



# Join with a Small Group of Friends

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**“Where two or three are gathered in My Name”**

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Several years ago I joined a group at my parish to study an aspect of the Faith that interested me. Before that, the only time that I would go to my parish was on Sunday morning for Mass. As a result, there was no real sense for me that we were a family united under the spiritual fatherhood of our pastor. What I realized after meeting with this group for eight weeks was that I had been lacking real fellowship with my parish. Toward the end of the sessions, it was a gift to feel truly “connected” to my church community.

I have spent some time pondering my experience, and after talking with many other people who meet with a group regularly to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ, it is clear that ongoing study and reflection with other Catholics is a necessary component of the Christian life.

The Bible reveals that Jesus taught His disciples in small groups. Further, in the early Church, as spoken about in the Acts of the Apostles, small groups of Christians met in homes – in secret to avoid persecution – to pray and study the Scriptures or hear a teaching about the Faith.

For us today, what benefits are there in meeting regularly for a DVD program with discussion or other small group format? Here are a few of them:

- It builds community, the sense of belonging in your parish.
- It develops strong friendships in Christ.
- It provides a specific time to deepen your relationship with the Lord through greater understanding of the Faith and/or the Bible.
- It strengthens you as you discover others with whom you can “walk” on the journey of life.
- It helps you to accept others and yourself as imperfect persons who are seeking God.

There are many excellent programs and resources available for study groups. Contact the parish director of the Faith Formation Program to see if the parish already has a program that interests you. Here are a few suggestions that are being used successfully:

- **Father: Origin and Desire of All** by Dr. Petroc Willey on *Franciscan at Home* online, workshops. Three sessions.

Free subscription. Visit: [franciscanathome.com/diocese-la-crosse](http://franciscanathome.com/diocese-la-crosse) and scroll to the bottom.

- 1) On the right, click on the middle button: "My parish or school is already registered, and I would like to set up my individual free account."
- 2) Click "Create an Account." Complete the information and Save. Select the Diocese of La

Crosse from a drop-down menu, and then your parish / school from a second drop-down menu, listed by city and name. Click on a track that interests you.

- **Who Am I to Judge: Responding to Relativism with Logic and Love** with Edward Sri. He will also be speaking in Onalaska Oct. 12.
- **Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father** by Fr. Donald Callaway, MIC. Recognize the power of St. Joseph. Visit [shopmercy.org](http://shopmercy.org). 5 sessions with a start date of Sept. 30.
- **How God Guides Us** by Ann & Carol Lankford, 8 sessions, at [diolc.org/deeper](http://diolc.org/deeper)
- **The Search** hosted by Chris Stefanick, 7 episodes [thesearchbegins.org](http://thesearchbegins.org).
- **The Wild Goose** by Fr. Dave Pivonka. A Free 14-part series about the Holy Spirit. [thewildgoose.com](http://thewildgoose.com).

Fall is an ideal time to join a study group. Consider what is being offered at your parish, or get a few friends together to meet in your home. Find something that interests you and then be committed. It is worth your time!

By Ann Lankford



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