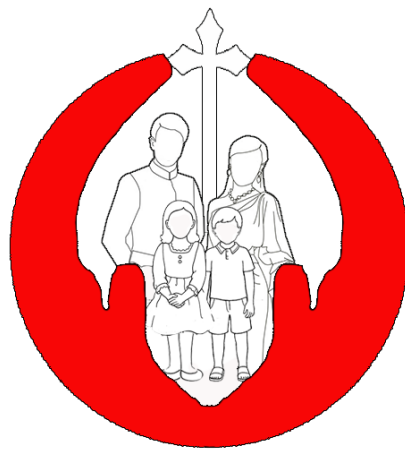


THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT



WE ARE THE FAMILY OF GOD

Book One

(Adapted from *I Believe in the Family*, with permission from the **Movimiento Familiar Cristiano** of Mexico and the **International Confederation of Christian Family Movements**)
September 20, 2018

Noppadon and Elma Muangkroot
Past Presidents
International Confederation of Christian Family Movements



THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT

The Christian Family Movement (CFM) is a network of small family groups, ideally but not necessarily parish-based. Groups often consist of 3 to 8 families, which may include couples, single parents, widows, widowers and individuals, who seek to become true family communities and work together to promote mutual growth. Founded in the 1950's, the CFM is the first organization that encourages small family groups to pray and do good works together.

Christian – Christ is our Lord and Teacher.

Family – We belong to a family and to God's family.

Movement – We move from prayer to action, growing spiritually and helping others.

In some countries these family groups have other names, such as Christian Family and Social Movement, Happy Family Movement, Basic Ecclesial Communities, Family Life Promotion Groups, Christian Home Movement and others.

CFM groups meet every two weeks or once a month in one another's homes or at a parish venue for spiritual growth and social action. The meeting, attended by a CFM chaplain, provides continuing spiritual education and develops social responsibility. The groups follow family life program guidebooks and affiliate with the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements (ICCFM).

*"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."
(Matthew 9:37-38)*

"In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (James 2:17)

CFM MISSION

- To promote Christ-centered marriage and family life.
- To help individuals and families live the Christian faith in everyday life.
- To improve society through actions of love and service.

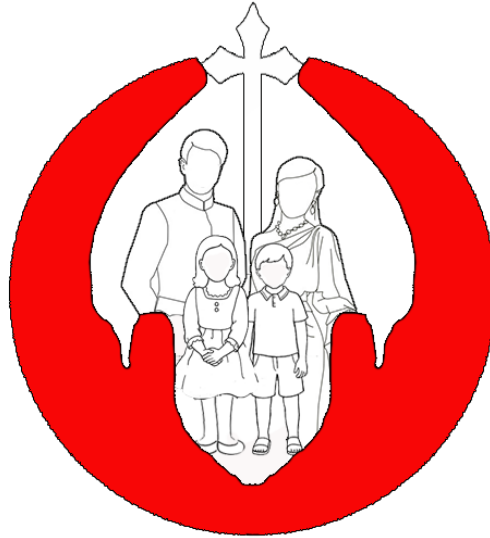
CFM CORE VALUES

- Prayer and spiritual formation
- Action and outreach

WHAT CFM OFFERS

- CFM provides Christian formation and spiritual growth.
- CFM builds stronger marriages and happier families.
- CFM develops community spirit and social responsibility.

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT



WE ARE THE FAMILY OF GOD

Book One

PART I CHILDREN OF GOD

1. Building a Christian Community
2. The Call to Social Action
3. The Creation and Fall of Man
4. The Value of a Person

PART II MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

5. Lights and Shadows of the Family in Today's World
6. Men and Women—What a Difference!
7. Marital Relationship and Dialog
8. The Most Precious Gift of Children

PART III THE MISSION OF THE HUMAN FAMILY

9. The Human Family
10. Forming People
11. Serving Life
12. Family as Cell of Society and Domestic Church

MEETING 1 BUILDING A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Meeting Goals:

- **Reflect on the Christian meaning of community life.**
- **Get to know one another better and develop openness and trust among each other.**
- **Recognize the community as a gift and a work in progress, gaining understanding and growing together.**

1. OPENING PRAYER (suitable prayer/song)
2. BIBLE STUDY (slowly read aloud by one or more persons)

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

⁹ *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: ¹⁰ If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.*

Matthew 18:20

²⁰ *"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."*

Acts 4: 31-32

³² *All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.*

Bible Sharing

- Briefly share part of your personal history: nationality, family, work and interests.
- From the Bible passages above, what are the advantages of belonging to a community?
- What do you hope to gain by being part of this Christian community?

3. SOCIAL ACTION (slowly read aloud by one or more persons)

When we are in the community, we get to know and experience God more closely, "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." We also see the example of Jesus who lived in a community and called the twelve apostles to send them to preach. The necessity of living as a community is one of the essential dimensions of human life and was understood by the early Christian communities who were "one in heart and mind."

Redemptoris missio, No. 51

A rapidly growing phenomenon in the young churches - one sometimes fostered by the bishops and their Conferences as a pastoral priority - is that of "basic ecclesial communities" (also known by other names) which are proving to be good centers for Christian formation and missionary outreach. These are groups of Christians who, at the level of the family or in a similar setting, come together for prayer, Scripture reading, catechesis and discussion on human and ecclesial problems, with a view to a common commitment. These communities are a sign of vitality within the Church, an instrument of formation and evangelization, and a solid starting point for a new society based on a "civilization of love."

- a. Observe (from experience)
 - Is there a spirit of community in your neighborhood?
 - What are the advantages of praying with others, as at Holy Mass, for example?
 - What can Christian communities do together to help others in need?
- b. Judge (as a Christian)
 - What is the difference between a secular community and a Christian community?
 - Why is it helpful to share our problems with people we can trust?
 - What is the greatest benefit of belonging to a strong and caring community?
- c. Act (choose one action individually or as a group and make sure to accomplish it) *
 - Pray together with family everyday or with friends at least once a week.
 - Greet and introduce yourself to someone you see regularly in Church.
 - Choose a relationship which needs to be improved and do something to improve it—a smile, a phone call, an e-mail, etc.
 - Choose your own action.

*You will share what action you chose at the beginning of the next meeting.

4. CHAPLAIN'S REMARKS (a short, encouraging talk from a priest, a sister or a spiritually mature lay person)
5. NEXT MEETING (assigning a couple or an individual to conduct the next meeting, scheduling time and place)
6. CLOSING PRAYER (suitable prayer/song)

MEETING 2 THE CALL TO SOCIAL ACTION

Meeting Goals:

- **Understand that every Christian has the duty to help the needy.**
- **Realize the importance of performing the works of mercy as a human being.**
- **Appreciate God's generosity that when we give to others, we will also receive his gifts.**

1. OPENING PRAYER (suitable prayer/song)
2. REPORTS OF ACTION Were you able to do your chosen action last week?
 - Pray together with family or friends.
 - Greet and introduce yourself to someone you see regularly in Church.
 - Choose a relationship you want to improve and do something to improve it—a smile, a phone call, an e-mail, etc.
 - Your chosen action.
3. BIBLE STUDY (slowly read aloud by one or more persons)

Matthew 25:37-40

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

Luke 6:38

³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

James 2:14-16

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?

Bible Sharing

- What good works can we do in our daily lives for "least of these brothers and sisters of mine" that would please our Lord?
- Share instances in your experience that illustrate Luke 6:38.
- Why is praying not complete if we do not do good works for others?

3. SOCIAL ACTION

St. Augustine, Confessions (slowly read aloud by one or more persons)

What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.

- a. Observe (from your experience)

- What do you agree most with St. Augustine about what love looks like?
- Can you think of someone, Christian or Buddhist, who is a good example of love and generosity? Describe what this person does.
- From what we have observed about ourselves, our neighbors and our friends, are we willing to help others in need even if we don't know them?

b. Judge (as a Christian)

- Is it possible to love God without loving and helping other human beings?
- Are we doing enough to help the poor and the needy or should we give more?
- How can we change ourselves from being selfish to being generous in helping strangers or people we don't like?

c. Act (choose one action individually or as a group and make sure to accomplish it)*

- Volunteer with your family to help in community service—taking care of babies in an orphanage, visiting a lonely person or helping distribute food to flood victims.
- Donate some of your unused clothes, shoes or other articles to a Church, a charitable organization or to the poor.
- Help somebody in need—an old person carrying a heavy bag, a lost foreigner, a lonely or sad person who needs a friend.
- Choose your own action.

*You will share what action you chose at the beginning of the next meeting.

5. CHAPLAIN'S REMARKS (a short, encouraging talk from a priest, a sister or a spiritually mature lay person)
6. NEXT MEETING (assigning a couple or an individual to conduct the next meeting, scheduling time and place)
7. CLOSING PRAYER (suitable prayer/song)

MEETING 3 THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN

Meeting Goals:

- **Realize that we human beings commit sin because we have a free will.**
- **Understand and appreciate more greatly why Jesus became man to save us.**
- **Be thankful for God's infinite mercy and forgiveness when we recognize our sinfulness and repent.**

1. OPENING PRAYER (suitable prayer/song)
2. REPORTS OF ACTION Were you able to do your chosen action last week?
 - Volunteer with your family to help in community service—taking care of babies in an orphanage, visiting a lonely person or helping distribute food to flood victims.
 - Donate some of your unused clothes, shoes or other articles to a Church, a charitable organization or to the poor.
 - Help somebody in need—an old person carrying a heavy bag, a lost foreigner, a lonely or sad person who needs a friend.
 - Your chosen action.
3. BIBLE STUDY (slowly read aloud by one or more persons)

Genesis 3:17-19

¹⁷... “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

Matthew 1:20-21

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

1 Corinthians 15:21-25

²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Bible Sharing:

- What sin did man commit against God?
- Would it have been better if God did not give man a free will?
- Why was it necessary for God the Son to become man?

4. SOCIAL ACTION (slowly read aloud by one or more persons)

The great story of creation illustrates the ultimate goal of God's glory: the happiness of mankind. He created Adam and Eve out of love, breathing into them his own life. He instituted marriage when he placed into human nature the attraction between man and woman, and through the full exercise of their sexuality in the marital union, he gave them the ability to have children and be his co-creators. Unfortunately,

Adam and Eve misused their freedom and disobeyed God. They did not accept their limits as creatures and "wanted to be like gods."

After the fall God did not abandon the human race. Thanks to Jesus and his redemption, through the grace of God man and woman could overcome the power of sin and make be happy again. Righteous men and women can attain a harmonious and stable family through the grace and love of God. Despite its limitations and failures, the human family can still be an area of accomplishment, love and prosperity because of Jesus' redemption.

The Name of God Is Mercy, Pope Francis

"There are no situations we cannot get out of; we are not condemned to sink into quicksand, in which the more we move, the deeper we sink. Jesus is there, his hand extended, ready to reach out to us and pull us out of the mud, out of sin, out of the abyss of evil into which we have fallen. We need only be conscious of our state, be honest with ourselves, and not lick our wounds. We need to ask for the grace to recognize ourselves as sinners."

a. Observe (from your experience)

- Are you aware that God created man to be happy and to make others happy?
- Do you recognize that you are sinful?
- Have you met people who think that their sins are too great to be forgiven?

b. Judge (as a Christian)

- What is necessary for the forgiveness of sins?
- Why is it important to seek forgiveness not only from God but also from the people we have wronged?
- What do you think is the greatest sin of mankind today? What can be done about it?

c. Act (choose one action individually or as a group and make sure to accomplish it) *

- Ask forgiveness from a person you have wronged.
- Forgive another person who has wronged you and pray for him or her.
- Go to confession and/or take someone to confession.
- Choose your own action.

*You will share what action you chose at the beginning of the next meeting.

5. CHAPLAIN'S REMARKS (a short, encouraging talk from a priest, a sister or a spiritually mature lay person)
6. NEXT MEETING (assigning a couple or an individual to conduct the next meeting, scheduling time and place)
7. CLOSING PRAYER (suitable prayer/song)

MEETING 4 THE VALUE OF A PERSON

Meeting Goals:

- **Understand and accept our dignity as individuals with corresponding rights and responsibilities.**
- **Encourage the attitude of respect for every person.**
- **Make the family a place where all can grow as respectable people.**

1. OPENING PRAYER (suitable prayer/song)
2. REPORTS OF ACTION Were you able to do your chosen action last week?
 - Ask forgiveness from a person you have wronged.
 - Forgive another person who has wronged you and pray for him or her.
 - Go to confession and/or take someone to confession.
 - Your chosen action.
3. BIBLE STUDY (slowly read aloud by one or more persons)

Genesis 1:26

²⁶ *Let us make man in our image and likeness.*

John 15:15-16

¹⁵ *I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.* ¹⁶ *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.*

Romans 8:16-19

¹⁶ *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.* ¹⁷ *Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, . . ."*

Bible Sharing

- In what way are we made in the image and likeness of God?
- Jesus says that he has taught us everything he has learned from his Father. What do you think are some important things Jesus learned from his Father?
- What does it mean to you to be "heirs" of God?

4. SOCIAL ACTION (slowly read aloud by one or more persons)

We live in a world of materialism in which the human being is seen as a commodity and as a producer-consumer of goods, measured only by his "having," not his "being." However, at the heart of the Christian message is the infinite dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God. We can imagine that God our Father telling us, "You are like me. I gave you a mind and heart with which you can know and love me. I created the earth and all its wealth for your service. You are superior to all other living beings because of all of them, only you are like me. When you love, you are like me. When you think, you participate in my

intelligence. I have created you to be able to enjoy a life of love with me in eternity, with happiness that never ends. I want you to love me freely; I do not force you but give you the ability to choose between good and evil. I give you the strength to master this inclination to evil and fulfill my law of love written in your conscience. When you obey this law freely, you reach the true dignity of a person.”

Gaudium et Spes, Pope Paul VI

But God did not create man as a solitary, for from the beginning "male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). Their companionship produces the primary form of interpersonal communion. For by his innermost nature man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others, he can neither live nor develop his potential.

a. Observe

- In what way are we created in the image and likeness of God?
- Do you use the earth's resources with responsibility?
- Why can man not develop his potential unless he relates to others?

b. Judge (as a Christian)

- Do we act in accordance to our dignity as human beings?
- Do we take care of all God's creation placed under our care?
- How can we help each other grow as people of God?

c. Act (choose one action individually or as a group and make sure to accomplish it)*

- Treat everyone, including yourself, with dignity and respect as sharers of God's life.
- "Save the Earth" by recycling, by using natural resources sparingly, by planting a tree or other means.
- Do some exercise and eat nutritious food to care for your health.
- Choose your own action.

*You will share what action you chose at the beginning of the next meeting.

5. CHAPLAIN'S REMARKS (a short, encouraging talk from a priest, a sister or a spiritually mature lay person)
6. NEXT MEETING (assigning a couple or an individual to conduct the next meeting, scheduling time and place)
7. CLOSING PRAYER (suitable prayer/song)

MEETING 5 Lights and Shadows of the Family in Today's World

Meeting Goals:

- **Examine the positive and negative realities that impact the family today.**
- **Appreciate the opportunities provided by modern times which have benefited mankind.**
- **Learn to face the modern challenges threatening the family without losing our moral values.**

1. OPENING PRAYER (suitable prayer/song)

2. REPORTS OF ACTION Were you able to do your chosen action last week?

- Treat everyone, including yourself, with dignity and respect as sharers of God's life.
- "Save the Earth" by recycling, by using natural resources sparingly, by planting a tree or other means.
- Do some exercise and eat nutritious food to care for your health.
- Your chosen action.

3. BIBLE STUDY (slowly read aloud by one or more persons)

Deuteronomy 20:4

⁴ For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you victory."

Luke 23:28

²⁸ Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children."

Mark 13

⁵ Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁶ Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many."

Bible Sharing

- Why should we never give up hope even when facing the difficult problems of our times?
- What meanings can you give to the words of Jesus when he said "weep for yourselves and for your children"?
- What examples of deceptions endanger us in the modern world?

4. SOCIAL ACTION (slowly read aloud by one or more persons)

Today's society has become increasingly secular or even anti-religious, and practicing the faith has become less relevant. However, even in this postmodern era, the family is still the number one value for society because it is the institution for transmitting life.

Among the positive trends for the modern family are a greater respect for individual freedom and human rights, awareness of the importance of the marriage relationship, promotion of the dignity of women, responsible parenthood, education for all, establishment of organizations to help people, greater awareness of social responsibility, efficient communication, scientific and technological advances and others.

On the other hand, rapid changes have created confusion and uncertainty in the family and given rise to greater social inequality. Negative trends affecting the modern family are individualism, loss of traditional values, domestic violence, divorce, abortion, economic problems, emigration, illiteracy, euthanasia, the widening gap between rich and poor, abuse of technology, negative mass media influence and others.

Gaudium et Spes No. 4

"Today, the human race is involved in a new stage of history. Profound and rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the whole world. . . Never has the human race enjoyed such an abundance of wealth, resources and economic power. . . Never before has man had so keen an understanding of freedom . . ."

Familiaris Consortio No. 1

"The family in modern times, has perhaps suffered like no other institution the attack of the vast profound and rapid transformations in society and culture. Many families live in this situation, remaining faithful to the values that form the foundation of the family institution."

- a. Observe (from experience)
 - What are the top modern trends that bring light to the family?
 - What are the top modern trends that bring shadow to the family?
 - What are some of the positive and negative values of your own family?
- b. Judge (as a Christian)
 - What are the fundamental family values that should never change?
 - What can you do to preserve these values?
 - How do you prevent young people from being led astray by false and negative ideas about the family?
- c. Act (choose one action individually or as a group and make sure to accomplish it) *
 - Alone or with the family, make a list of gifts that God has given your family and finish with a family prayer of thanksgiving.
 - Identify two or three modern trends that have created family problems and decide on a joint action to preserve your family's well-being.
 - Have a family appreciation dinner in which you say positive things about each other.
 - Choose your own action.

*You will share what action you chose at the beginning of the next meeting.

5. CHAPLAIN'S REMARKS (a short, encouraging talk from a priest, a sister or a spiritually mature lay person)
6. NEXT MEETING (assigning a couple or an individual to conduct the next meeting, scheduling time and place)
7. CLOSING PRAYER (suitable prayer/song)

MEETING 6 MEN AND WOMEN—WHAT A DIFFERENCE!

Meeting Goals:

- **Recognize that all human beings have the same value as individuals.**
- **Understand and accept the physical and psychological differences between men and women.**
- **Appreciate the rising status of women in today's society.**

1. OPENING PRAYER (suitable prayer/song)
2. REPORTS OF ACTION Were you able to do your chosen action last week?
 - Alone or with the family, make a list of gifts that God has given your family and finish with a family prayer of thanksgiving.
 - Identify two or three modern trends that have created family problems and decide on a joint action to preserve your family's well-being.
 - Have a family appreciation dinner in which you say positive things about each other.
 - Your chosen action.
3. BIBLE STUDY (slowly read aloud by one or more persons)

Proverbs 31:10-12, 23, 28-29

¹⁰ *A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.*
¹¹ *Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.* ¹² *She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. . .* ²³ *Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land. . .* ²⁸ *Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:* ²⁹ *"Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."*

Mark 10:5-8

⁵ *"It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied.* ⁶ *"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'* ⁷ *'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,* ⁸ *and the two will become one flesh.'* So they are no longer two, but one flesh."

1 Corinthians 11:11-12

¹¹ *Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.* ¹² *For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.*

Bible Sharing

- What are the blessings of a husband with a good wife?
- How do the above passages show that men and women are equal in God's sight?
- Give examples of rights that women in today's society enjoy which were not given to them before?

4. SOCIAL ACTION (slowly read aloud by one or more persons)

Men and women are equal in value and dignity, but they are physically and mentally different. These differences are part of God's plan. The bodies of men and women are naturally different and complementary. Women, with a vocation for motherhood, are soft and delicate. Men, as protector of the home, are strong and muscular. Their bodies are different, each with its own role in human reproduction. The sexes are complementary and attraction between them is very strong because sexual

union is a gift from God, intended to make men and women pro-creators with him for the propagation of the human race.

As with their bodies, the minds of men and women man are also different and complementary. The lists below show the generally accepted, but not absolute, differences between the primary needs of men and women:

Primary Needs of Men

Self-Reliance
Acceptance
Admiration
Approval
Stimulation

Primary Needs of Women

Loving Care
Understanding
Devotion
Reassurance
Peacefulness

The idea that men are superior to women was part of the culture of the past when there was a different social structure. Even today many cultures still consider men worth more than women, that men have more value and are born to lead while women are born follow and obey. However, inequality between men and women goes against reason and against the teachings of the Church because men and women are equally God's children, made in his image and likeness.

- a. Observe
 - Give examples of how men and women see, think, feel or act differently.
 - Name some cultures in which men are still considered superior to women.
 - Share what changes you have seen in your country that show greater equality between men and women.
- b. Judge (as a Christian)
 - Are men and women treated equally in your family and in your society?
 - Do you relate to your spouse as an equal or is there one who dominates and one who submits? (Give concrete examples).
 - What are some obstacles that cause problems between husband and wife?
- c. Act (choose one action individually or as a group and make sure to accomplish it)*
 - Work towards a fair and equal relationship with your spouse in areas where there is inequality.
 - Teach your children, both sons and daughters, to do household chores (making beds, washing dishes, house cleaning, caring for younger siblings, etc.).
 - Remember to treat women around you with the same respect as men.
 - Choose your own action.

*You will share what action you chose at the beginning of the next meeting.

5. CHAPLAIN'S REMARKS (a short, encouraging talk from a priest, a sister or a spiritually mature lay person)
6. NEXT MEETING (assigning a couple or an individual to conduct the next meeting, scheduling time and place)
7. CLOSING PRAYER (suitable prayer/song)