

**FAMILY LIFE MINISTRY  
METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA**

## SUMMARY

### Objective

Develop fourteen (14) sessions for the engagement of young adults in constructive, relationship-building, and educational dialogue. Three (3) sessions will be for an initial three-week program, while the other eleven (11) will be for subsequent monthly meetings.

### Goals

The overall goal is to create a semi-structured environment that allows young adults to engage with each other on topics that are relevant to their lives, build relationships with each other, and reflect theologically on the topics with the guidance of a facilitator.

### Solution

A combination of the “Orthodoxy on Tap” (aka “the beer ministry”) model with the World Cafe format<sup>1</sup> will allow for both education in the faith and social engagement among young adults. The format of each meeting will be standardized in the following way: 10-15 minutes of unstructured social time for participants to meet each other and the facilitator, which allows for latecomers to enter without disruption or distraction; a 10-20 minute introductory presentation by the facilitator on the topic of the session; 30-60 minutes of small group (3-7 person) conversations; and a 10-20 minute conclusion by the facilitator, who will draw upon the content of small group discussions (collected from “scribes” at each table), support theological reflection, and reinforce points made during the introduction.

The 30-60 minutes of small group conversations will be broken into 7-9 minute segments dedicated to each subtopic or question, each of which will be associated with a particular table. One participant will be assigned to each table to act as the “scribe” for that subtopic or question. This individual will be provided with paper and a writing instrument to record generally the ideas and thoughts exchanged in relation to each subtopic or question. After the time allotted to a subtopic or question has passed, the facilitator will direct each small group to disperse and the individuals to go to different tables, at which they have not yet sat. A group should not move together from table to table; new combinations of participants should form for each 7-9 minute discussion segment. After using it to craft their conclusions, facilitators should share the data from small group discussions with others responsible for or involved in young adult ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Anton Vrame, Director of Religious Education of the Archdiocese, for this idea.

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Creating a comfortable and hospitable environment for these discussions is an important element in their success. One way to make the conversations more convivial, informal, and relaxed is to provide food for each of the tables at which small group discussions will occur.

### **Project Outline**

By the 2014 Clergy-Laity Congress, we will have developed outlines for 3 sessions for use in three subsequent weeks. By the end of the summer, we will have developed outlines for monthly sessions that cover a year. Subsequent development of these sessions will include more detailed presentation points for the facilitator, who may not be formally educated in theology, and a bibliography for his or her information and preparation. Small group questions will be most effective when they are developed by young adults involved as facilitators or participants in these sessions.

