

## Using Small Groups in the Catechumenal Process

The purpose of RCIA catechetical sessions is to inform and *foster the process of conversion of heart*.

To this end, it is important to give participants a forum where they can feel comfortable –

- ❖ Expressing how they have understood the teachings they have heard
- ❖ Articulating their initial responses; perceptions, insights, agreements, assent, thanksgiving; as well as concerns, reservations, difficulties, and disagreements
- ❖ Deepening their own conversions
- ❖ Considering how they might apply the teaching in their lives.

This forum is the **small-group discussion**. Though not mentioned in the RCIA ritual book, small groups are exceedingly helpful for participants because they call for *dialogue and response*. Speaking honestly about their thoughts and feelings as they learn causes participants to wrestle with them, and in time and with God's grace, experience deepening conversion.

Small-group sessions are also helpful to the RCIA leader, godparents, sponsors and RCIA team.

- ❖ Dialogue with participants in a small-group context allows sponsors, godparents, and team members (facilitators) gain invaluable insights concerning the pastoral care an individual or group may need.
- ❖ If a participant needs to talk something out, the small groups provide people who are there to listen.
- ❖ If there is a recurring issue that needs further attention, a pastorally astute RCIA team member (facilitator) can pick up on it so that it can be addressed appropriately – whether in a group format or privately.

For all these reasons, the small group is an essential element in helping participants embrace and internalize what has been presented, as well as helping to providing pastoral insights for the RCIA team to better assist and foster conversion for individual participants and the group.