

CHAPTER VI

ASPECTS OF FORMATION



The Formation Director and Team are involved in teaching and celebrating a new way of life. They should relate to adult people who are looking for new meaning and a new way of life as Secular Franciscans.

The challenge to the Formation Director and Team is to respond to these adult needs within the various phases of the Formation process.



Therefore the Formation Director and Team should be interested in how adults learn and what are the best methods to help learning occur.

Small groups that allow candidates to reflect upon their own experiences are important.

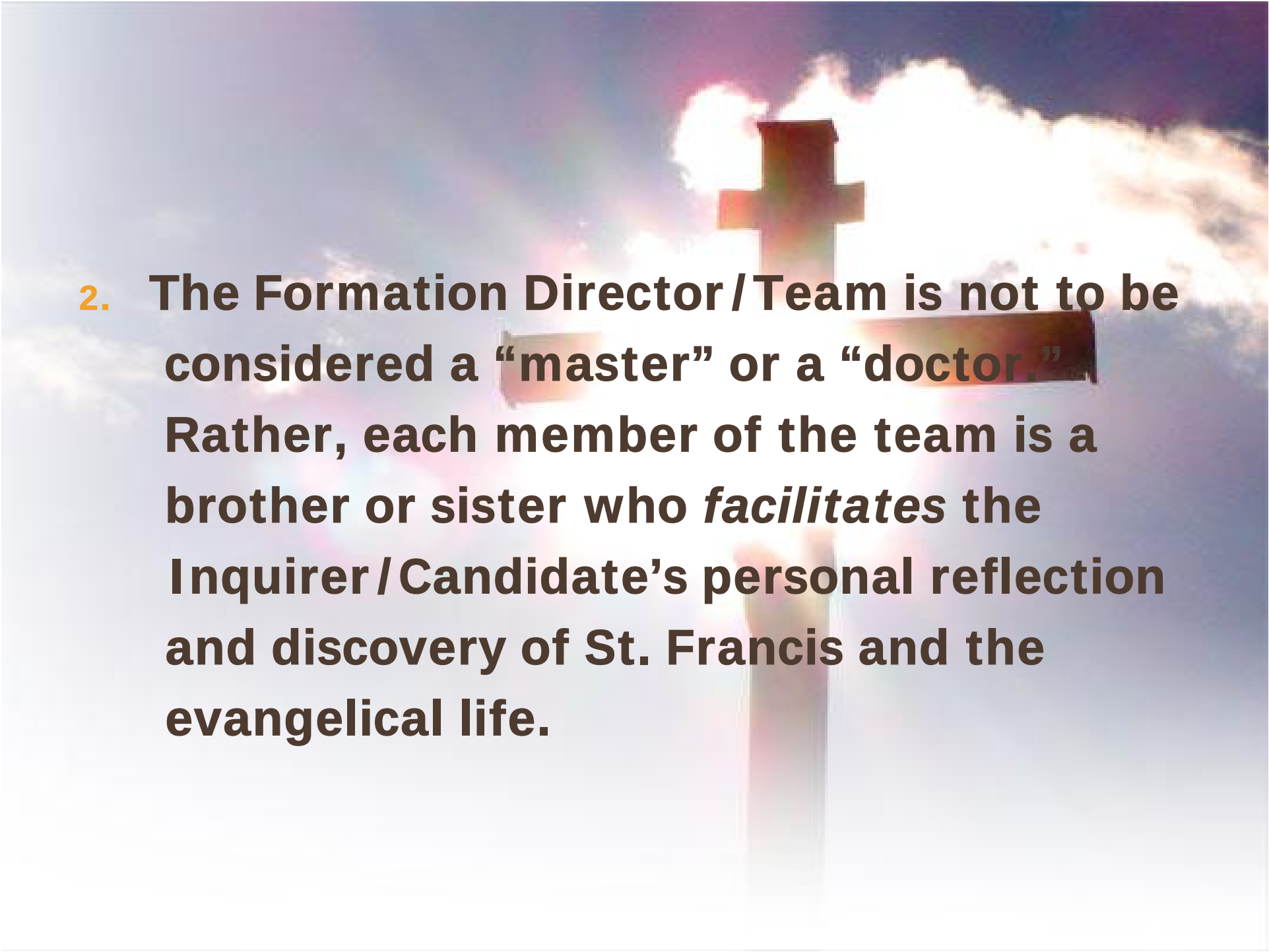
Helping adults to participate fully in liturgical celebrations, or to discover how the teachings of the Catholic traditions and the Franciscan tradition can add meaning to their lives and all the challenges for the Formation Team. Following are some helpful guidelines for the Formation Team.



A. GUIDELINES FOR FORMATION DIRECTOR/TEAM

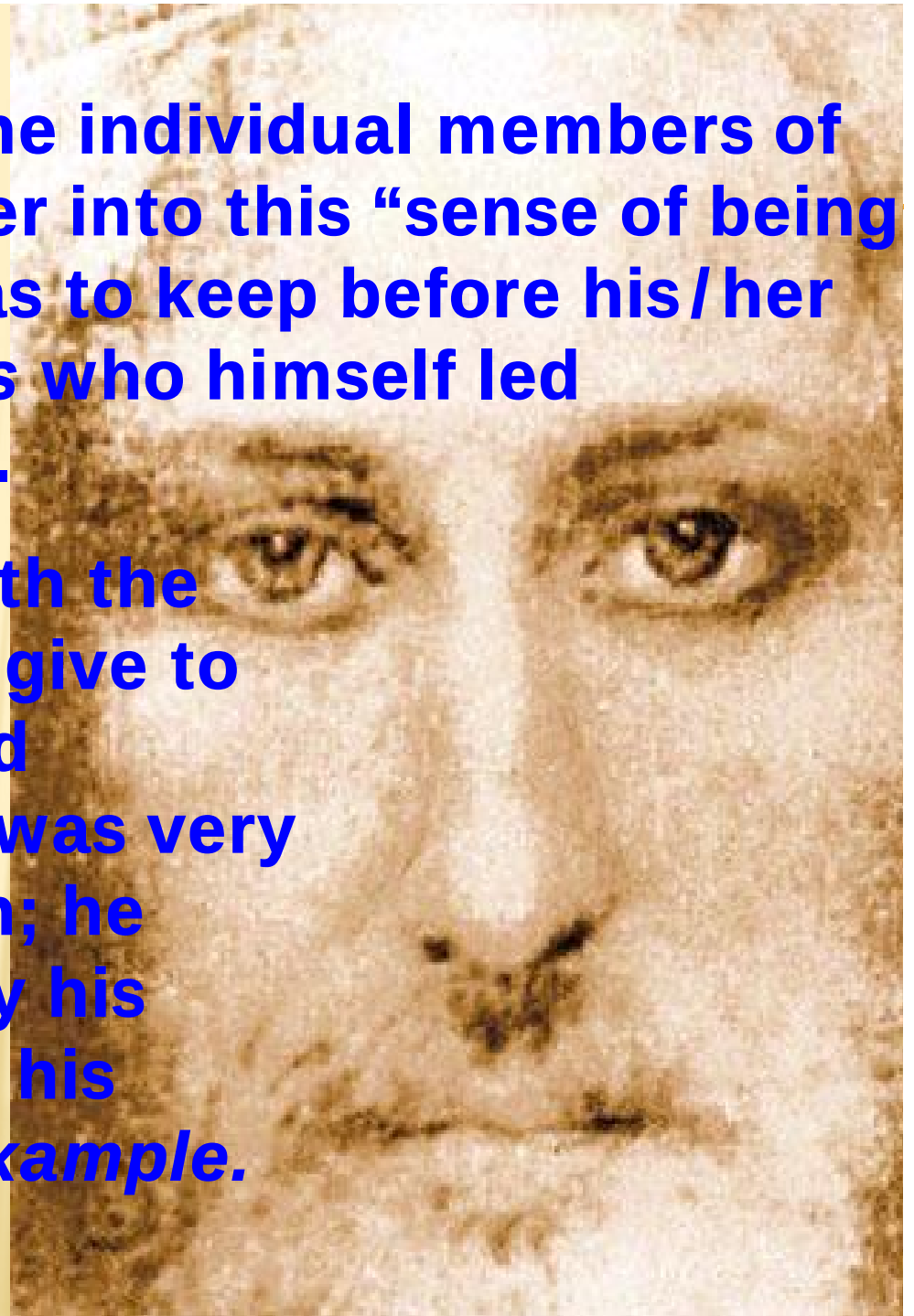
**The Formation Director/Team
accompanies the
Inquirer/Candidate in his/her
discovery of Jesus Christ, of St.
Francis, of Gospel living.**



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- 2. The Formation Director/Team is not to be considered a “master” or a “doctor.” Rather, each member of the team is a brother or sister who *facilitates* the Inquirer/Candidate’s personal reflection and discovery of St. Francis and the evangelical life.**

3. It is important that the individual members of the formation team enter into this “sense of being teacher.” Always one has to keep before his/her eyes the *person of Jesus* who himself led (educated) his disciples.

Francis, too, in living with the first friars knew how to give to each one the council and admonition needed; he was very attentive to each person; he formed them not only by his word, but even more by his practice and *personal example*.



4. Give attention to the climate of adult learning. Warmth, friendliness, and an emphasis on concern for persons participating make for an atmosphere in which adults feel welcomed and valued.

5. Encourage participants to enter into dialogue. Avoid long lecturing. Encourage timid persons to ask questions.



Take into account one's lived experiences when searching for concrete solutions to real problems rather than using a theoretical approach.



Use a variety of resources rather than a single text.

8. Distribute the necessary materials well in advance of the meeting. Give clear directions regarding assignments and preparations required for the next meeting.



9. When working with a selection from a particular book, help the participant to know how to read the text slowly, to re-express the ideas contained therein, and to analyze them. Teach candidates the joy of discovery. Accustom the Inquirer / Candidate to express himself/herself, which will foster the maturation process.

10. Create a relaxed atmosphere. Believe in the goodness of the Inquirer/Candidate, and the Holy Spirit working in all the members.

11. Communication is the essence of group sharing. Remember that it is a complex and sometimes delicate process. It includes *listening* as well as *talking*.

12. A REVIEW of LIFE is a process recommended by the II Vatican Council Document "The Decree of the Apostolate of the Laity," (23f and 30e). This process will help the Inquires/Candidates know how to analyze an event of life by confronting it with a gospel text which they themselves have to find, to give direction to their life and activity. (See Chapter V, p37).

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

"FOR WHAT I RECEIVED I PASSED ON TO YOU AS OF FIRST IMPORTANCE: THAT CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, THAT HE WAS BURIED, THAT HE WAS RAISED ON THE THIRD DAY ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, AND THAT HE APPEARED TO PETER, AND THEN TO THE TWELVE."

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-5

In order to assess the Inquirer/Candidate's Progress and growth, the Formation Director/Team should make the REVIEW of LIFE together with the Inquirer/Candidates Considering what they have learned, the Experiences gained, and the actions carried out



DISCUSSION QUESTION FOR FORMATION DIRECTOR/TEAM

- 1. In your fraternity, what could the Formation Director/Team do to improve the climate of adult learning?**
- 2. In your fraternity, how could the Formation Director/Team bring out more of the “lived experiences” of the Inquirer/Candidates?**
- 3. Why is a variety of resources better than just using one text?**
- 4. What could the Formation Director/Team do to create a better environment to get the Holy Spirit working in all the members?**

B. EFFECTIVE COMPONENTS OF A FORMATION PROGRAM

**There are four main components of an
Effective formation program. These four
Elements are important dimensions of every
Fraternity meeting.**

1. GROUP STUDY & DIALOGUE & REFLECTIONS

Resource materials for this aspect can be Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels; the writings of St. Francis and St. Clare; the SFO Rule; other Franciscana.



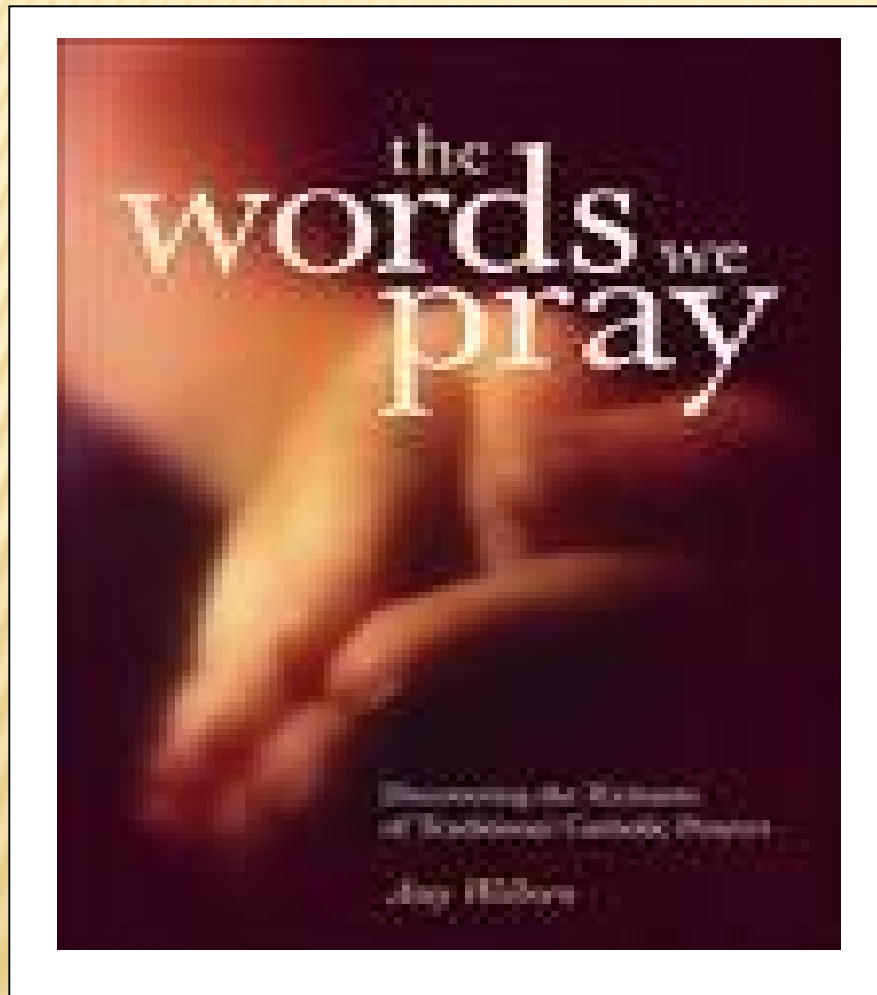
2. A PROGRAM OF ACTION

... lay people recognize him as
"one of us called forth to do a
certain job in our community."



The Program of
Action or apostolic
expression is
intended to put
what is learned into
practice.

3. A LITURGICAL EXPRESSION



This is intended to seal and heighten the formation experience and to develop an experience of the community's life with God in prayer.

4. AN INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT TO STUDY

This is an important aspect for professed members as well as for candidates. It is essential that each Secular Franciscan devote some time to study one's own, and to strengthen one's own commitment through the discipline of self-study. Meditation and reflection upon study material is also a vital dimension not to be ignored.

C. THE FRATERNITY MEETING



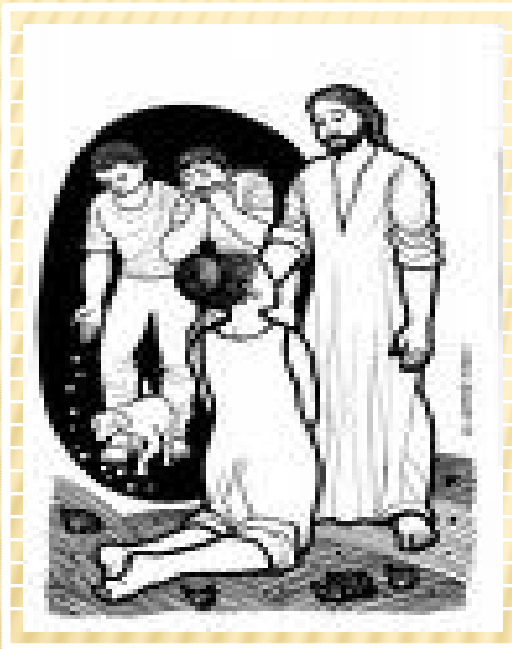
The fraternity should be "...a visible sign of the Church, the community of love" it "...should be the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its Members" (SFO Rule # 22).

Given the importance of the Fraternity Meeting, whether it be for professed members only, or for the formation of Inquirers / Candidates, what follows is *One Suggested model.*

OPENING PRAYER / HYMNS

**A short prayer could be offered by a member
Of the group asking God's presence and for
Openness to hearing the Word of God. A CD
Of a song might be used to set the tone; a
Lighted candle in the center of the room will
Help focus attention on the reason for the
Gathering.**

READINGS / REFLECTIONS



All participants should have materials well in advance and come prepared. Selected passages should be read slowly, reflectively, with quiet pauses between readings. Time for personal reflection and journaling insights is a helpful preparation for group sharing

SHARING / DIALOGUE

The sharing should be a relaxed, friendly exchange of ideas and feelings among participants. Each member of the formation team should be comfortable sharing personal experiences of the Lord's presence in his/her life, and should encourage others of the group to share their own experiences which have special meaning and Importance.

ACTION RESPONSE

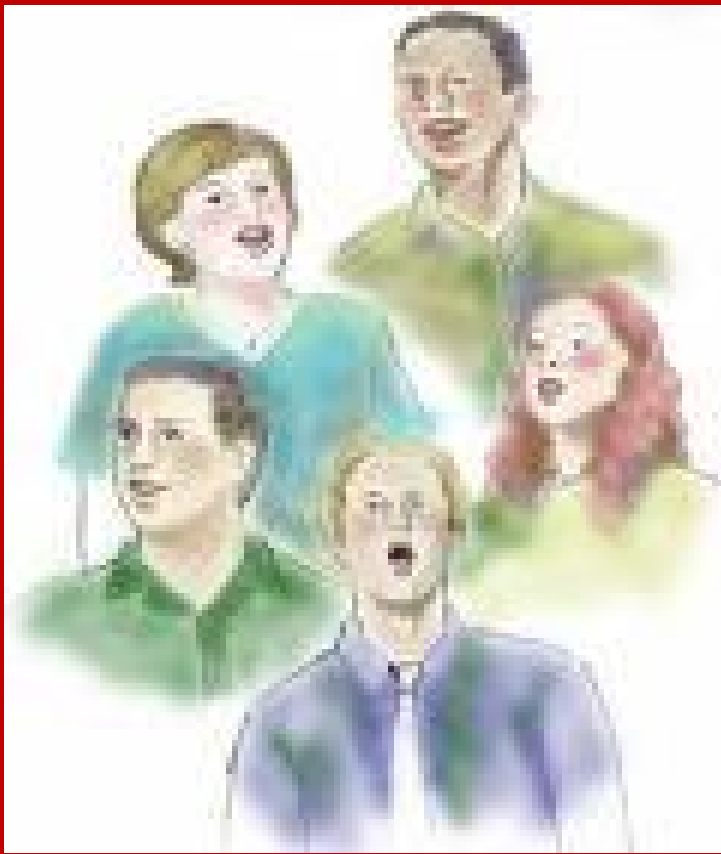
It is the responsibility of the Formation Director/Team to motivate participants to Take on the suggested activity, and also to Discover and carry out other projects of Their own. It might also be appropriate at Some time for the whole group to join Together in an activity.

ASSIGNMENT



**Formation Director/Team
should be sure
to inform participants what
materials
are to be prepared
for the following meeting.**

ASSIGNMENT



The closing prayer should vary with each meeting. Elements might include:
music, singing,
prepared prayer,
Scripture, silence,
spontaneous prayer

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. What would you suggest to your fraternity to make the Formation Program more effective?

2. What components would you suggest be added to your fraternity meetings?

