

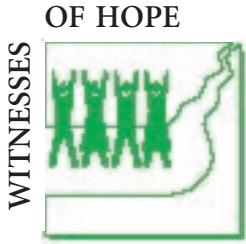
▣ Builders of Hope ▣

Book 2

Followers of Jesus

Followers of Jesus Editorial Team

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Followers of Jesus is the second book in the Builders of Hope series. This series was written to promote the development of lay vocation among *jóvenes** in the church and in society. Although it was designed for small missionary and evangelizing communities according to the Prophets of Hope model (see volume 3 of the Prophets of Hope series, *The Prophets of Hope Model: A Weekend Workshop*), this series can be easily adapted for other pastoral models. *Followers of Jesus* is intended for participants sixteen years of age and older. If used with younger adolescents, it will require adaptations in methodology and substance.

Followers of Jesus is designed to continue the process of evangelization and integral formation that started with the book *In Covenant with God*. It emphasizes the participant's vocation and mission in salvation history from a **christological** perspective leading them to a **Christian praxis**. Its objectives are for the community members to get to know Jesus better, to further their relationship with him, and to strengthen their lives as his disciples both personally and communally.

The process of *Followers of Jesus* consists of *an initial journey* that helps participants deepen their understanding of what it means to encounter Jesus and prepare to follow him; *two cycles of community meetings* that focus on various aspects of Jesus and of Christian discipleship; *a formation workshop* that offers an introduction to the study of the New Testament; and *a retreat* to renew and strengthen the commitment as Jesus' disciples. In addition, the book contains *three documents* that offer different kinds of information necessary for the comprehension of and reflection on the themes that

*The first time any special term appears, it is presented in boldfaced type. Definitions can be found in the glossary. We suggest that before reading the book, you review the glossary to acquaint yourself with this vocabulary. We also recommend that persons responsible for coordinating and facilitating the meetings carefully study any special terminology used.

integrate the formation process. *Two appendices* include evaluation forms and a chart of the Witnesses of Hope collection.

Followers of Jesus is an instrument to support the life of a community. Each community should use this resource to the extent that it helps to develop the community's Christian life and strengthen its missionary spirit. It is recommended that the participants keep a diary with their reflections or, at least, take notes in their books. These notes are very important in the formation process.

Methodology of the Builders of Hope series

The Builders of Hope series follows a methodology based on a holistic perspective of young people's human development and Christian growth. It promotes critical analysis of their reality, frequent use of the Scriptures, consideration of ecclesial documents, personal and communal prayer, formation-in-action processes, and Christian praxis.

Followers of Jesus, like the rest of the books in the Builders of Hope series, is made up of five modules, which are described below. These modules are the initial journey, the first cycle of community meetings, the formation workshop, the second cycle of community meetings, and the retreat. The coordination of these modules is the responsibility of a coordinating team made up of an **adviser** and three to five members of the communities. This team is selected from a group of people formed by the *animadores* of all the communities and two delegates previously selected by each community at the same level of formation. A time line of the different modules appears on pages 14–15.

Description of the five modules

The following is a description of the five modules that make up the process of *Followers of Jesus*:

Module 1: The initial journey

The initial journey offers the participants an experience of ecclesial community broader than that of their small communities, and helps them enter into the formation-in-action process. The initial journey may last one or two days, according to the judgment of the

organizing team. The instructions for preparing the initial journey are found on pages 17–18.

Modules 2 and 4: The cycles of community meetings

Community meetings help the participants to live out a personal and communal Christian praxis in the church and society. The meetings are organized in two cycles, each of which is made up of four to six meetings focused on themes related to the life of the participants, plus one meeting for the evaluation of the content and process of each cycle.

Each community should decide how frequently it will meet, taking into consideration its members' needs and commitments. The material designed for each meeting can be covered in one or two meetings, according to the situation of a given community. The important thing is to promote a more Christian life, adapting the materials as the community sees fit. In addition, a period of informal “hanging out” should always be included, as well as some time to discuss the community's shared life.

For each small community to have a life of its own, beyond the series of meetings outlined in this book, it is important that its members interact with one another by calling one another on the telephone, visiting one another frequently, sharing recreational and pastoral activities, and regularly participating in the **Eucharist** as a community.

To prepare for these meetings and to know how to lead them, as well as to become familiar with their methodology, see “Introduction: Community Meetings” on pages 30–33. If this material is used with people under sixteen years of age, it is recommended that it be adapted by dividing each community meeting into two sessions, so that the process can better meet the needs of this younger age-group. It will also be necessary to adapt some aspects of the substance of the book and some of the reflection themes.

Module 3: The formation workshop

The formation workshop is designed to occupy an entire day. Its objective is to allow members of various small communities to interact with one another and learn from trained professionals in areas demanding academic preparation, such as the Scriptures, **theology**, and pastoral theory. The workshop coordinating team is responsible

for hiring the presenter well in advance to secure her or his availability. Additional instructions for preparing this workshop can be found on pages 77–78.

Module 5: The retreat

The retreat offers the participants the opportunity to reflect more deeply on their faith experience—a process that they began during the initial journey and the community meetings. This will help them discern how their human development and Christian growth are proceeding. The retreat also celebrates the community's passage to the next stage of formation. It is recommended that members of various small communities that are at the same stage of formation participate together in the retreat so that they can exchange experiences and share a broader ecclesial encounter.

The retreat is designed to last a weekend. Friday's activities are intended for the participants from different communities to get to know one another and to create an appropriate ambience for the retreat; Saturday is reserved for reflection and prayer; and Sunday is devoted to sharing and celebrating the Eucharist. The coordinating team for the retreat is responsible for contacting a priest well in advance to secure his availability for the celebration of the Eucharist. Instructions for preparing the retreat are found on page 147.

Documents

The documents are informational articles that clarify topics that require explanation to be understood. They serve as reference material for the general themes in the book and as resources for the formation workshop.

Appendices

The evaluation of each of the modules is very important for recognizing the achievements made by each module, for identifying those aspects that need improvement, and for fostering the maturation process of the participants and of the small communities.

Appendix 2 is a chart of the Witnesses of Hope collection. This chart presents the different series in the collection and explains the objectives of each book and its place in the Prophets of Hope process.

Note: The books in this series include the materials needed to design the initial journey, the community meetings, the formation workshop, and the retreat, in keeping with the methodology proposed here. Other resources are needed to help set the ambience for the meetings, to plan games, and to select songs.

Process and Scheduling: Followers of Jesus

