



## **Young Leaders Initiative at the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering**

Pre and post CSMG meeting sample agendas

Thank you for organizing students on your campus to attend this important leadership development opportunity. In doing so, you are both showing your commitment to developing the leadership in your own students and helping to shape leaders for the next generation of social ministers for the church.

As you gather with your group, consider how you might prepare the group to dive deeply into this experience. What outcomes do you hope this experience creates for your student? For your campus? For your community? The meeting agendas below are designed to assist you in cultivating a community within your student representatives and help open their hearts to where God is calling them to act in solidarity with those on the margins of our society, locally and globally.

### **CSMG Pre-Meeting #1**

Welcome and Opening Prayer:

Opening Prayer: Help us Build Communities in God's Vision of Justice

Holy Spirit,

We praise and thank you!

You anoint us to

bring glad tidings to the poor  
proclaim liberty to captives  
recover sight for the blind  
free the oppressed  
and build communities in keeping  
with God's vision of justice.

Show us how to be

light of the world  
salt of the earth  
seeds that sprout love

and leaven that infuses humanity  
with the desire to promote  
human dignity and solidarity.

Help us to listen so that  
those in poverty can lead our efforts  
to  
proclaim a more hopeful vision  
liberate captives from injustice  
heal the blindness of the powerful  
free us all from self-centeredness  
and build community to overcome  
poverty.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/help-us-build-communities-in-gods-vision-of-justice.cfm>

### Community Builder

Have participants share the following about themselves:

- Name
- Year in school
- Major
- Fun fact
- Why did you sign up for this pilgrimage?

### Reflect on the 2020 CSMG Theme: Bearing Witness, Life and Justice for All

Read [John 13: 31-35](#)

*When he had left, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. [If God is glorified in him,] God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, and as I told the Jews, 'Where I go you cannot come,' so now I say it to you. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

- What words, phrases, or images jump out at you from this passage?
- Jesus tells us that all will know his disciples by their love for one another. How do we show love for one another?
- How do we show love for those it is sometimes difficult to love? Those on the margins? The imprisoned? Those with whom we disagree?
- God offers a chance to reconcile with those who do injustice. What does reconciliation look like today?
- What bridges could we build on our campus as a result of attending CSMG?

### Logistics

- Review the [full schedule of events](#) and the [YLI schedule](#).
- Watch this video from past YLI participants about [preparing for CSMG](#).
- Describe briefly the opportunity to advocacy on a few specific issues. Ask students to decide if they want to meet with representatives of their home districts or the districts where campus is located (if that might be different.)

### Closing Prayer

Lord God of peace, hear our prayer!

We have tried so many times and over so many years to resolve our conflicts by our own powers and by the force of our arms. How many moments of hostility and darkness have we experienced; how much blood has been shed; how many lives have been shattered; how many hopes have been buried... But our efforts have been in vain.

Now, Lord, come to our aid! Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace. Open our eyes and our hearts, and give us the courage to say: "Never again war!"; "With war everything is lost". Instill in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace.

Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love, you created us and you call us to live as brothers and sisters. Give us the strength daily to be instruments of peace; enable us to see everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister. Make us sensitive to the plea of our citizens who entreat us to turn our weapons of war into implements of peace, our trepidation into confident trust, and our quarreling into forgiveness.

Keep alive within us the flame of hope, so that with patience and perseverance we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation. In this way may peace triumph at last, and may the words "division", "hatred" and "war" be banished from the heart of every man and woman. Lord, defuse the violence of our tongues and our hands. Renew our hearts and minds, so that the word which always brings us together will be "brother", and our way of life will always be that of: Shalom, Peace, Salaam!

Amen.

- Pope Francis, **Invocation for Peace**.

### Assignment:

- Read Pastoral Letter Against Racism
- Have participants look up what district they vote in and what representatives they wish to meet with on advocacy day.
- Has the campus delegate completed the interest form? And determined the number of hotel rooms needed?



## CSMG Pre- Meeting #2

### Opening Prayer

To open in prayer, have your group reflect with Pope Francis on the theme of CSMG:

"Jesus offers a justice other than that of the world, so often marred by petty interests and manipulated in various ways. Experience shows how easy it is to become mired in corruption, ensnared in the daily politics of quid pro quo, where everything becomes business. How many people suffer injustice, standing by powerlessly while others divvy up the good things of this life. Some give up fighting for real justice and opt to follow in the train of the winners. This has nothing to do with the hunger and thirst for justice that Jesus praises.

"True justice comes about in people's lives when they themselves are just in their decisions; it is expressed in their pursuit of justice for the poor and the weak. While it is true that the word "justice" can be a synonym for faithfulness to God's will in every aspect of our life, if we give the word too general a meaning, we forget that it is shown especially in justice towards those who are most vulnerable: "Seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Is 1:17)."

-Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exultate*, no. 78-79.

- Pope Francis warns against being too general with the term "justice." What are the specific types of justice that you feel called to address?
- How can your own—and others'—participation in encountering others, building community, and raising your voices, help the "pursuit of justice for the poor and the weak" around the world? What gifts do you bring? Where do you seek to grow?

### Reflection on *Open Wide Your Hearts*

What resonated with you from the pastoral letter? What surprised you? What challenged you?



### Expectations during the Gathering

- Help your group to think about why you are attending the gathering, what each student hopes to gain personally and what they hope to bring back to the campus community.
- Talk about what the group expects of one another during the conference, what moments you'll have for a check in, and whether or not you'll do action planning while at the conference or upon your return home.
  - Some examples might be:
    - Will you divide up the breakout sessions or attempt to have everyone attend the same ones?
    - What 'down time' is reasonable for students and when are they expected to be present?
    - How will you commit to continuing to grow your community and be open to creating new connections while at the gathering?

### Logistics and Final Preparations

- what representatives/districts are people planning to meet with? If you have not yet shared this information with the coordinator for YLI, please email: [enovak@usccb.org](mailto:enovak@usccb.org).
- Rooming assignments
- Getting there details

### Closing Prayer



### **Reflection Questions for Campus Groups During CSMG**

Reporting out from breakout sessions:

- What did you learn?
- What surprised you?
- What challenged you?
- What is something you want to think more about/act on because of the session?

On the day as a whole:

- How are you feeling?
- What is sticking with you?
- What questions do you have?
- What are notes you want to make to talk about when we get back to campus?



## Post CSMG Meeting #1 (February)

### Opening Prayer: Reflection on CSMG

**Leader:** If you can... think back to your hopes and feelings on our first day at CSMG. Before we led the brunch....

Think about all of the people you had the chance to get to know ...  
Each of us in this group...  
The other students and the work they are doing on their campuses....  
Staff members who work on policy and justice issues at CRS, Catholic Charities, the USCCB...

**All: We thank you, God, for the people you have gifted us with.**

**Leader:** Think about what made you excited....  
What were some issues that really caught your attention...  
Created a pull in you or a fire for justice?

What were moments of challenge?  
What may have been unsettling or difficult during the week?

**All: Thank you, God, for these moments of challenge and learning.**

**Leader:** Think about our advocacy...  
What does that word meant to you now?  
How was it sharing your voice? Meeting with your representative?

**All: Thank you, God, for the opportunity to use our voices to make a difference.**

**Leader:** What is speaking to you still from the week?  
Where do you feel God leading you?

How can we bring this energy back here to campus?

Closing:

Loving God, bless our conversations,  
keep our hearts and minds alert to the needs  
and gifts you have placed in our community.

Help what we have learned make a lasting impact on our community here at \_\_\_\_\_.

Discussion:

1. Name a challenge from the week?
2. What is a lasting impact that is still sitting with you?
3. What is keeping you excited/energized?
4. What do you want to do with your energy?

Brainstorming

- Where is your energy taking you – what are ways we can bring this here?
- What are your goals and actions you will take as an individual to live out the values and call to justice from the CSMG?
- What will we as a group do to promote justice on this campus?

Closing Prayer: [Prayer for Life and Dignity](#)

Eternal God, creator and sustainer of life,  
bless us with the courage to defend all life  
from conception to natural death.

Bless us with the strength to respect all peoples  
from east to west, from north to south,  
so that we may truly follow the call of Jesus to be neighbor.

We ask this in the name of Jesus,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit.  
Amen



**Post-CSMG Meeting #2: Reflection on the Semester (March/April)**

Opening prayer: Prayer to Address the Sin of Racism

We pray for healing to address  
The persistent sin of racism  
Which rejects the full humanity  
Of some of your children,  
And the talents and potential You have  
given.

We pray for the grace to recognize  
The systems that do not support  
The dignity of every person,  
That do not promote respect  
For those who are seen as other,  
Who bear the legacy of centuries  
Of discrimination, fear, and violence.

We pray for graced structures  
So children of color in Flint, and all  
children,  
Have access to clean water and health  
care.

We pray for graced structures  
So children of color in Mississippi, and  
all children,  
Have quality education that will allow  
them to develop their gifts.

We pray for graced structures  
So children of color in Camden, and all  
children, have homes where families  
can live in dignity and security.

We pray for graced structures  
So children of color in Chicago, and all  
children,  
Can grow up without fear, without the  
sound of gunshots.  
Lord of all, we ask you to hear and  
answer our prayers.

Give us eyes to see how the past  
Has shaped the complex present,  
And to perceive how we must create  
A new way forward,  
With a new sense of community  
That embraces and celebrates  
The rich diversity of all,  
That helps us live out your call to reject  
The sin of racism, the stain of hate,  
And to seek a compassionate solidarity  
Supported by Your grace and Your love.

All: We ask this through Christ, Our  
Lord. Amen.

Reflection questions:

- What have you been involved in building bridges since returning from CSMG?
- What work is there still to do on this campus? What are our next steps? What can we plan for next year and what can we still do this semester?
- What did you appreciate about the CSMG experience, including our preparation and reflection meetings? What would you have changed?
- How does God continue to call you to engage in the work you learned about during CSMG?

Closing Prayer: [Life and Dignity of the Human Person](#)

God of all life,  
Help us to appreciate the great gift that is human life  
formed in your image, a reflection of your holiness.  
Help us to recognize you  
in all whom you have created:  
children not yet born,  
families affected by poverty and war,  
people of different abilities,  
people from other lands, and  
all who are victims of hatred and racism.  
Help us to bear witness to the dignity of all whom you have created,  
regardless of stage of life,  
or wealth,  
or ability,  
or color, or creed,  
for every person is fully equal in your loving eyes.  
Share with us your holy knowledge  
that we are all your children,  
each bestowed with inherent dignity.  
May your justice reign forever!  
Amen.

**For the campus leader:**

If your students have brought about good work as a result of attending CSMG or have impactful reflections on their experience, we'd love to hear about it! Please email Emily Schumacher-Novak ([enovak@uscgb.org](mailto:enovak@uscgb.org)) with any of this information. We might be able to highlight the work happening on your campus in our materials.



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