



CNWE

CATHOLIC NETWORK FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY
RÉSEAU CATHOLIQUE POUR L'ÉGALITÉ DES FEMMES

Catholic Network for Women's Equality (CNWE) ~ Discussion Guide on Family Life

Purpose of Discussion Guide

The purpose of this discussion guide developed by CNWE's National Work Group (NWG) is to offer an opportunity for Catholics to listen and share with one another on issues important to women and family life. The guide is designed for use by small groups.

Faith Formation

- 1. Did your early experiences of family life influence your faith journey?**
 - If yes, did they play a positive role or hinder the development of your faith (or some of both)?
 - What was your experience of faith in your adolescence and young adulthood?
- 2. How have you shared your Catholic beliefs and practices with your children, grandchildren or other relatives? What has been their response?**
 - What have your children/grandchildren or relatives taught you about the Catholic faith?
- 3. Are there particular passages of scripture that resonate with your experiences of family life?**
 - Are there 'troublesome texts' in scripture wherein particular interpretations can have negative effects on families?
- 4. Do you feel that your local church nurtured/nurtures you/your family's spirituality?**
 - If so, how? If not, why not?
 - How could parishes better support faith and family life?

Understanding Gender

- 5. What do you consider the primary influences on your day-to-day practices as a woman or man?**
 - (i.e. parents, siblings, friends, church, education, media)
- 6. Have your gender practices changed during your lifetime?**
 - What led to these changes?
- 7. How have the experiences of dating, courtship, co-habitation, marriage and divorce (your own or those of family and friends) influenced your understanding of the gender roles of women and men?**

8. How have your employment or educational experiences influenced your understanding of gender roles?

- How have your experiences of aging impacted your understanding of gender?

Sexuality

9. How did you learn about sexual orientation, sex, birth control and procreation?

- How has your understanding of sexuality changed over the years? Do your religious beliefs and practices influence your understanding? If so, how?
- If you have children, how did you teach your children about sexual orientation, sex, birth control and procreation?
- The Vatican survey asks, “How can an increase in births be promoted?” What is your reaction to this statement?

10. What aspects of the Catholic church hierarchy’s teaching on marriage/same-sex marriage, contraception, abortion and homosexuality have you/your family accepted, questioned, ignored or rejected?

Marriage and Family

11. Has your understanding of marriage and family changed over time? If so, how?

- How do your children/grandchildren, younger relatives/friends understand marriage?
- What role have religious beliefs and practices played in your understanding of marriage?

12. How well do parishes support couples in formation and couples/families in crisis?

- If you are/have been married, did you participate in a marriage preparation course? If so, was it helpful? Given what you know now about married life, how could it have been more helpful?

13. Is there, to your knowledge, information on abuse or family violence available in your local parish?

- Do you feel that your parish would be a safe place to disclose experience of domestic abuse or violence?

14. What are your experiences concerning divorce and remarriage in your family and among your friends?

- What do you think about Catholic teaching that prohibits the reception of communion for people who are divorced and have remarried?
- Do you know of someone who sought an annulment? What was the process like for her/him?

15. Has the magisterium’s teaching in any of these areas influenced the degree to which you participate in your local Catholic parish?

- Has it influenced your participation in CNWE?
- How has this teaching promoted or hindered justice and equality for women in the church and in the world?