

Root & Branch

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DIY Group Template

December 2021

Template Overview

This template is offered as a guide for those who have been inspired by the Root & Branch movement and who feel inspired to continue the conversation in their own parish, home group or area. Root & Branch feel strongly that one effective way to do this is by setting up Root & Branch DIY groups for which this template is provided as a guide for you to use and adapt as you see fit. Ideally these groups would be face to face in a suitable location, however there is no reason why the groups could not be formed virtually for those who are more isolated. These are changes one can make in one's own community that might help embed Vatican II's vision of the Church as pilgrim People of God (see *Lumen gentium*, 48-51).



About Root & Branch

Root & Branch is an “all are welcome” forum which has been on a journey of discernment. We wish to empower Catholics to believe that there are changes we can ALL make but still keeping with the best of Catholic tradition. We wish to offer a practical and challenging vision for the Church, calling it to be Christ-like in its structures with a focus on inclusion, diversity and social justice. Our thinking and practice have the endorsement of deep, pastorally sensitive and well-informed thinkers and theologians, including some who are clergy. It is offered in the spirit

of Canon Law 212.3, which states that **'the Christian faithful have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters that obtain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known.'**

Holding the Meeting

We recommend a total time of no more than 90 minutes which includes a balance of prayer, educational input, sharing and social action. Participating in these groups may lead to discussion and some action regarding church reform as it is this issue which may have attracted you to Root & Branch in the first place. We would encourage you to keep to a consistent structured meeting and although some may feel more motivated to lead than others, we feel it is important to allow different group members to have an opportunity to lead each meeting and to hear a wide range of views. As we know the Holy Spirit resides in each and every one of us, is it not therefore life-giving to hear how that shows itself in each of our lives? Also asking different people to lead each time will inspire a confidence in each of us to see that we all have something of value to say about our faith.

Meeting Structure

Opening Prayer - 1-5 min

Example: In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Lord, we praise you for your promise that where two or three are gathered, you are with us. We thank you for bringing us together. We ask that your Spirit will inspire us to share more deeply your life, your grace and your love.

Reading and Discussion - 30-40 mins

There is no shortage of stimulating material. For the reading, the Gospels are a good place to start, ideally reading one through completely in sections - here Mark is the shortest. As for the discussion subject material, there is no end to the amount of subjects for discussion. You may like to read a modern book together or watch and then discuss one of the You Tube Root & Branch speaker videos on our Bristol 2021 page. Our Info page contains our Journey Guest videos, alongside a Well of Wisdom with book reviews. You can also send in recommendations for our Well of Wisdom section by submitting a simple book review. For the discussion, it is preferred if a different person prepares this each time although not necessary.

Breaking Bread Together - 15-20 mins

"The faithful met in their houses for the breaking of the bread" - This is a time for thanksgiving and sharing just as Jesus and his disciples shared meals together and, when they did so, they offered thanksgiving to our heavenly Father. Jesus requested that we all "Do this in memory of me" so here we share something simple to eat and drink, perhaps a cup of tea, coffee, cake or perhaps break bread together. We also take some time to talk to each other and share what it is that we are thankful

for and remember Jesus's words to us. Here is a simple thanksgiving prayer taken from an early Christian community guide:

*"We give thanks to you, our Father,
for the life and knowledge which you have made known to us.
Through Jesus, your servant, to you be glory forever.
For as the broken loaf was once scattered over the mountains and then was gathered in
and became one, so, Father, may your church be gathered together into your kingdom from
the very ends of the earth.
Yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever"*

Social Action - 15 mins

Root & Branch DIY groups should be outward looking and try and have some involvement in social action outreach, concerned for the Common Good as Catholic Social Teaching informs us to do. 'By your love people will know you,' as Jesus tells his disciples. Most of us will already be doing this with other organisations or by ourselves so this is the time to share that with others. Or in some cases it could even be a new joint project for the DIY group. The range is endless, the homeless, asylum seekers, environment, foodbanks, street pastors, fundraising, helping our neighbour etc. It is here that you may find the spirit guiding you into discussions about what changes you would like to see in our present church structures.

Closing prayer - 1 min

A simple ending prayer is often the most meaningful with perhaps a very short period of silence. Saying the Grace is an excellent ending prayer "May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us, now and for ever"

AOB

Time of next meeting and who would like to prepare it.

Contact

Maybe if you are having thoughts about starting an R&B DIY group of your own or want to find out who's in your area? Get in touch with Kevin Gallagher at diy@rootandbranchsynod.org for a chat or to share ideas. Or perhaps if you have informally begun, then do please let us know as well. Our vision is to have many Root & Branch groups linked in to each other and to our Core group, all working for reform in the ways that seem best to us and to each other.