

Religious Life and the School Sisters of Notre Dame

Sturdy Roots as a whole offers many archival examples of one religious community evolving through various political and religious changes. In a Formation Program for Sisters and Associates, one might find the following topics helpful:

- 1. Family Tree:** Each chapter gives a brief explanation of the role played by SSND founding persons.
- 2. Beginnings:** The 20 minute video gives a description of SSND origins and growth from 1833 – 2003.
- 3. Education:** There are two videos showing the education, various habits of SSNDs, and ministries: “*God’s Career Women*,” a documentary from 1951, and “*Photos of Sisters in Formation*,” and “*Photos of Sisters in Ministry*.”
- 4. Creative Fidelity:** Each chapter relates to the development of the congregation, especially in the 20th – 21st centuries. There is a chapter on the development of *You Are Sent*, along with the highlights of the *General Superiors* that would foster an understanding of our commitment to the church and reading the “signs of the times.” Matthew 16: 2 – 3.
- 5. Woman of the Word:** In each chapter there is topic related to Mother Theresa’s love of scripture, as well as that of Bishop Wittman and Fr. Job. There is also information on the *Translation* of her letters. Listen to an audio clip of S. Henriette Hoene’s experience in finding the letters of Mother Theresa and getting all 5,337 translated.
- 6. Mary:** Each chapter offers insight into the vital role Mary plays in the spirituality and ministry of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.
- 7. Case Study in Courage:** The family life of Mother Caroline was a unique cross-cultural experience which can be discussed in *Family of Origins*. Her experience on the American scene is historically described by Professor Anne Butler in her essay, *Adapting the Vision*, which includes excellent discussion questions at the end of her essay.
- 8. Seeds of Hope:** *International Photo Gallery* provides a pictorial essay of the congregation today. *Theresa and New Members* outlines what Mother Theresa looked for in new members. *Death of a Professed* offers Mother Theresa’s assessment of what makes one a real School Sister of Notre Dame. Her *Letter to Agnes Finke* offers her words of encouragement to a new member who is disillusioned with the congregation.
- 9. Expansion:** Each chapter shows how ordinary SSNDs responded to the call, leaving their homes to bring the Good News to other cultures.
- 10. Creative Fidelity:** Consider viewing each of the General Chapter video clips that tell the SSND story through the lens of internationality, dialogue, and communion with Christ and one another.
- 11. Education:** View *Vatican II* video and explore this context as the development of religious life in the past fifty years.