



Prayer Box

We offer the texts for guided sit-downs chosen by the Equipes Notre-Dame in France and translated from the French, which are related to each of the eight topics in the theme of the year in 2013/4, *“Dare to Live the Gospel.”*

“The Church is at work with the power of the Holy Spirit”.

From the Fathers of the Church to Christians today

Each bible passage is followed by suggestions for discussion at a Sit-Down.

1. The Church founded on the faith of the Apostles.

Prayer – Acts of the Apostles 2; 41-47

They accepted what Peter said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number. These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. And everyone was filled with awe; the apostles worked many signs and miracles. And all who shared the faith owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and distributed the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed. Each day, with one heart, they regularly went to the Temple but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

For Discussion in the sit down

What unites us as a couple in terms of faith, and what separates us ?

What differences exist between us in the expression of our faith ?

2. Progress in the faith

Prayer – Matthew 13; 24-32

He put another parable before them, 'The kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, then the darnel appeared as well. The owner's labourers went to him and said, "Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?" He said to them, "Some enemy has done this." And the labourers said, "Do you want us to go and weed it out?" But he said, "No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn." ' He put another parable before them, 'The kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air can come and shelter in its branches.'

For Discussion in the Sit-Down

Share as a couple on our journey of faith, our doubts and difficulties over the years.

As couples and as a family, what are the positive or negative experiences, on which we have built our faith.

How do we grow in faith as a couple ? With what support?

How do we pass on the faith to our children?

3. The Eucharist, union of the Church in Christ

Prayer – John 6; 51-58

I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.' Then the Jews started arguing among themselves, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' Jesus replied to them: In all truth I tell you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise that person up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in that person. As the living Father sent me and I draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will also draw life from me. This is the bread which has come down from heaven; it is not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

For Discussion in the sit down

How do we let Christ live in us, in our marriage and our personal relationship as a couple with Christ?

How do we show Christ alive in our family, and with our children?

4. A Common Prayer

Prayer – Matthew 6; 7-13

'In your prayers do not babble as the gentiles do, for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them; your Father knows what you need before you ask him. So you should pray like this:

*Our Father in heaven, may your name be held holy,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.*

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us.

And do not put us to the test, but save us from the Evil One.

For Discussion in the sit down

Our couple prayer: difficulties, joys, obstacles, and benefits.

Why and for whom do we pray?

Family prayer.

5. The Church and concern for the poorest

Prayer – Matthew 25; 31-46

'When the Son of man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All nations will be assembled before him and he will separate people one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the upright will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, lacking clothes and clothe you? When did we find you sick or in prison and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." Then he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food, I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink, I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, lacking clothes and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or lacking clothes, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then he will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me." And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the upright to eternal life.'

For Discussion in the sit down

Money matters in our marriage, how do we define necessity and extravagance ?

(PTO)

The part we each play in managing our budget, and respect for the independent choices of each other.

Our solidarity with the poor, sharing our surplus.

Our attention to others in the way we live.

The education of our children in sharing and solidarity.

6. The Christian community in the service of unity and peace

Prayer – John 14; 23-29

Jesus replied: Anyone who loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make a home in him. Anyone who does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not my own: it is the word of the Father who sent me. I have said these things to you while still with you; but the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you. Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace which the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me say: I am going away and shall return. If you loved me you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you this now, before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe.

For Discussion in the sit down

What causes conflict in our marriage ?

How do we prevent, avoid this?

How do we reconcile and move forward ?

What gestures of peace do we show in everyday life?

7. Be apostles

Prayer – Matthew 28; 16-20

Meanwhile the eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

For Discussion in the sit down

The possibilities and difficulties in being apostles of Christ in marriage and family.

The vocation to holiness of the couple; how to discover it, and implement it ?

The acknowledgement of weakness in oneself, one's spouse, as a couple, in the family.

8. Called to work for the Church

Prayer – Ephesians 4; 11-16

And to some, his 'gift' was that they should be apostles; to some prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; to knit God's holy people together for the work of service to build up the Body of Christ, until we all reach unity in faith and knowledge of the Son of God and form the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself. Then we shall no longer be children, or tossed one way and another, and carried hither and thither by every new gust of teaching, at the mercy of all the tricks people play and their unscrupulousness in deliberate deception. If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow completely into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole Body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its own strength, for each individual part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has built itself up in love.

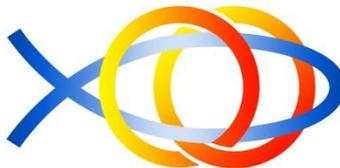
For Discussion in the sit down

Dare we say that we love the Church ?

What are our commitments in the Church ?

What is our personal and couple involvement in the problems of the world ?

How do we support the education of our children in the life of the Church ?



Equipes Notre-Dame