



# Why Dominican?

## Presentation Notes for Inquiry Module 6: Dominican Study

**Objectives:** At the end of this session, the Inquirer will be able to:

1. Understand that “assiduous study “ (Rule II 10 f) is not optional but it is required as an indication of one’s suitability as a Dominican. It is pursued in conjunction with one’s other obligations.
2. Understand that study is the way Dominicans search for Truth. Understand why Dominicans approach study through “disputatio” (looking at multiple aspects of a topic/question in an intellectual “roundtable” type of discussion).
3. Understand the multiple purposes of Dominican study including:
  - a. to understand the created world
  - b. to grow in friendship with God, as a way to conversion of heart
  - c. to reach out to and communicate with those who are different in various ways
  - d. to inform oneself so as to become a support and counsel to others in the Dominican community and to receive support and counsel from the community
  - e. to be a bridge connecting community and apostolate
  - f. to be able to give to others what one does have/understand.
4. Understand the importance of study in the Order including:
  - a. Personal and communal study
  - b. Dispensation within the Order to study
  - c. The duty to preach must have study as a foundation.
5. Incorporate the sources of Dominican study as listed in the Rule (II 13) into their lives.
6. Articulate why “Veritas”/ Truth is a suitable motto of the Order of Preachers.

**Materials:** no special materials are needed for this session

**Prayer/Contemplation:** Matthew 4: 1- 4

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## Study:

Note: The presenter might want to read the article by James A. Weisheipl, O.P. entitled “The Place of Study in the Ideal of St. Dominic” to gain an overall view of Dominican Study. It is available at <http://www.domcentral.org/study/opstudy.htm>. While this is an older article and one directed at friars, it still gives particular insight into the “why” of study.

1. Begin the discussion by asking the participants about their educational experiences in their early school years including both positive and negative experiences. Continue with experiences as an adult.
2. After those who wish to share have done so, identify situations or characteristics that increased their motivation to learn or which facilitated learning.
3. Ask each person to rate his/her personal inclination to study on a scale of 1 to 5, but not to share that feeling aloud. Bring out the point that Dominicans do not need to be scholars but that they need to have a “hunger” for knowledge based on Dominican spirituality.
4. Continue leading a directed teaching in which you state a certain point and then ask the participants to respond to that point by giving a personal reaction, an example, or by posing a question. Points should include:
  - a. The purposes of Dominican study
  - b. The sources of Dominican study
  - c. The importance of study within the Order.
5. At this point, it would be helpful to try to contrast studying at school or for work with Dominican study. This strategy is used not only to understand the uniqueness of Dominican study but also to allay any fears from past experiences about one’s present or potential status or success as a future Dominican who will profess to be a lifelong student. Although all Dominicans must have a true thirst for knowledge about Divine Truth upon which his/her life as a Dominican rests, the amount of study and the type of study does vary considerably. There is no need to be a scholar, just an avid learner.
6. Define “disputation” during study or in a discussion as a way to obtain the Truth that is contained, in part, in each of multiple perspectives on an issue through an intellectual “round table” type of discussion. St. Thomas Aquinas used *disputatio*/disputation in his written arguments and those who wish to investigate his actual methodology are encouraged to do so. The basic points necessary to understand at this stage of formation include maintaining an attitude of openness, verbal and intellectual respect for each viewpoint and speaker, time to reflect on new information, and refraining from any type of coercion in trying to change another’s opinions.

7. Encourage the participants to discuss the positive outcomes of situations in the secular world when open dialogue (which is similar to disputation) has been used.

**Community:** Point out that other Dominicans are excellent sources for expanding one's own viewpoint on a particular subject because, more times than not, among Dominicans will be informed members with different opinions on the topic.

**Apostolate:** Point out that effective and grace-filled preaching is based on solid knowledge that comes from both study and listening to other perspectives on the subject matter.

**Conclusion:** Lead a summary discussion of how the participants view Dominicans and their motto "Veritas" (Truth).

**Assignment:** Distribute the Study Guide for the next session.