



Why Dominican?

Presentation Notes for Inquiry Module 7: Dominican Community

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

1. Understand that although Lay Dominicans do not live in community, they form a community much like a familial group and that they live according to a common Rule.
2. Understand that belonging to a Dominican community has particular responsibilities and benefits.
3. Articulate how a Lay Dominican belongs to the Dominican Family on a local, national, and international level.
4. Articulate the organizational structure of a local group/Chapter and know the personnel in leadership positions.
5. Know the names of current personnel who have been elected to the places of leadership within the Province (of friars and laity) as well as the Master of the Order.
6. Understand that the governance of the Order of Preachers as well as some of its traditions such as disputation rely heavily on the pillar of community to work smoothly.

Note: Several aspects of this module overlap with others in the Inquiry Stage including those concerning the Rule, the Particular Directory, and Study. Be sure to adjust the emphasis on these items according to what has been addressed previously and at what length and depth

Materials: chalk/chalkboard or markers/poster board; Presentation Handout about Community Expectations

Prayer/Contemplation: Read one or all of the following: Rom. 12: 10-13; Gal. 6: 2; Phil. 2: 2 – 3; Col. 3:12-14. Ask the Inquirers to share their impressions of the kind of community portrayed in these readings.

Study:

1. Begin the study session with the types of groups to which the participants belong. Include the general criteria for membership in each group.

2. Discuss the differences in membership in other groups and membership in the Order of Preachers. Stress that belonging to the Order of Preachers requires mutual discernment about one's living according to the Rule and that it requires a lifelong commitment.
3. Drawing on some of the qualities of interacting with one another from the Scripture readings, point out that each Dominican smaller community strives to share in the qualities of the first Christian communities as members of the Mystical Body of Christ and the Order of Preachers.
4. Using the presentation handout about community, facilitate a discussion about the responsibilities and benefits one might expect when one becomes an integral part of the local Dominican group.
5. Review the responsibility of living according to the Rule as a matter of discipline and obedience. Discipline, obedience, and encouragement might also be part of a brief discussion of how participants strive to live the Dominican life more fully and faithfully.
6. Discuss how the democratic form of government used throughout the Dominican Order (for elections of leadership including no primacy of place for any Dominican before or after election, decisions within the group or Province or Order) relies on this type of community.
7. Discuss ways in which the current local group provides support and encouragement as well as re-direction to its participants. If there are only Inquirers in the group, this can be a kind of "wish list" of how each person can be respected but also held accountable within the group.
8. Discuss accountability and what it means in a spiritual journey.
9. Review some of the key points about disputation which should be used in conducting discussions or debates or in decision-making.

Community: Take a little bit of time to talk about the positive things each participant has found already within this growing Dominican community. Using a "family tree" structure, discuss how the officers of the group/Chapter belong to the wider government structure of the Order. You may want to prepare a presentation handout ahead of time that includes the Master of the Order, the four branches of the Order, the structure of the friars and laity in your country, region, and province including the names of those in current leadership.

Apostolate: The apostolate/mission of the Order of Preachers is to preach. Preaching is not to be thought of as only giving a homily, but rather, as a variety of opportunities. Since community also involves one's parish, a discussion of each participant's personal apostolate in his/her parish or a group apostolate if all participants attend the same parish will help connect the Dominican community to the church community.

Follow-up: At regular intervals, it might be beneficial to review some characteristics of a "good" Dominican community and assess how this group is approaching those characteristics.

Assignment: Distribute the Study Guide for the next session.