

Online Group Leader's Guide

Welcome and Thank You! Thank you so much for agreeing to facilitate an online group of learners in one of the My Catholic Faith Delivered programs. While MCFD strives to provide solid Catholic content in an engaging online format, it is the group facilitators who will help build the bridges among parishioners and learners as they journey to grow in faith.

You have chosen to facilitate a group of learners who will not have scheduled opportunities to gather. This might be the first time that you've facilitated a group of online learners, especially for a group who is growing in faith. While this makes your task much easier since you don't have to facilitate a place and time for the group to gather, it also poses new challenges for making sure that the experience of growing in faith is complimented by the building of community. Your commitment to this task is an important one. We will be asking for the Lord's blessings upon your commitment and your efforts. Thank you.

We've provided a number of materials and instructions to make your job as easy as possible. We also are available to you via email at support@mycatholicfaithdelivered.com, via phone at 1-866-981-8964, or via online chat at www.mycatholicfaithdelivered.com. Feel free to contact us if we can help in any way.

Getting Started

- Get Familiar with the System
 - Logging In
 - Navigating the Lessons
 - Administrative Functions You Will Need
 - Announcements
 - Blogs
 - Reports

- Introduce Yourself and Welcome Your Group Members
 - A week before you are going to start the lessons, send your group members a welcome email introducing yourself. Feel free to share any of the following information:
 - Who Am I?
 - What Is My Faith Background?
 - Why Did I Sign Up to be an Online Group Facilitator?
 - Invite the group members to post their own responses to the same set of questions before they begin the lesson.
 - Provide the details for logging into the system (*see Group Facilitator Materials*)
 - Provide the details for how the online program will run (*see Group Facilitator Materials*)

- Send a calendar for lessons

- While recognizing that learners have full access to the system for completing any lesson at any time, you will want to set a schedule that guides them for the benefit of facilitating group discussions online. We've provided a sample schedule (*in the Group Facilitators Materials*). Just type in your own calendar dates.

Facilitating Lessons

- Group Discussion
 - As people get started in the lessons, your role becomes one of facilitating group discussions. This may be as easy as posting a single question about the lesson (*see Questions for Reflection at the end of every lesson for examples*) as you might have a group that engages and interacts with little prompting. You might also feel the need to prompt additional questions or to probe for clarification.
- Announcements
 - A few days before you post the Group Discussion Question for that lesson, feel free to use the Announcement Board to remind your group members that they will want to have begun or completed this lesson in order to respond to the question.
 - Feel free to use the Announcement Board for your group to encourage and foster their continued growth in prayer and response to Christ. There are Weekly Faith Challenges (*see Group Facilitator Materials*) that allow each learner to live out their faith in specific ways.
 - If there are specific prayer requests for or from members of the group, the Announcement Board is one place you can seek prayers.
 - If there is a lot of engaged discussion or question about a specific topic, you can use the Announcement Board to direct your group members to a certain site for further learning. (*Additional approved sites can be found in the Group Facilitator Materials.*)
- Group and Individual Progress
 - You will have access to the Reports for your group that you can use for the purpose of encouragement, reminders and discussion points. Email reminders can be sent to those who haven't started the lesson along with others. Sometimes it is simply the "invitation" to join in the discussions that will prompt action by learners.
 - Examining reports to see where there were multiple people who missed a specific question on the Post-Assessment provides you the opportunity to flesh out a variety of areas for further learning.

Bringing Things to a Close

- When the final lesson has been completed, feel free to use the Closing Questions (*see the Group Facilitators Materials*) to allow your group members to reflect upon their learning, their growth and their faith journey.
- Your group may decide to gather for their final lesson discussion. If so, use the Closing Questions for that meeting.