Fosters the vocation and mission of the members of the community in their immediate environments from a social perspective	
	Book 4 <i>Committed as Church</i>	Fosters the vocation and mission of the members of the community from an ecclesial perspective	
	Book 5 <i>Fostering Culture and Society</i>	Fosters the vocation and mission of the members of the community from a socio-cultural perspective	