

# GROUP COORDINATORS

## Passionist Family Group Movement

### Family Group Leadership.



- Good leaders are vital to the growth of a Family Group. They help the different members get to know one another and they encourage them to contribute to the development of the group.
- Family Group Leadership is like parenting.
- As a Family Group grows, the adults begin to be more involved. However, since relationships are always changing and adaptability is important, coordinators need to be aware of the needs of their families.
- It is important that group coordinators help each member feel welcome and appreciated.

### What Helps the Leadership?

Important strategies help to ensure that the task does not become burdensome:

- Delegate, but don't abdicate responsibility. If leaders delegate and ask for help, not only will they decrease their own workload, but they will help the group bond.
- Take advantage of the support of the Parish Coordinators and other Group Coordinators. Group Coordinators need to meet regularly under the guidance of the Parish Coordinators and Regional Coordinators to share their experiences and support each other. It is desirable that the pastor attend these meetings when possible.
- Rotate the leadership regularly – 3 years is a good term.
- Leaders need to be able to keep confidences, be attentive listeners, be sensitive when dealing with personal issues, be willing to seek advice, and be approachable.
- Previous Group Coordinators are an invaluable source of help and advice.
- The key to good leadership is not to simply encourage people to accept differences, but to appreciate them as enrichment for the group and the best learning ground for living the gospel.
- Until people are comfortable with one another they will usually be slow to volunteer or offer help. It helps if the Group Coordinators seek, welcome and accept help.

### So how Do You Build Involvement?

- Coordinators need to monitor suggestions to ensure that they allow as many as possible to participate. Finance can be an embarrassing issue, so keeping activities at *low cost*, and encouraging people to share, will protect the many who struggle financially.

- It is good to have some organisational skills so that functions are planned, group members are informed of what is going on and the Parish Coordinators are regularly informed about the state of the group.
- Groups are advised to meet and plan their monthly activities 12 months ahead. It helps to build involvement if different families or perhaps two families are asked to host or organise an activity.
- As in a family, good example is vital. This applies in particular, to encouraging members to recognise ways they can assist each other in times of need and especially when there is a crisis. It is easy to think that the '*success*' of a group depends on a good attendance at group activities, but it is a trap to fall into the '*numbers game*'. A groups' vitality will be determined by the depth of bonding between the members, and sometimes the poorly attended functions, small '*get togethers*' and phone calls promote this more than the popular activities, because people get a better chance to talk and share with one another.

### **What Extra Is Expected of Group Co-coordinators?**

- Group Coordinators need some on-going development to assist them to appreciate more deeply the skills required for pastoral leadership. One occasion for this is the annual regional refresher sessions. Parish and Group Coordinators are expected to attend these or to invite others from their group to attend in their place. This is a major occasion for learning about leadership from others who deal with similar situations. These sessions are open to all group members.
- Some coordinator groups have an annual weekend away with their children and this is most effective in strengthening their relationships.
- At all levels of the Family Group Movement the emphasis is on *support*, and there can be no doubt that the rewards of this ministry give some insight into what Jesus meant by gaining "the hundredfold" in this life. It must surely be one of the most exciting and fulfilling ministries in the New Zealand Church.