

Family Tree: Facilitator's Directions

Materials needed.

Text and photographs of all founding persons

Timeline of St. Augustine

Conversion of St. Augustine (text & audio)

Prayer for Family Tree

Family Tree in Artistic Form (2)

How: To provide a summary of their respective contribution as well as pictures of the founding persons.

Goal: To appreciate the sturdy roots of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Controlling Purpose: To explore founding persons in the history of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, both past and present.

The purpose of this topic is to combine both text and photographs that tell the story of some of the founding persons significant to the School Sisters of Notre Dame. As one traces the history in this family tree the sturdy roots will become evident. The intention of the author was to create a photo album format that illustrates this strength. A way to create these resources into a photo album is described below.

The FACILITATOR will need a three-ring binder, 8½ by 11, and the ability to print all pictures and content represented in this topic. This also includes a cover for the outside of the binder. Title page, table of contents and introduction are also included.

By following the Table of Contents the FACILITATOR could put the pages together in the binder. The final pages are two artistic representations of the SSND Family Tree as depicted in 1883 fifty years after our founding and 1933, one hundred years after the founding of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

On the page facing The Living Community the FACILITATOR may want to add a picture of one of the oldest and youngest members of her Unit. Other photographs of significant founding members of one's Unit would add to the album.

The FACILITATOR may also want to look at some of the cross-references that relate to this topic. They are named below. In the author's mind those who could be considered "founding persons" are included in each generation of the congregation, including the present.

If former School Sisters of Notre Dame or their family and friends are using these materials it may be helpful to add pictures of those who support/ed your journey of faith and a desire to live out this spirit in marriage, single life, or a specific career choice.

Options for Presentation.

- ❖ The entire Family Tree can be printed into booklet form, formatted for 8½ by 11 standard paper.
- ❖ Photos can be printed or displayed individually.
- ❖ Prayer service can be printed separately.
- ❖ The text for each founding person would be distributed to the group.

The FACILITATOR welcomes the group and says: We want to look more closely at the Family Tree of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. It's important in any family to know who makes up the family tree. Discovering the roots of the School Sisters of Notre Dame and those who are significant family members will be the focus of our gathering. I'll be doing this by showing you pictures that relate to this history.

The FACILITATOR distributes copies of the text accompanying The Trinity ikon and says: The power of the Word of God is vital in the formation of Catholic religious life. As we walk through a brief description of each person, notice how the Word of God energized his/her vision.

The FACILITATOR displays The Trinity ikon and invites someone to read the text provided. After hearing the text, the FACILITATOR says: Consider being invited by the Trinity to join them for a conversation. (Note the empty place at the table in the ikon.)

The FACILITATOR continues: Let's focus on each founding person. Each one listened to God's Word and dialogued with the Trinity in prayerful conversation about what society needed during his/her lifetime. The persons we'll meet in this Family Tree lived radical Christianity. We'll take each person as they appear in history. Let's begin with St. Anthony of the Desert.

The FACILITATOR takes each founding person individually by distributing copies of the accompanying text. After inviting someone to read the text, The FACILITATOR shows the picture and says: What is significant about this person? Would you see him/her as having a mission in today's world? If so, what would it be? Invite questions and comments stressing the roots in scripture that are apparent in each of the founding persons. Invite comments on what the artist has tried to portray in each picture.

When presenting St. Augustine, there are additional notes on his life. (Timeline for St. Augustine) There are selected memories of his struggles and conversion taken from *The Confessions* both in print and audio. (Conversion of St. Augustine) The FACILITATOR may choose to print a copy of the Rule that influenced St. Peter Fourier. It is available at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/1534/ruleaug.html> His role as a founding person for School Sisters of Notre Dame is vital in understanding the emphasis on lifelong conversion, community, and mission, especially expressed through education.

After presenting Mother Theresa The FACILITATOR says: Mother Theresa was named "blessed" by the church on November 17, 1985. This means she was inducted into the Church's Hall of Fame for her outstanding goodness and service. It was the women of Munich who believed she was a woman of such deep faith and courage that the

church should recognize her in a public way. Part of the process of beatification was to read her writings to find evidence for her union with God. In a small sample of two hundred of her more than five thousand letters, the author discovered her roots in the Word of God. To tap this rich resource see: *Woman of the Word*.

After concluding *Mother Caroline*, The FACILITATOR says: There is another segment of this study entitled *Case Study in Courage*. It gives an idea of her family of origins, the historical context in which she established the School Sisters of Notre Dame, her fidelity to Mother Margarita of Cortona, the successor of Mother Theresa, as well as a brief look at “the real Mother Caroline” in photos. We may consider this as another topic to be explored in the future.

If The FACILITATOR would like to pursue another topic related to Family Tree, consider the topic, *Living in Wartime*. This provides an opportunity to read about Mother Theresa and Mother Almeda Schricker, a modern “founding person.” She commissioned the Family Tree of 1933. Both lived radical Christianity during wartime. Through their efforts of educating for peace and establishing an international community they shared a legacy of hope.

The FACILITATOR continues: We also have photos of more than eighty women who have been in formation most recently from throughout the congregation; *Seeds of Hope*. If so, invite discussion on the following: How do you see newer members or Associates re-founding the congregation?

Before concluding with a prayer, The FACILITATOR may want to invite participants to suggest names of the “founding persons” they want to recognize. The FACILITATOR says: As you consider the Family Tree of the School Sisters of Notre Dame who would you add to the list? What makes you choose this person? Tell us a story about her/him. If sharing with Associates or others there may be inspiring stories that reflect the founding spirit as it is lived by laity associated with School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Consider adding pictures of some who are named. Tell their stories in writing so that others may recognize them as “founding persons.” You may want to acknowledge such persons by a letter of thanks, a way of celebrating their contribution, or by creating a list that has a prominent place in a motherhouse. At some point it would be enriching for various Units to share these names and stories with one another.

The FACILITATOR concludes: Among some of the German School Sisters of Notre Dame there is a form of visual prayer. In it a group views a piece of art together and then shares what they see. I would like to share this kind of artistic prayer together. The FACILITATOR distributes copies of the Family Tree in Artistic Form. The FACILITATOR continues: Let’s look at this 1883 Family Tree. This was created to celebrate the first fifty years of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. What do you see?

(Notice the roots growing out of the hearts of Mother Theresa, Bishop Wittmann and Fr. Job. St. Augustine and St. Peter Fourier are also pictured. The major branches of the tree are the founding motherhouses, with the names of missions on the leaves. Try to find your area of the congregation.)

Now look at the 1933 Family Tree that was created to celebrate one hundred years. Do you notice any changes from the 1883 tree? (The tree has grown and has become a vine with bunches of grapes representing various missions. Recall the original title of this study, *Sturdy Roots*, in which the motto of the School Sisters of Notre Dame is significant. "All the works of God proceed slowly and in pain; but then, their roots are sturdier and their flowering the lovelier.")

The image of a grapevine also reminds us of the importance of pruning. The 1933 Family Tree of the School Sisters of Notre Dame was about to be severely pruned through the events of World War II.)

After comments The FACILITATOR says: We've had an experience of looking at the Family Tree of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. What have you learned about the roots and founding persons? Invite comments and possibly take time for individuals to create some artistic representation that they might share with the group in the future.

The FACILITATOR says: We'll conclude now by reading the Prologue of *You Are Sent*, the current Rule of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. As we listen to the Prologue, let's pray especially for all newer members, Associates, and all whose lives have enriched our own. (An appropriate hymn could complete the study.)

Prologue

We, School Sisters of Notre Dame, hold as
essential to our constitution, life and mission

Jesus Christ, who sent by the Father, sends
us in the power of the Spirit, to proclaim
the gospel by our lives;

the church, which by its very nature, continues
the presence and mission of Christ;

the world, which is the concrete situation in
which we carry out Christ's mission;

our charism, which gives focus to our life
and mission

Our charism, gift of the Spirit, was embodied in

Blessed Mary Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger
who longing for the oneness of all in God,
grounded the congregation in Eucharist,
anchored it in poverty, and dedicated it to Mary.

A woman of faith,
ever seeking God's will,
she struggled for unity in our international community
and responded to urgent needs,
preferring the poor,
and educating with a world vision.

In these gifts of the Spirit to our foundress,
Mother Theresa, we recognize the evolving charism
of our congregation.

Our charism flows from our spiritual heritage,
especially the gifts of

St. Augustine
who formed a community to be of one heart
and one soul in God,
seeing in the Trinity the basis,
source and goal of all community.

Blessed Alix LeClerc and St. Peter Fourier,
who gave a new direction to religious life,
insisting that ministry be integral
to the community they founded.

Bishop Michael Wittmann and Francis Sebastian Job,
who held Christian education for girls
as their special concern,
understanding what woman must be
if the human family were to improve.

Mother Caroline Friess,
who, through courageous leadership,
adapted the congregation to life on another continent,
perceptively reading the signs of the times,
risking innovative response
to the needs of the new world.

Our charism continues to develop in the
living community,
which, enriched by the past,

enables the congregation
to unfold in the present and
to be challenged by the future.

In a spirit of creative fidelity to Jesus Christ, the church, and our charism, we commit ourselves, as members of a religious institute of pontifical right dedicated to apostolic works, to continue the mission of Christ for which we have been consecrated. Through the power of the Spirit, we carry out this mission particularly through

our efforts toward unity,
our community life,
our ministry directed toward education,
our common search for and doing of God's will.

Mary, mother of the church and of our congregation,
gently challenges us:

“DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU.”
(John 2:5)