

## **Table Leader Guide**

### **2.2 Role of Catechism and Doctrine in Meetings**

As we use Biblical scholarship and exegesis to support our understanding of The Word as it connects to our personal experience, we use catechism and doctrine in a similar way when responding to questions about what the Catholic Church teaches.

During small group discussions there are often catechetical teaching moments that come up. One man will be sharing an experience and someone well intended will jump in saying “ well... that’s why the Church teaches us that... ” Sometimes the response can be correct but often it is incorrect. Either way it can pull the discussion well off topic and often results in shutting down the man who was sharing his experience.

There is a wide range of religious, theological and educational understanding present at most men’s ministry meetings. This can often lead to confusion about the difference between Church doctrine, dogma and traditions. Again, the focus here should be using catechetical elements in a supportive way to help clarify a point being made or directly answer a question. We’ve found it helpful to not let one question about “what the church says” evolve into a full-blown apologetics debate. This can happen easily because it’s more comfortable for most men to debate catechism and theology than to share their personal experiences of God’s presence, especially if articulating those experiences is new for them.

If you have clergy present you can ask them to clarify questions as they come up. Or simply table the question until the end of the meeting so the entire group can benefit from the question and answer during the large group sharing. In situations where no clergy is present we generally have a core team leader follow up with the pastor to get an answer then e-mail it to the group, or address it the following week.

These situations generally occur more frequently in the early stages of the ministry but can be managed easily with good table facilitation skills. It is important to address people’s questions but not let the question disrupt the sharing or flow of the discussion.