V ENCUENTRO
PARISH GUIDE
Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry
A USCCB INITIATIVE

MISSIONARY DISCIPLES: WITNESSES OF GOD’S LOVE
MILESTONES OF THE V ENCuentro PROCESS

1. Five Sessions
   - Discover how We are Called to be Missionary Disciples
   - January – June 2017
   - Small groups of 7-12 in Homes or the Parish

2. Parish Encuentro Event
   - Explore how We are a Church which Goes Forth
   - May – June, 2017
   - Participants of the Five Sessions
   - At the Parish

3. Diocesan Encuentro Event
   - Integrate the Lived Experience of Missionary Discipleship
   - September – November 2017
   - All Participants
   - Location TBD

4. In Between
   - Develop Diocesan Working Documents
   - Small Group Sessions

5. National Encuentro
   - Discern Pastoral Guidelines
   - September 20 – 23, 2018
   - National Delegates
   - The Gaylord, Grapevine, TX

6. Post National Encuentro
   - Edit and Publish the National Working Document
   - Develop Creative Ways to Implement the National Encuentro Results

In Between
- Develop Regional Working Documents
- Small Group Sessions

Regional Encuentro
- Identify Areas of Priority
- March – June 2018
- Regional Delegates Determined by (Arch)Dioceses
- Location TBD
THEMES OF THE GUIDE

• At the heart of the V Encuentro process is a **five-week experience** of reflection, evangelization, and consultation guided by **five themes** inspired by Pope Francis’ call to foster a culture of Encounter (cf. *The Joy of the Gospel*, n. 24):

1. Called to a loving encounter with Jesus
2. With words and actions: Do it!
3. Walking together with Jesus
4. Bearing fruits of new life
5. Celebrating the joy of being missionary disciples
10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE GUIDE

1. The Guide is a resource for the V Encuentro, which in turn is a process of evangelization, consultation, and communion.

2. The Guide has been designed to be used primarily in the context of small faith communities. However, communities can use it in larger contexts.

3. The Guide has been written in English and Spanish.

4. The Guide has five sessions that can be scheduled based on the timeframes that work best for each local community.

5. The structure of the Guide is flexible enough for pastoral leaders to adapt to particular audiences and contexts (e.g., prison ministry, campus ministry, youth groups, farmworkers, etc.)

6. At the heart of the Guide is the well-known pastoral methodology, See – Judge – Act.

7. The Guide will be shipped to dioceses in the Fall 2016 to be distributed to parishes and be ready to be used in parishes, other ecclesial settings, and faith communities starting in 2017.

8. The V Encuentro website (http://www.vencuentro.org/) will have the guide, accompanying resources, and support materials in electronic form.

9. Pastoral leaders who develop related resources, adaptations, and support materials are invited to share them with the entire nation via the V Encuentro website. Instructions will be provided.
BY ENTERING THIS PROCESS, YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY IS BEING INVITED TO:

1. Experience being a Church that goes forth.
2. Inspire a process of reflection and faith sharing among members of the small group.
3. Contemplate the calling to being missionary disciples.
4. Prepare to engage in evangelizing missions and consultations in the periphery.
5. Document the experience and the process of consultation to discern pastoral implications.
6. Make the transition from small groups into small faith communities.
• Spend some time in prayer before each session.
• Read the entire content of each session before meeting with the small group.
• Assign adequate time for the completion of each of the five moments of the session. For instance, know that the sections SEE and JUDGE will require more time than the others.
• Develop a strategy to facilitate the conversation.
• Confirm that the number of symbols to be handed out at each session matches that of the participants in the small group.
• If you are going to incorporate some media resources (e.g., video, music, images, etc.), test your media equipment before the session.
• Arrive at least 15 minutes before your small group meets to prepare the altar or sacred space.
• Make sure that the meeting space is free of interruptions and noises that will distract participants.

• Offer a warm welcome to every participant in your small group. Greet everyone by name.

• Make sure that the interaction among the group is always welcoming, respectful, and affirming.

• At the first session, ask all participants for their preferred contact method, preferably email. If a participant misses a session, communicate with this person to follow up.

• Renew the invitation.

• At the end of each session, thank all participants, and remind them of the day and time of the next meeting.

• Send a reminder the day before the next meeting.
Parish Encuentro Team oversees the groups/Facilitators

Form groups now.

What groups already exist? How will you invite? Sign ups? Locations?

All Catholics of all backgrounds are encouraged and welcomed to be part of the V Encuentro process…parishes, movements, SCCs, schools, campus ministry, organizations…

Children in groups if they can follow the conversation and participate – Adaptations? Please share…

5 Sessions – weekly, biweekly, other

Lent? Easter? Complete first half of 2017

7-12 members per group is ideal

Meet in homes, parish grounds, schools, prisons, offices, funeral homes, parks, community rooms, hospitals…

90 minutes per session

Music found at www.vencuentro.org
Keep in mind the five basic responsibilities you have as a facilitator:

1. Preparar el espacio donde se va a reunir el grupo.
2. Guiar la conversación, asegurándose de que todos se sientan bienvenidos y tengan la oportunidad de participar.
3. Procurar y distribuir los símbolos y cualquier otro material a usarse en cada una de las sesiones.
4. Tomar nota de quiénes participaron en las sesiones. Esta información se utilizará como parte del proceso de consulta y será comunicada a los obispos.
5. Enviar un reporte al Equipo Parroquial del Encuentro (o equipo coordinador) al final de la experiencia de cinco sesiones (ver el formato del Reporte final del facilitador(a) del pequeño grupo en el apéndice de la guía).
Use the RESPECT guidelines for effective communication:

R = take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel without blaming others.

E = use EMPATHETIC listening.

S = be SENSITIVE to differences in communication styles.

P = PONDER what you hear and feel before you speak.

E = EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions.

C = keep CONFIDENTIALITY.

T = TRUST ambiguity because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong.
In order to ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak, we will proceed in the following way:

- The leader or a designated person will share first. After that person has spoken, he or she then invites another to share. Whom you invite does not need to be the person next to you. After the next person has spoken, that person is given the privilege to invite another to share.

- If you are not ready to share yet, say “I pass for now” and we will invite you to share later on. If you don’t want to say anything at all, simply say “pass” and proceed to invite another to share. We will do this until everyone has been invited.

- We invite you to listen and not to respond to someone’s sharing immediately. There will be time to respond and to ask clarifying questions after everyone has had an opportunity to share.
Forming and Training Parish Teams

1. Pastor appoints 2 Parish Team Chairs
2. Chairs invite & gather Parish Team and pastor affirms members
3. Chairs offer training for members of Parish Team on the V Encuentro Process

Ideally, Parish Teams consist of all ministries, lay ecclesial movements, and cultural groups.

4. Parish Team Members invite parish leaders to be facilitators of small groups/communities
5. Parish Team provides training for facilitators on the use of the Guide
6. Small groups/communities engage in the 5 Sessions and mission and consultation activities
1. Facilitators submit copies of answers to consultation questions.
2. Parish Team and Facilitators review collected information.
3. Parish Team convenes facilitators to jointly answer questions in the Guide (p.50) based on collected information.
4. Parish Team produces final bilingual report and sends it to Diocesan Team.
5. Everyone in the parish and peripheries engaged in the process participates in the Parish Encuentro.
6. Parish develops working document for the Parish Encuentro based on template provided by ENAVE.

www.vencuentro.org
Suggested Parish Committees

- Process/Program
- Logistics
- Communications
- Liturgy
- Secretary
- Development
SESSION 1: CALLED TO A LOVING ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS IN THE CHURCH

• Symbols and Supplies:
  – Nametags
  – Chairs in a circle
  – Image of a Path in center
  – Blindfolds (one for each participant)
  – Music and player/speakers (Resources/Music)
    www.vencuentro.org/v-encuentro-documents/music/
  – Prayer (Celebrate)
    • Blindfolds
    • Small pieces of paper and pens
    • Prayer on page 14 (Saint Teresa of Avila)
    • Music and player/speakers
    • V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journal
SESSION 2: WITH WORDS AND ACTIONS:
DO IT!

• Symbols and Supplies:
  – Nametags
  – Chairs in a circle
  – Image of a Path in center
  – Bottle of Water (for each participant)
  – Music and player/speakers
  – Prayer (Celebrate)

  • Clear bowl with water
  • Green plant with leaves
  • Containers that workers or immigrants use for water
  • Soft music sounds of water flowing
  • Bottle of water for each participant
  • Music and player/speakers
SESSION 3: WALKING TOGETHER WITH JESUS

• Symbols and Supplies:
  – Nametags
  – Chairs in a circle
  – Image of a Path in center
  – On a table
    • Bible
    • Basket with V Encuentro Wristbands (2 for each participant)
  – Music and player/speaker
  – Prayer (Celebrate)
    • Lit candles
    • Flowers
    • Incense
    • Table with Bible and wristbands
    • Music and player/speakers
SESSION 4: BEARING FRUITS OF NEW LIFE

• **Symbols and Supplies**
  – Chairs in a circle
  – Image of a path in the center
  – Candle
  – Basket with bread
  – Music and player/speakers
  – Prayer (Celebrate)
    • A candle placed high
    • Basket with enough bread for all participants
    • Tea light candles for all participants
    • Music and player/speakers
SESSION 5: CELEBRATING THE JOY OF BEING MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

• **Symbols and Supplies**
  – Chairs in a circle
  – Image of the Path in the center
  – Basket with the V Encuentro Crosses
  – Candle and Open Bible
  – Prayer
    • Large Cross
    • Side table with wreath of flowers and white cloth
    • White paper cross and pens
    • Tape
Reflection:

- The opportunity to pause, quiet ourselves and review what is before us and what is inside us.
- Non-judgmental way of perceiving in which we become more present to our Encuentro experience.
- We listen to our experience, paying attention to how it is speaking to us and to what is occurring within us and the group.
LEADING A GROUP IN CONTEMPLATIVE AND REFLECTIVE PRAYER

Prayer:

• A turning toward God through the words we are sharing with an open heart.

• In prayer, we become more aware of God’s presence in the Encuentro and we seek a deeper understanding.

• Praying as a group also opens us to a great appreciation of God’s presence in our ministry, and inspires us to act as a community.
Contemplation:

• Clearing the mind of outside concerns so that God’s voice may more easily be heard and be united with the movement of the Spirit within oneself and the group.

• The necessary silence, waiting to and listening to hear from God.
Leading a Group in Contemplative and Reflective Prayer

The Role of the Spiritual Leader

- Leading Group Contemplative/Reflective Prayer
  - Prepare with personal prayer.
  - Begin and conclude the gathering with prayer as indicated.
  - The first step is slowing down and refocusing attention.
  - Speak slowly and meaningfully.
  - Be open to being guided into this by the Spirit.
The Role of the Spiritual Leader

• Leading a Group in Faith Sharing
  • The role of the facilitator is one of listening and encouraging by inviting group members to participate.
  • The facilitator does not provide answers to personal faith questions participants might have.
  • The facilitator is not a teacher who instructs, nor a judge who renders verdicts, or a counselor who provides spiritual or moral guidance.
  • Remind all of the importance of maintaining confidentiality so that a trust level grows in the group and all are honored.
• The V Encuentro embraces a spirit of the New Evangelization and the vision of a Church that goes forth and reaches out.

• At the end of each session, all participants are invited to take part in a simple missionary action.

• This action is an opportunity to witness one’s identity as a missionary disciple of Jesus Christ.

• Also, it is an invitation to go into the peripheries of our Church and our society.
The Periphery?

- Places where our sisters and brothers are vulnerable, excluded, treated as outsiders, living in fear, isolated, ignored, invisible.
- Pope Francis reminds us that as baptized Christians, Catholics must embrace the call from Jesus Christ “to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel.”
- Each community, each family, each person must identify the immediate peripheries and then go and meet people there with a message of love and hope in a spirit of accompaniment.
- Many Hispanic Catholics—as well as other Catholics—live in the peripheries of our Church and society.
- We are called to bring the light of the Gospel to all these groups.
1. Choose your missionary partner. The Lord sent his disciples in pairs (Lk 10:1).

2. If you are reaching out to people you know, contact them in advance of the visit.

3. If you are going to the periphery, engage people in a natural and polite way, showing authentic interest in getting to know them.

4. Pray for wisdom before going to visit someone. Pray in thanksgiving after returning.

5. Bring some information about your parish or faith community to share.

6. Missionaries should not visit or contact minors under the age of 18 without the presence of a parent or adult following Safe Environment Guidelines.
7. Be natural and enthusiastic. Speak about what you know and what you have experienced as a Christian.
8. Be respectful. Avoid entering into controversies.
9. Use the questions in the Mission and Consultation Journal. Then, listen... listen attentively and lovingly.
10. Keep the conversation short.
11. Write a few notes and respond to questions in the Mission and Consultation Journal after your return.
12. If you have any questions, consult with the leaders of the V Encuentro team in your parish or faith community.
POSSIBLE SCENARIOS – VISITATION

- We are a new Catholic family in the area...
- I am no longer a practicing Catholic...
- I am angry at the Church because...
- I am too busy at this time to talk...
- I am not a Catholic and I practice my faith at...
- I do not go to any church...
- Why are you visiting me?
During the first session all participants in the five session experience will receive a notebook called The V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journal.

This Journal will help you to:

• **Reflect** on your own experience of the V Encuentro Sessions

• **Engage** people in the peripheries, build relationships, and ask questions

• **Discern & Write** down new insights gained from this missionary experience and fill out the consultation form weekly