

## Ideas and Resources for On-going Formation

Article 44 of the General Constitution states that “the formation of the brothers and sisters takes place in a permanent and continuous way.” On-going formation – accomplished by means of courses, gatherings, and the sharing of experience – aims to assist the brothers and sisters:

- in listening to and meditating on the Word of God, “going from Gospel to life and from life to Gospel”
- in reflecting on events in the Church and in society in the light of faith, and with the help of the documents of the teaching Church, consequently taking consistent positions
- in discerning and deepening the Franciscan vocation by studying the writings of Saint Francis, Saint Clare and Franciscan authors

The following are some ideas for your consideration.

1. Go through the writings of St. Francis or St. Clare
2. Go through a book on St. Francis, St. Clare or Franciscan Spirituality, assigning discussion questions each month.

Examples:

- Pick More Daisies (Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap)
  - Capturing the Spirit of Francis and Clare (Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap)
  - Fully Mature in the Fullness of Christ (Fr. Benet, OFM)
  - Building Living Stones
  - Franciscan Prayer by Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF
  - Clare of Assisi A Heart Full of Love by Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF
3. Reading and praying through the Rule. Open sharing follows the reading of one rule per gathering.
  4. Study scripture (maybe studying the readings for the upcoming Sunday liturgy)
  5. Study the General Constitutions and/or National Statutes
  6. Explore (read and discuss) the Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order
  7. Study a Vatican II document or a Papal letter
  8. Study a text on the Secular Franciscan Order's History
  9. Read and discuss “servant leadership”
  10. Meditate on an icon (Christ, seasonal, saint, etc) for 30 minutes followed by sharing.
  11. Meditate and learn about the San Damiano crucifix and its contents.
  12. Read about a Secular Franciscan saint (life of or writings from) followed by sharing.  
Examples: Saint Anthony, Saint Bonaventure, Blessed John Duns Scotus, Blessed Angela of Foligno, Saint Margaret of Cortona, Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, Saint Louis.
  13. Create a prayer space for members to focus on to assist in practicing an admonition or virtue (mini retreat), such as penance, humility, charity, poverty. Practice an act of this (ie, give up something material that you hang on to or treasure dearly).
  14. Create a community project to do as a fraternity: How can we go out to our community and preach the word of God – ‘without words’?
  15. Visit a local shrine or holy place for the day...or half a day.
  16. Create a mini retreat or hermitage for your fraternity. (See Francis' description on hermitage).
  17. Read a chapter from the gospels at each meeting: What is the message for you? How can I do or practice this to deepen my faith.
  18. Instead of Liturgy of the Hours do other Franciscan prayers (ex. 12 Our Fathers, )

19. Take a scene from St. Francis' life as depicted by Giotto's fresco and discuss the following questions:
  - Explore this moment in your life: persons, places, circumstances
  - How did you experience God in the moment?
  - How did this experience alter your life?
20. Take a scene from St. Francis' life and prepare discussion questions.  
For example: Francis meets the leper; possible discussion questions:
  - Who or what are my lepers?
  - Whom am I avoiding?
  - Who am I afraid of?
21. Watch a movie on Francis or a Franciscan saint together.
22. Study a document written by Pope John Paul II or Pope Benedict XVI
23. Host a gathering with another fraternity (plan 4 to 6 months in advance).
24. Take turns preparing a teaching on a subject: admonitions, beatitudes, etc).
25. Read and practice daily a charism or behavior of St. Francis (praying on a gospel sentence or phrase in a place of seclusion, teaching /praising God to his brothers (or the birds) about Our Lord.
26. Pray as a fraternity before the Blessed Sacrament for one hour.
27. Learn and pray the Franciscan Crown Rosary.
28. Learn about other third order spiritualities: How are we similar? What aspects are different? What are the order's charisms?
29. Connect with a First Order friary or Second Order monastery...gather with them for prayer, bring them lunch, etc.
30. In the spirit of ecology: What can we do as a fraternity to make a healthier environment? What can we contribute or create for our community?
31. Learn about early followers of Francis. Discuss the personalities and practices of each.
32. As a fraternity, choose and 'do' a corporate act of mercy together.
33. Choose and 'do' a spiritual act of mercy together.
34. Once a year have town hall meeting format to get the fraternity to discuss issues and get them addressed.
35. Once a year have a memorial meeting where someone talks about a past member who had died (to capture a fraternity's history).
36. Have the professed members participate in orientation and initial formation classes.
37. see [www.nafra\\_sfo.org](http://www.nafra_sfo.org) and [www.ciofs.org](http://www.ciofs.org) for additional resources.

AND, THE LIST GOES ON AND ON.

See the next section for a checklist to use when determining whether a resource should be used as a Secular Franciscan Formation resource.