



**MODULE 1 FACILITATOR’S GUIDE:
Living Charism Today and into the Future**

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MODULE GOALS

- To deepen sisters' and associates' understanding and commitment to the gifts of living the charism today and for the future.
- To develop a personal and collective understanding of living the charism today.
- To create a shared vision of gospel living of mission, and discern personal and collective action using the lens of the CSJ charism to facilitate healing around issues of passion.

WELCOME (5-10 MINUTES)

Facilitator welcomes the group. If group members did not watch the Walk with Wisdom Introduction video before this first session, play the video now. Facilitator then reads the following.

Walk with Wisdom is a tool to help us explore our charism and mission, remembering who we are and how we wish to live committedly and communally for the love of God. Each session can be completed in three hours, but as a group we can decide if we want to spend more or less time on a given session.

My role as the facilitator of this session is to help us move through the process outline, keep us on time and assist us in deciding our regular meeting times and who will volunteer to facilitate the next session. Each session will have some or all of the following components:

- Centering prayer
- Sharing the state of the heart
- Shared experiential exercises
- Guided discussion from the readings
- Corporate silent worship/contemplative silence and time for reflections that may have emerged from the silence
- Closing prayer

CENTERING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Facilitator signals the beginning of prayer using a song, chime, or quiet invitation. When all are settled, read the following instructions.

- Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.
- Sit comfortably and with your eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.
- When you become aware of thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.
- When I signal the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with your eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

Facilitator signals the end of silence using a song, chime, or a quiet invitation. After a few beats of silence, read the following:

Maxim 35: Convince yourself that wherever you are and whatever you do God sees you clearly and distinctly; do not do in his presence what you would not dare do in the presence of a person you should esteem.

SHARING THE STATE OF THE HEART (20-30 MINUTES)

Maintain the quiet, contemplative atmosphere as you invite the group to reflect on these questions; then briefly share what has been given to you during this time of reflection.

- How has God been revealed to you since our last gathering [or in the today/this week if this is your first gathering]?
- How has that changed you?

After all have shared, Facilitator reads the following:

Living Charism is the first session in the series of six. In this session we will explore what the charism means to us personally and collectively. We will complete a mind/concept map to help us see how we each interpret ideas and beliefs that surround our understanding of the charism and use this as the foundation for our work as we move forward together.

Facilitator plays video for Module 1.

VIDEO FOR MODULE 1 (20 MINUTES)

CREATING A MIND MAP OF THE CHARISM (60 MINUTES)

Create a shared concept of the Charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

**Important:* there are no right or wrong answers, this is to see how individuals relate and create their understanding of deeper aspects of the charism.

Items needed:

- Large newsprint or flipchart paper
- Bold markers for easy reading at a distance
- Painters tape
- Wall space, large table space or an open floor
- Paper for participants's notes

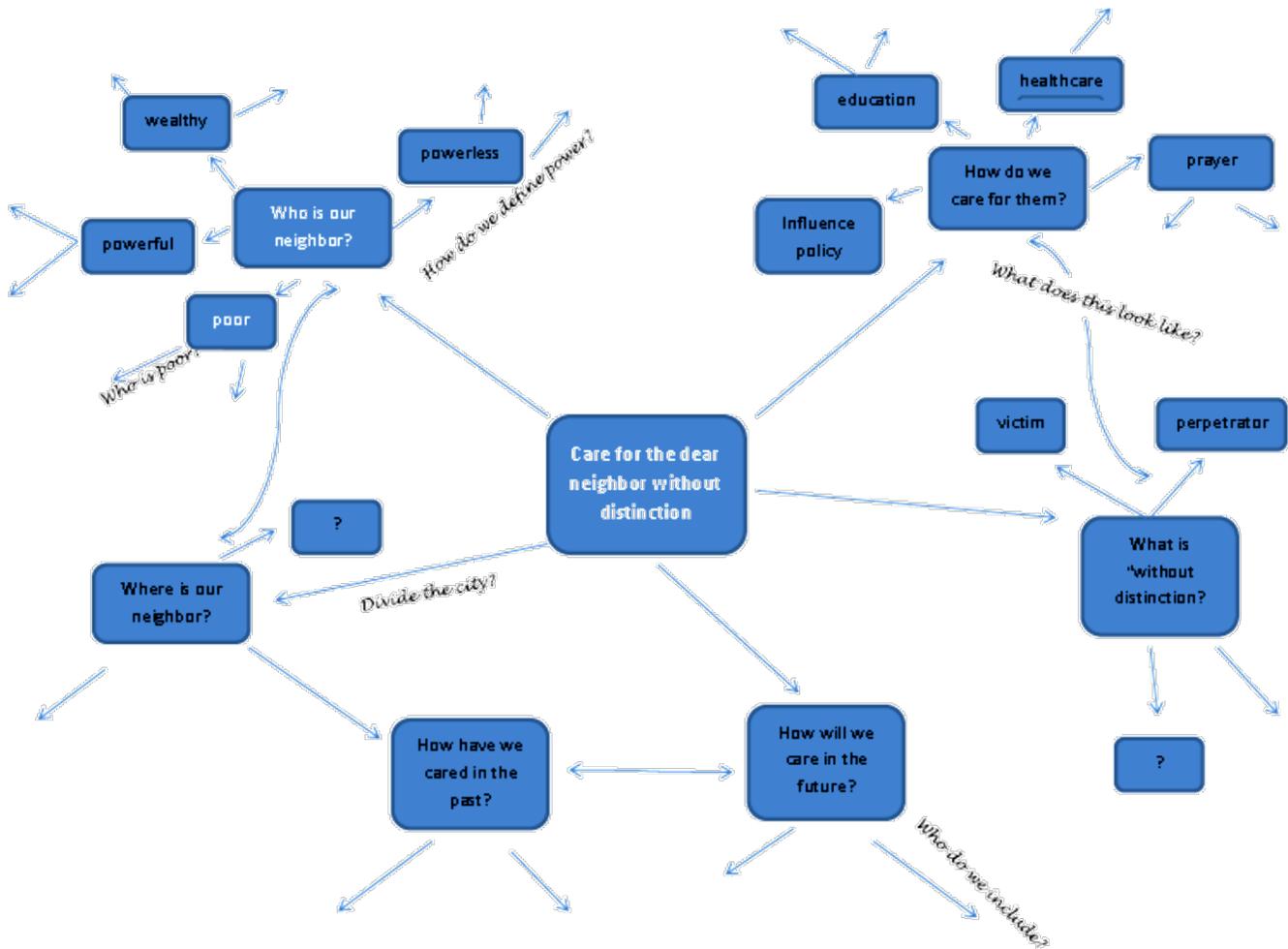
Purpose of exercise:

To be curious about deeper knowing of the charism. When speaking of the charism and mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph, we toss around concepts of right relationship, unity and reconciliation, hospitality and love of God and love of Dear Neighbor without distinction. These concepts are often ambiguous, have personal connotations, and can differ in understanding and priority among us. This exercise is to help those gathered to share a deeper consideration of what we mean and believe about ourselves and others when we speak of our understanding of the charism.

Creating a mind/concept map:

- As a large group, brainstorm aspects, phrases, and ideas associated with the charism of the community. The facilitator will record these on newsprint for the entire room.
- At the end of the group brainstorm, ask each member to individually list key phrases or ideas in order of most importance to her.
- Once each member has made her list, break into groups of three or four people.

Sample Concept map of Dear Neighbor



Small group sharing:

- Find three to five key elements shared all/most group members and list them each on a large piece of newsprint.
- Under each key element, brainstorm additional key aspects/characteristics, then keep building layers by asking questions. What does that mean? What would that look like? How do we see this in ourselves? How do others see it in us?
- Begin to draw arrows and make notes on how these elements and answers have relationship to each other.
- Note if there are any key elements that are not in alignment with the whole group, e.g. one person believes "care for creation" is a key element of the charism but it was not listed by the whole.

Once each small group has sufficiently mapped three to five aspects of the charism in depth, take a moment to have the group study the various layers.

Facilitator calls the group back to a large group discussion of the following questions.

- What did we discover about the charism?
- Where in the charism was it easiest to find common ground?
- Was there ever disagreement on what was an important aspect of the charism?
- How often do we collectively and personally examine what the charism looks like in our daily and corporate living?
- How does this time of sharing change us as a community?

GUIDED DISCUSSION FROM THE READINGS (60 MINUTES)

From the silence, speak only if you feel called to respond to any of the excerpts and queries below. This is not a time for conversation, but a deep sharing of understandings revealed. Once someone has shared, allow for space, then others can continue to speak if prompted by the Spirit. After all have shared, if there is time and the group feels compelled, more discussion may be desired.

Facilitator reads the following:

- Pope Francis shared the following from Saint Irenaeus in *The Joy of the Gospel*,
"...even if the Christian message has known periods of darkness and ecclesial weakness, it will never grow old. Jesus can also break through the dull categories with which we would enclose him and he constantly amazes us by his divine creativity. Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today's world."

If the charism is the door through which we invite ourselves and others to access the Gospel, what have I learned by viewing the various openings and understandings of my sisters and brothers who share this charism with me?

- We are reminded by José Rodríguez Carballo, O.F.M. in *Rejoice!*, "Life in the spirit is never completed, but is always open to mystery, as we discern in order to know the Lord and to perceive reality beginning with him."

How do we ensure that we do not let the mission/charism become stagnant in our hearts, remaining ever open to mystery and new beginnings in Christ, to become the living charism?

- In Pope Francis's *The Joy of the Gospel*, and Walter Brueggemann's *The Prophetic Imagination*, we are warned of the abandonment of our traditions by enculturation and consumerism, which leads us to individualism—not just a loss of faith, but a false faith.

By examining individual and shared understandings of our charism, how do I/we prepare to share joy and live an alternative prophetic community?

GATHERING THE GRACES (5-10 MINUTES)

Reflect on the following questions:

- What have I heard?
- What am I learning?
- What difference will it make for me tomorrow and the day after that and beyond?
- What difference does it make for us as the community of St. Joseph?

Each participant may share ONE brief awareness/learning from today's process.

Take a few minutes to record in your journal:

- What awareness has the group gained during this time?
- What wisdom needs to be recorded and carried into the next session?

If your group has chosen to have a different facilitator for each session, Facilitator asks for a volunteer to facilitate next time.

CLOSING PRAYER

Facilitator invites everyone to reflect silently for a moment on what they have experienced during this time together. Choose a group member to read the following.

Reader: Loving God,
You have given us the gift of the charism as Sisters of St. Joseph.
We are mindful that "life in the Spirit is never completed,
But always open to mystery."
Help us to discern in order to know you and serve you more fully.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Incarnate Word and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.