

For the purposes of this informational presentation, we propose an abbreviated version of a typical session. The approximate timings that would be dedicated to each part in a normal sharing are indicated below:

- 10 minutes
- Sharing the Good News - 5 minutes
- 10 minutes

Session 1 (abbreviated) What is Prayer?

LIFTING OUR HEARTS (Opening Prayer)

EXPLORING THE CATECHISM

(Invite all to read quietly) (1 minute)

Prayer is the language of a loving covenant—of a love for God who made us and continues to call us into a personal loving relationship. St. Thérèse of Lisieux has given us a beautiful description of prayer: "For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy" (2558). Thérèse's love for God was so full that she gave her heart totally.

In prayer, God gives himself to us and we give ourselves to God. We speak, listen, and respond to him. Prayer is the meeting of two loves—God and ourselves. God asks for our hearts completely. When we pray, we are asked to pray with humble hearts, not with hearts full of pride. **Only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought" (Romans 8:26) are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer (2559).**



- 15 minutes

SCRIPTURE: PONDERING THE WORD

Luke 18:9-14 (2 minutes)

SHARING QUESTION (5 minutes)

- What stance do I take in prayer? Am I humble, fearful, confident? Explain.

- 10 minutes

EXPLORING THE CATECHISM (continued) (5 minutes)

Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between the Holy Trinity and us (2564). As we lift our minds and hearts to God, we pray in

God's presence. Communion with God originates for Christians in their Baptism into Christ's body, the Church.... **Prayer is Christian** insofar as it is communion with Christ and extends throughout the Church, which is his Body. Its dimensions are those of Christ's love (2565).

Prayer is a marvelous gift from God. It enables us to look at our beloved who is God and it enables us to know that God is constantly looking at us. Through prayer we can empty ourselves and come to know God, not just know about him.

God is always searching for us, always waiting for us.... **In prayer, the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response (2567).**



SHARING OUR FAITH (5 minutes)

- How have I experienced prayer as a gift in my life?

• 25 minutes

LIVING THE GOOD NEWS (5 minutes)

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. This should be your primary consideration. The following are secondary suggestions:

- Make a commitment to spend at least fifteen minutes a day in prayer if you do not already do so.
- Invite someone to pray with you. For example, if you do not gather as a family for prayer, choose a time to pray together as a family.
- Research and read good books on prayer and spirituality.

• 10 minutes

LIFTING OUR HEARTS

Offer spontaneous prayer.

Pray together.

• 5 minutes

LOOKING AHEAD

- Prepare for your next session by prayerfully reading and studying **Session 2, Prayer in the Old Testament** and paragraphs 2566-2597 of the *Catechism*.

To be done after the present session and before the next session