

Framework for a Franciscan Solidarity Table Gathering

While these are not step-by-step directions, we provide you with a sample framework. For the sake of unity and continuity, we ask that you include some common elements in each gathering, such as time for prayer, song, and sharing.

a) Opening Prayer

While the Prayer Suggestions document has ideas, feel free to use your own prayers. As people seeking to follow St. Francis' and St. Clare's way of responding to God in their lives, both prayer and community are vital to the process of becoming what God created us to be.¹



b) Song

At the end of the Appendix, there is a list of recommended songs to give you some ideas. However, part of the richness of being an FST is the unique Good brought to the Table by each member, and we encourage you to share your own song suggestions with each other. Those with musical gifts can share them with the group. Live instruments or vocal leaders are not always necessary; groups may play recordings instead.

c) Seeing God

Each person takes a turn to share just one way that they saw God in the past week. You may wish to use an object that is held for the time that the speaker is sharing. The "central theme of Francis' 'way of life' is Incarnation."² This practice of sharing how we recognize the presence of God all around us is connected to the Franciscan focus on seeing God incarnate, whether in mundane, awful, or splendid moments.

d) Reflection/Discussion/Planning

This part of the gathering will vary each time.



Before the Closing Prayer, it can be helpful to review logistics for the next gathering and the various responsibilities (i.e. Where? Who leads prayers? Who provides refreshments?)

¹ "For Clare, prayer without community cannot lead to the fullness of our self-identity, since it is in community that the mirror of our identity is reflected in the other, the neighbor whom we are called to love. Love transforms because love unites, and it is in loving our neighbor through compassion that we become more ourselves, and in becoming more ourselves, we become Christ." Delio, O.S.F., *Ilia, Clare of Assisi, A Heart Full of Love*, Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007, p. 51.

² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

e) **Closing Prayer**

Please see the Prayer Suggestions document for ideas and feel free to bring in your own prayers and creativity. In addition, we ask that all Tables end their prayer time with this final Closing FST prayer:

Closing Prayer for FST
Most High, glorious God
we praise You and we thank You
for the many good people and blessings
You have bestowed upon our Solidarity Table.
We ask today that Your spirit of truth and goodness
enlighten us as we embrace
the opportunities and challenges of this day
and give us true faith,
certain hope and perfect charity,
sense and knowledge, Gracious God,
as we seek to live out your gospel.

f) **Refreshments** (or in the middle of the gathering to provide a break, if desired)
Sharing food and drink can help to facilitate conversation and to build relationships. However, we also want to be sensitive to people's budgets and time, so we encourage each Table to decide as a group whether or not they would like to include time to share a snack or something to drink. We would encourage whatever is shared to be simple unless there's a special occasion and it is agreed upon by all.



3

³ *The Lord's Supper*, by Fritz Eichenberg (Germany & U.S., 1953), viewed June 2, 2020, <<https://www.plough.com/en/topics/culture/art/the-witness-of-jesus>>.