

Christian Formation and the Education of Children

Discussion Guide 2

Local phase: September 2022 - June 2023



REGNUM
CHRISTI

Prayer in preparation for the 2024 General Convention



Jesus Christ, gathered in your name as a spiritual family and apostolic body, we place ourselves in your presence.

You have revealed to us the mystery of the love that burns in your apostolic Heart for all men and your desire to reign in our souls and in society.

We feel called to know the gift of Regnum Christi better, so that it will be fruitful in our lives and in the world.

We ask you to send out your Spirit, that he may be light to understand our charism with our minds and hearts, and that we may be always ready to respond to the needs of the Church and the world as apostles of your Kingdom.

Following Mary's example, we want to discover and welcome the action of your Spirit, accepting your plan with faith and singing your praise for the great works that you have done and continue to do.

Jesus Christ, You are the center of our lives. With renewed love, today we say to you, "Christ, our King, Thy Kingdom Come!"

Introduction



You have in your hands a series of eight discussion guides with topics for Encounters with Christ as a team or community. These resources seek to help with apostolic discernment on concrete topics from our life and surroundings. We seek to listen, with all members of Regnum Christi, to the voice of the Lord who invites us to go out and respond to the different needs of the world and the Church from our charism.

Eight areas of the apostolic activity of Regnum Christi have been chosen, which are found in number 11 of the Statutes of the Regnum Christi Federation. These are:

1. The proclamation of the Faith and the New Evangelization
2. The Christian formation and education of children
3. The Christian formation and education of adolescents
4. The Christian formation and education of youth
5. The promotion of marriage and the family
6. Vocational culture and ministry
7. The evangelization of professional and cultural environments
8. Social justice and practice of the works of mercy

Each one of these discussion guides is meant to be used as an Encounter with Christ, in such a way that as a community we can go deeper into each topic and discern what the Lord is inviting us to do as a team, as a section, and as Regnum Christi. With these discussion guides, the topic that is proposed for discussion takes the place of the case study.

In addition to this material, we have the essay published on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart: The Encounter with Christ in the Life of Regnum Christi: Identity, Foundation, and Dynamic, which explains to us the deep meaning of the Encounter and each one of its parts. This activity, which occupies a central place in the life of the members of Regnum Christi, puts us in contact with the Word and orients the communal discernment of what the Lord expects of us as a team or community.

We offer you here a few practical tips on how to use these discussion guides:

1. With respect to the content of the discussion guides:

Choice of the topic: there are eight topics. Although the discussion guides are numbered in a specific order, not every team has to do all eight topics, nor in that order. Each team is invited to choose those topics that they feel called to contribute to, though it may not be an area that touches their reality or stage of life directly. Each topic should be done in at least one session of the Encounter with Christ, but it can also be done in two sessions if it is considered necessary. It is advisable to know the topic to be discussed beforehand, so as not to waste time choosing it during the Encounter, and in case it is possible to come prepared.

Limitation to one's own environment: discernment of the proposed topics has to be done by placing ourselves in the reality of our own concrete environment, so that we avoid generic reflections and information. Therefore, although each discussion guide includes a general introduction to the topic, the unfolding of the Encounter has to specify the real environment in which we live and move, since that is where we are called to respond. The introduction offers us a description of the topic for discussion, its scope, and what we seek in that Encounter.

Parts: the Encounter follows the ordinary outline of all Encounters with Christ. There is an opening prayer to place ourselves in the presence of God and ask the Holy Spirit for his guidance and light. Then there is the Gospel reflection, for which a passage is provided along with some alternative options. It is recommended that sufficient time be dedicated to the prayerful reading of the Gospel, since discernment is illuminated by it alone. After having encountered Christ through his Word, we turn to the communal discernment of what He expects of us. The discussion guide offers some questions that serve to orient the reflection, following the method of see, judge, and act.

Apostolic dynamism: the fruit of the Encounter with Christ takes shape in actions of conversion in our life and apostolate. In addition to the questions that the discussion guide poses, it is good to listen to see if there is any action that the Lord is inviting us to personally and as a team.

2. Regarding methodology:

Time: it is recommended that the team leader help the team to reach the end of the process of discernment on each topic. Therefore, aware of the time at their disposal (that which is normally set aside for Encounters), they need to calculate the duration of each part and help to carry the conversation along. It is important to ensure that they get to all the different questions. The final question of each discussion guide helps to specify the formulation of what we have perceived to be the invitation of God in that specific area. As we mentioned above, a topic can be discussed in one or two sessions/moments of Encounter with Christ.

Secretary: in addition to the team leader, one person should be assigned to act as the secretary of each Encounter, since it is

important to keep track of what each team sees and proposes in order to discern it in the next step of the process. Therefore, there is a link at the end of each discussion guide where the notes of each Encounter are collected. It is not necessary to write down everything that is said, but only those things that are most interesting and best represent the topic that is being discerned, as well as the concrete resolutions.



Follow the link to the guides for the eight areas of evangelization and the corresponding forms to fill out as a team. www.rcgeneralconvention.org/local-phase-resources/

Christian Formation and the Education of Children

“The witness of Christian life given by parents in the family comes to children with tenderness and parental respect. Children thus perceive and joyously live the closeness of God and of Jesus made manifest by their parents in such a way that this first Christian experience frequently leaves decisive traces which last throughout life. This childhood religious awakening which takes place in the family is irreplaceable.” (Cfr. General Directory for Catechesis, n. 226, 2020).

The child perceives, absorbs, explores, examines, becomes self-aware through experiences. They have a great capacity for wonder, for openness to mystery, for grasping supernatural realities in their interior (the presence of their Guardian Angel, of the Blessed Virgin...). They live the joy of encountering God with simple and spontaneous acts and signs in front of beautiful images which reflect the tenderness of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Joseph, and of the Child Jesus. They gradually form an internal image of God and enjoy a personal relationship with Him and the Blessed Virgin, and they experience their protection.

As they traverse this stage they need to expand their experiences of the faith; have a close relationship with Jesus as a friend; know that they are an important and active part of the world, of history, and of a group; live rightly the awakening of their conscience; and have the opportunity to channel their sensitivity to the needs of others, especially when their concept of justice is born in this stage of life.

“The catechetical process in infancy is eminently educational. It seeks to develop those human resources which provide an anthropological basis for the life of faith, a sense of trust, of freedom, of self-giving, of invocation and of joyful participation.

Central aspects of the formation of children are training in prayer and introduction to Sacred Scripture. As a child of God, in virtue of the gift of Baptism, the child is proclaimed by Christ to be a privileged member of the Kingdom of God.” Mk 10:14. (Cfr. General Directory for Catechesis, n. 177-178, 2020)

In this topic we seek to reflect on our call as a Christian community to pay attention to the evangelization of children in the Christian education of the family, Catechesis, and religious education in schools, each one with its own character, which is especially delicate today.



1. Opening prayer

We begin this activity with a prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten our understanding, move our wills, and enkindle our hearts.

It is appropriate to add a Hail Mary or other prayer to invoke the Blessed Virgin, a Glory Be, and the invocations proper to Regnum Christi which seal our prayer by pointing to the goal of all our life and actions – the glory of God.



2. Prayerful reading of the Word

We seek to encounter him in the Gospel in order to place ourselves in an attitude of listening, so that faith and charity will guide our reflections, order our values, and orient our discernment.

A passage of the Gospel is chosen. It could be from the previous or next Sunday, or another passage that is appropriate to the needs of the team.

For today’s encounter, please choose one of the following Gospel passages:

Mark 10: 13-16: Let the little children come to me.

Alternative Gospel:

Matthew 18: 1-5: Become like children



3. Apostolic discernment of reality

After we have encountered Christ through his Word, we undertake a communal discernment of what he expects of us as a team or community in the circumstances of life in which we find ourselves. Consequently, we will observe the reality in which we are immersed with the desire to discover the best way to carry out our mission of evangelization within it. For today's encounter with Christ, using the questions provided in this discussion guide, please reflect on: "Christian formation and the education of children".

Follow the link to find all eight discussion guides and the corresponding forms to fill out as a team.
www.rcgeneralconvention.org/local-phase-resources/



To see

We want to see the case as God sees it, learning to observe life with objectivity and depth, with reason and faith, discovering how God is present in it.

- How important do you think Christian formation from childhood is?
- What are the challenges regarding the Christian education of children?



To judge

After we have become more aware of the presence of the wheat and the weeds in the case we have chosen (see Matthew 13:24-30), we want to discern how Jesus judges or interprets our presence, participation, or attitudes before this case, and, consequently, understand what he hopes for from us.

- What kind of formation and accompaniment do you think is necessary so that parents have the tools to transmit the faith to their children according to their age and interior world?
- How can we make the most of this stage of life to make Christ known and transmit the faith both to children and their families?
- What responses are needed to meet them?
- How can we respond, as Regnum Christi, to evangelize in this area?
- To what degree do you think that Regnum Christi in your locality is responding to the needs of people in this field of evangelization?



To act

This is the moment to choose what actions of conversion and apostolate we are called to in light of what we have discerned that Christ is asking of us. We seek to respond to the invitation from the Lord that we received through the Gospel judgement with our own evangelizing initiative. In this way, we aspire to transform reality with the criteria of the Gospel.

The members suggest possible actions to carry out with regard to themselves, with the goal of their own conversion, and with regard to the reality affected by the case, with the goal of evangelization. In response to the call experienced in the “to judge” element:

- As a team, how can we collaborate with God in his work of making present the Kingdom in this area of evangelization?



4. Closing prayer

The Encounter with Christ concludes with a prayer of thanksgiving by one or several members.

The prayer closes with the two invocations to Christ the King and the Virgin Mary proper to Regnum Christi.



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