

Respecting Confidences

As a Leader, you may be entrusted with information that is not for public consumption. Even the fact that a person is a single parent may be something that she or he wants to talk about when they feel ready. Respect all confidences that are given to you and make sure that you are not perceived to be prying when someone is not willing to give much information about themselves.



Welcoming New Members

As Leaders, you need to make a special effort to welcome new members into your Group and to make them feel at home. Remember how it feels to come into a group where everyone already seems to know each other. Make sure all your members realise this so that they do not become complacent and relate only to the friends they already have in the group. This could actually happen if people are having such a good time together that they forget how left out other could feel.

Benefits In Being A Leader

As a Leader, you are offered the unique experience of putting your Christianity into action in a practical, everyday way. you will improve your communication skills by working with different kinds of people. Your own family will see, by your example, what it's like to reach out beyond your own family and help create a community in which people know that others genuinely care about them.



At all levels of the Family Group Movement the emphasis is on love and support. There can be no doubt that the rewards of this ministry bring the gospel alive as we "Love one Another". It must surely be one of the most exciting and fulfilling ministries in the church.

**"FAMILY GROUPS DO NOT TAKE AWAY
THE DIFFICULTIES OF LIFE, BUT GIVE
US THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE
TO LIVE AS FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST."**

*Father Peter McGrath, C.P.
Founder of the Family Group Movement*

ROLE OF THE LEADERS

**FAMILY GROUP
MOVEMENT**



What Does Leadership Of A Family Group Mean?

Good Leaders are vital to the growth of a Family Group. They help the different members to get to know one another and they encourage them to use their own unique gifts to the development of the group. It is important that the Leaders help everyone feel welcome and appreciated. They need to be aware and sensitive to people's needs.

The Leaders are in some ways the servants of the Group. They are there to make sure it develops without dominating or seeking to be in a power position.

Christian Ministry

Leaders are not chosen for their administrative skills or their cleverness. They are chosen because they have shown that they have the interests of the community at heart. They are willing to do something to help the others in the Parish because they genuinely wish to put their Christian faith into practice. Even if they are quiet, shy people, Leaders who want to serve are always more valuable than "capable" people who are too bound up in their own lives and goals.

Simplicity

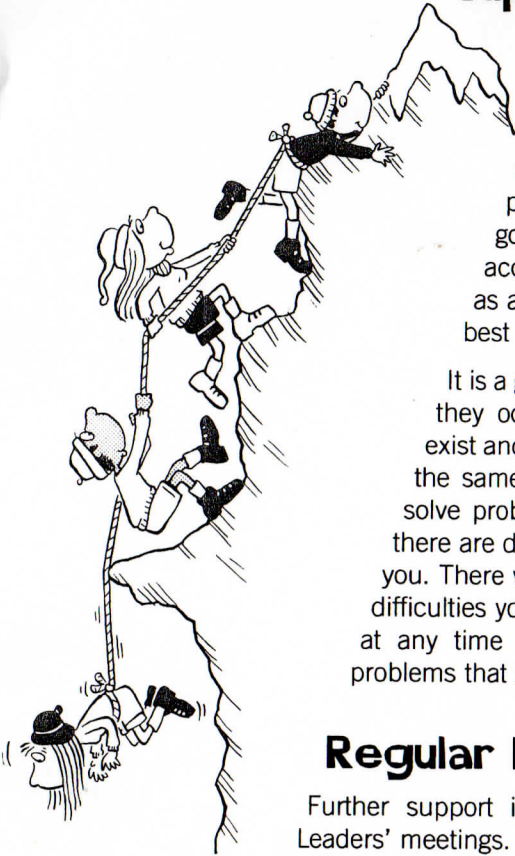
A group that is ticking along, with everyone becoming involved and sharing the responsibility of organising functions, allows the Leaders to relax and enjoy being part of the group.

The more that all the members become involved with the functions and making decisions about them, the more they will feel that it is their Group too.

Family Group Leadership could best be seen in the light of "setting the wheels in motion". It shouldn't be seen as a huge burden either. Most of us have enough responsibilities without feeling that we bear the responsibility of 10 to 12 other families too.

The beauty of Family Groups lies in their simplicity, not structure. So look at yourself as a catalyst for friendships, not a Prime Minister in charge of souls!

Support



Although there is great satisfaction in being a Leader, there can also be times of pain and disappointment. It does not take long before people recognise that there are differences among themselves which are reflected in how people think, feel, act and relate. The key to good Leadership is to encourage people to accept these differences and to appreciate them as an enrichment for the group. This can be the best learning ground for living the gospel

It is a good idea if problems can be discussed when they occur rather than pretending that they don't exist and will go away. Being open and honest, and at the same time tactful and caring, is the best way to solve problems. It will not be easy all the time and if there are difficulties in the group, this is no reflection on you. There will be others there to help you deal with any difficulties you meet. The Co-ordinators can be contacted at any time to ask any questions or to consult about problems that arise.

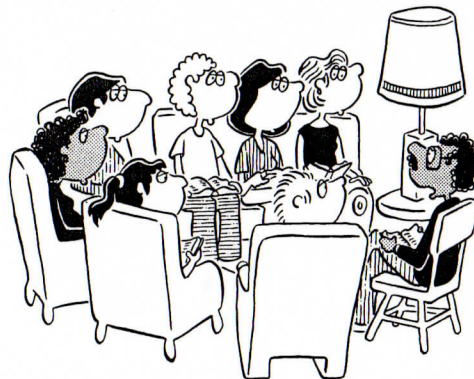
Regular Leaders' Meetings

Further support is available through attendance of regular Leaders' meetings. The Co-ordinators will be there to offer their guidance. It is also desirable to have your Priest attend. In the early stages of your Family Groups, a member of our Lay team will also attend to offer assistance.

As Leaders are continually supporting others, they need to be looked after too. One of the most effective ways of support is through the Leaders' Group.

At regular Leaders' meetings, you can share the successes and difficulties you have encountered and receive suggestions from fellow Leaders and the Co-ordinators. You will gain from other people's ideas and their experiences, and they can gain from yours.

As Family Groups develop in your Parish community, these systems of mutual support, encouragement and strength will continually grow.



Annual Leaders' Days

This is an excellent opportunity to gather with many Leaders from parishes throughout the region. These days provide Leaders with a renewed enthusiasm for the ministry they are carry out. It is also a chance to develop friendships across the region while supporting, enriching and energising each other.

Involvement Of All The Group

Groups are advised to meet and plan their activities at least six months ahead; many groups start the year with a planning meeting in early February and plan through to December. After this meeting it is a good idea to send a list of dates and all activities to each family.

It helps to build involvement if different families are asked to organise an activity. In the early stages some may feel too shy to do this and it is often a good idea for two families to work together to organise a function. Those who feel uncomfortable to help are not to be pressured.

Leaders need to ensure that suggested functions allow the entire group to participate. Low to no cost activities are encouraged. There is no substitute for a simple meal shared with friends.

Encourage the family doing the organising to contact all the other members before the function to reconfirm date, time and place etc.

Caring By Your Example

The best way to demonstrate the kind of caring that is required is by your own example. Remember that this is a new experience for most people. Being involved and looking after people that are not your own family is unusual in our society.

To see generosity amongst those in your group, show this in your own behaviour. Make sure that you talk to everyone, not just the ones you are attracted to. Take the opportunity to contact them, not just at functions, but in between as well.

At times a family may be unable to come along for a while and they may feel they no longer belong. This is an opportunity to ask other members to keep in touch with them, perhaps to pass on any news and generally to keep the contact and communication open.

In a group there are often those who are shy and others who are more dominant. You need to promote the less dominant members and make sure that their needs are not overlooked. It takes time to get to know people and build up friendships and once that occurs the love and support follows on naturally.