

**“Come & See” Event**  
**Suggested Logistics, Outline and Talking Points**  
**March 2018**



Your fraternity is interested in spreading the word about the OFS and the members would like to host a “Come & See” event. Many formats can be successful. This document contains one example format with some **suggestions** for planning and organizing the event. These are just suggestions – an example for you to use to plan such an event. These are not required to any extent. Create an event that meets the characteristics of your fraternity.

**Pre-event Planning:**

Start planning the event at least six months ahead of time.

- Set a date,
- Arrange for a location,
- Develop the agenda (suggested outline and talking points are provided below) include times for each portion of the agenda. Set a time limit for the event. This is an introduction. Don't expect to cover the entire three years of formation in one afternoon or evening. Suggest that talks be no longer than 15 minutes each. The prayer and information segments should be no more than 60 minutes with time for social afterwards.
- Assign speakers topics and have them prepare and practice talks, and
- Advertise for the event (e.g. bulletins, pulpit announcements at your parishes, diocesan papers, leave business cards in the back of parishes with information about the date).
- Assign people to set up, prepare a sign-in sheet, bring handouts, bring refreshments, clean-up.
- Arrange for audio-video equipment if necessary.
- Ask each member to invite people to the event.

**Day of Event:**

- Get there early to set up.
- Put up signs to direct people to the room.
- Set up a sign-in table with sign-in sheet with members to greet visitors
- Set up refreshments and any audio-visual equipment.
- Go over with presenters the flow of the event.

**After the Event:**

- Contact the persons who attended.
- Invite them to a regular gathering.
- Let them know about the next steps.

**Suggested Agenda**

Prayer Service

Welcoming

- You are drawn to the way St. Francis followed Christ.
- We gather together in a tradition that has been around for more than 800 years
- An Order established by St. Francis, approved by the Pope and the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church
- Focus is bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to life in the world.
- Many aspects to learn about – so we won't be able to cover it today.
- To give you an introduction, we will have a few brief sessions.
- Discussion about “vocation” for people like us – living our faith more deeply.
- An overview of the Franciscan family along with a brief overview of the Franciscan Charism.

Topics for large group or breakout sessions:

- A. Vocation
- B. Franciscan Family
- C. Franciscan Charism

(see pages 2-4 for talking points)

Social Time – one on one. Make sure your members are ready to share their testimonies one-on-one. Ask the visitors about their journeys and what moved them to come to the session.

Consider holding an event annually.

We want to hear from you so we can learn from your experiences. Please, share your experiences at [1.800.Francis@mail.com](mailto:1.800.Francis@mail.com).

These tools may be revised based on your feedback.

## **Talking Points (Taken from the For Up To Now (FUN) Manual)**

**Below are some suggested points (talking points) to share with visitors for the topics listed in the suggested agenda. This is not intended to be a script. We encourage presenters to review the points so he or she is able to speak from the heart. These are just guides to help presenters prepared.**

### **A. Vocation** (based on the chapter “Vocation – God’s Call” by Maria Amore, OFS)

1. What is a vocation?
  - a. “A call” – a function or station in life to which one is called by God
  - b. Not just for priests, deacons, nuns or sisters
  - c. Not just marriage
2. Jesus calls us to serve. That is the Gospel message.
3. Certain areas of the Gospel message speak louder than others.
4. The Secular Franciscan Order or Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis (OFS) - is an established Order in the Church.
5. What does it mean?
  - a. Secular – in the world (not “religious” – one who has taken vows)
  - b. Franciscan – followers of the way St. Francis of Assisi followed Christ, the Church and the Pope
  - c. Order - a body or society of persons living by common consent under the same religious, moral, or social regulations or rules.
6. Secular Franciscans strive to live the Gospel more fully each day in our secular state by going from Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel in our own state. (single, married, widowed, divorced) To live by example... to be present to help one another, to be good parents, friends, coworkers. To bring out faith to others with actions.
7. Prayer and Action / Francis and Clare
8. Come together in small groups to be strengthened in our vocation.
9. “Assisted” as opposed to “directed” by Franciscan Religious to ensure we are staying on track.
10. You don’t decide on your own.....the Holy Spirit has to plant in your heart.
11. Formation process (learning about the Way of Life and being a Secular Franciscan) takes years.
12. First step is to say – I am interested and to come and see – which you already did today.
13. Next steps – speak with the Minister and Formation Director and let the Holy Spirit continue to guide you.

Handout: Card with links to fraternity and NAFRA website, Facebook, Twitter. Contact information for fraternity.

### **B. Franciscan Family** (based on the chapter “The Franciscan Family – A Brief Introduction” by Robert Fitzsimmons, OFS)

Of course the Franciscan Family is part of the larger Roman Catholic Church Family based on the teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1. “Founded” by St. Francis of Assisi
  - a. Francis was a sinner, just like us a regular man wanting to be honored with Knighthood, who experienced profound conversion – drawn to follow Christ’s message of peace, mercy, joy, love.
  - b. The journey was not easy, just like ours in today’s world but, determined to follow Christ, he inspired Men in the area who heard about the way Francis followed Christ, wanted to do the same, so joined him – the First Order – approved in 1209 - the Friars Minor (Today is the Order of Friars Minor – or OFM).
    - i. OFMs
    - ii. OFM Conventuals
    - iii. OFM Capuchins

- iv. Others
  - c. St. Clare was touched by Francis also, but couldn't join the brothers – thus Second Order was founded – approved in 1212 – the Poor Ladies or now The Poor Clares
    - i. Poor Clares
    - ii. Various other orders formed
    - iii. cloistered, contemplative life based on the Gospel, a life of prayer and penance in the Franciscan tradition of joy and simplicity – privilege of Poverty
  - d. Laypeople wanted to follow Francis' example. He wasn't a priest but he was a great witness to our faith. Men and women who were attracted by Francis' way of life, but could not leave their homes and families to become wandering preachers or cloistered nuns, banded together – Brothers and Sisters of Penitence.
    - i. Third Order of St Francis Third Order, changed to the Secular Franciscan Order
    - ii. Third Order Religious (priests, brothers, sisters)
    - iii. Others – Secular Institute of Mary (SIM)
2. All branches of the Franciscan Family, in their respective Rules of Life, are charged to “observe the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ”.
- a. Three parts of the whole, like a 3 ply cord, are stronger when united together as equal partners to share and spread the vision of Francis.
  - b. Relevance for us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.....we all live out our Franciscan life in a unique way. To live by example... to be present, to help one another, to be good parents, friends, coworkers. To bring our faith to others with actions yet we are all guided by the same vision to proclaim the Gospel, using words only when necessary.

Handout: Franciscan Family Tree (one side English version, the other side Spanish version)

### **C. Franciscan Charism** (based on the chapter “Vocation, Charism and Mission of the Secular Franciscan Order” (pages 9-15) based on the work of Benedetto Lino, OFS)

What is a charism? It is a gift of the Holy Spirit. When speaking of the charism of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Benedict, St. Teresa of Calcutta, etc., we are referring to the unique way a particular saint was called to live the Christian life; the way he or she approached the Holy Trinity; their emphasis in the spiritual life. There are many ways to relate to God; we each need to find one that fits us.

As all Franciscans are called to make the charism of St. Francis present in their lives, we need to 1) understand what that charism is; 2) discern whether or not that is a good fit for our own personality and inclinations; 3) if so, discern how to live that charism out in our own circumstances.

Francis' charism was to be more like Christ than any other human being. Francis uniquely perceived God's love and total self-giving in the Incarnation of Jesus. Francis lived as a joyful, loving, and trusting son of the heavenly Father, and was so conformed to the life of Christ that he even received the wounds of Christ's passion. As Francis was aware of his sonship to the Father, he recognized his brotherly relationship to other people and to all of creation. The Franciscan family's organization into “fraternities” emphasizes this shared life as children of the Father. Francis' love of humility came from his recognition of how God became humble to become one of us in the Incarnation. Francis' love of poverty relates to his recognition that God, in Jesus, gave up everything to become one of us out of love for us.

Living the charism of St. Francis today means relating to God in ways that are characteristic of Francis. Franciscan spirituality includes the following elements:

- A very intense Eucharistic life, focusing on God's self-emptying gift to us;
- Poverty (self-emptying in imitation of God's action in the Incarnation)
- Humility/minority; wanting to serve, not to be served
- Simplicity
- Obedience (to the will of the Father)
- Chastity

- Fraternity (as mentioned when describing the charism of Francis, this is the natural outgrowth of the experience of being sons and daughters of the Father)
- Following the total Christ in complete simplicity

The specific way that Franciscan spirituality is lived depends on the situation of each individual.

Questions for reflection:

1. Which of the elements of Franciscan spirituality listed above resonate with you?
2. Which elements do you find more difficult? Why?

**Handouts:**

**Digests:** <http://www.skdregion.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/digests.pdf>

**Profession Pathway:** <http://www.skdregion.org/wp-content/uploads/pathwaytoprofession.jpg>

**17 Essential Elements:** [https://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/articles/summer08/misc5\\_summer08.pdf](https://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/articles/summer08/misc5_summer08.pdf)

## **Other items for handouts, if desired:**

### **San Damiano Cross**

1. Francis of Assisi did not start out life as a fiercely devout and pious man.
2. His early years were spent indulging in the extravagances available to those born to money and privilege. As he approached adulthood, however, he found himself in crisis, searching for deeper meaning in his life.
3. This inner conflict led him to the deserted church of San Damiano in his hometown of Assisi.
  - a. It was here, praying before the San Damiano Cross, that Francis first heard the Word of God. "Francis, go and rebuild my house, which is falling into ruins."
  - b. When Francis heard these words, he responded by quickly taking up a collection to restore the churches of Assisi, which were in disrepair. Through his efforts, many chapels and churches were rebuilt.
4. Francis realized that God was not merely asking him to restore chapels, but to rebuild His Church around the world as a community.
  - a. Francis embraced a life of poverty, prayer and service
  - b. began to preach the Word of God.
5. Because it has so meaning to St. Francis, let's look deeper at the Cross
  - a. "icon cross," meaning it contains not just a depiction of Christ, but icons of various people and scenes relevant to the story of the Crucifixion and Resurrection.
  - b. It is made of painted walnut and measures 75 inches high, 47 inches wide, and slightly less than 5 inches thick.
  - c. The original Cross is now located in the Basilica of St. Clare in Assisi.
6. Symbolism – not enough time to discuss all of it – but here are the highlights
  - a. What do you notice about the images?
    - i. Many figures in the icon – many biblical stories represented.
    - ii. Christ – central figure
      1. eyes are open - representation of the living God.
      2. Standing upright
      3. Blood dripping
    - iii. Ascension
    - iv. Hand of the Father
    - v. Mary and John

Handouts (examples): Holy Card with San Damiano Cross.

### **Tau Cross - Symbol of the Secular Franciscan Order**

1. TAU, as a symbol of sanctity
  - a. comes from Ezekiel 9:4, "Go through the city of Jerusalem and put a TAU on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it."
  - b. It is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet and looks very much like the letter "T".
  - c. Pope Innocent III opened the Fourth Lateran Council on November 11, 1215, with these words: "I have desired with great desire to eat this Passover with you." (Luke 22-15.) Innocent announced that for him, for the Church, and for every Catholic at the time, the symbol they were to take as the sign of their Passover was the TAU Cross.
2. Likely that St. Francis was present at the Council
  - a. heard Pope Innocent III when he said, "The TAU has exactly the same form as the Cross on which our Lord was crucified on Calvary, and only those will be marked with this sign and who have mortified their flesh and conformed their life to that of the Crucified Savior will obtain mercy."
  - b. From then on, the TAU became Francis' own coat of arms and he often used it as his writings as his personal signature.
3. Francis preferred the Tau above all other symbols:

- a. utilized it as his only signature for his letters, painted the image of it on the walls of all the places in which he stayed.
4. TAU recognized and accepted Franciscan symbol among Franciscans of various denominations and of all orders within those denominations for centuries.
5. The TAU carries with it all of the symbolism of the Cross of Christ as well as Francis' ideal of life and dream for himself and his followers.
6. The TAU is the designated as the distinctive sign of the Secular Franciscan Order.

Hand out little card with - In the famous blessing of Brother Leo, Francis wrote on parchment, "May the Lord bless you and keep you! May the Lord show His face to you and be merciful to you! May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace! God bless you Brother Leo!" Francis sketched a head (of Brother Leo) and then drew the TAU over this portrait.