

SESSION 2

With Words and Actions: Do It!



ENAVE

OBJECTIVES

- Share the mission experiences carried out during the week.
- Share difficult moments and life dreams among group members.
- Experience the power of active listening as a way to get involved and participate in a process of consultation.
- Prepare ourselves for mission with people in the periphery, especially reaching out to young people

SYMBOLS

Bottles of water

PREPARING THE SETTING

Before the session, prepare the setting for the small group meeting. Chairs are placed in a circle and in the middle an illustration of a path is placed. Place the bottles of water near the path symbolizing our thirst for God and for a fuller life. The ideal is to have a bottle of water for each participant. There should also be a basket with *The V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journals* (new participants will receive a *Mission and Consultation Journal* at the end of the session).

PRAYER

 **Song:** *Pescador de Hombres* (Cesareo Gabaráin) or *Como el Sol en el Cielo* (Johann Álvarez) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome and greeting. Each participant is invited to briefly share a moment from his or her missionary experience during the week. The following questions can be used to guide the sharing:

Whom did you reach out to (*primereaste*)? What periphery did you visit? What did you see and hear?

The session continues with the following reading from the Scriptures:

[He asked them,] “What are you discussing as you walk along?” They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?” And he replied to them, “What sort of things?” They said to him, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. (Luke 24:17-20)



After a few moments of reflection in silence, a person from the group shares the following reflection on the reading:

To get involved with gestures and actions...

In the first session we saw how Jesus took the initiative toward his disciples by joining them along the way to Emmaus. In this second section, we focus on how Jesus gets involved in the life of the disciples asking them about their conversation. This action by Jesus is one of the most surprising in this passage. Jesus knows full well what happened in Jerusalem, and he is very much aware of the difficult situation afflicting his disciples. Why, then, does Jesus ask the disciples what they are talking about along the way, as if he himself did not know the answer? In fact, Jesus asks again, kindly and calmly, saying, “*What sort of things?*” when the disciples answered sadly and in an incredulous tone: *Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?*

This very surprising gesture by Jesus, asking first, and then asking again, is a very important aspect of the methodology of the V Encuentro. The encounter with others, particularly with people who are going through difficult moments, must start by asking about their lives, concerns, hopes, ideas, needs, and dreams. This also allows them to speak about their reality from their own perspective, to share their experiences, their feelings, their ideas. To listen deeply creates a space of trust and safety that allows people to quench their thirst and unload their burdens.

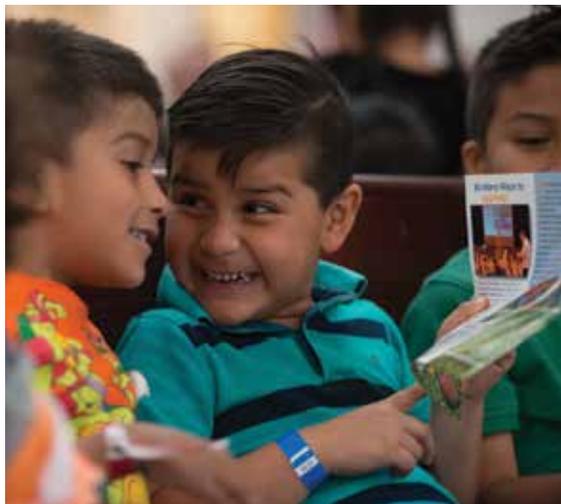
Jesus is not interested in scolding the disciples for having abandoned him, or for not trusting in his promises. Nor is he interested in reproaching them for not having recognized him. He does not start the conversation by teaching them. Jesus’ questions reveal a great human sensitivity as well as his divine wisdom to listen to the suffering of his disciples and to allow them to express their pain, confusion, and astonishment about the events. Jesus knows that his disciples are extremely thirsty in their journey: they thirst for Jesus himself, his message of hope, justice and freedom rooted in the love of the living God who draws near to us, listens to our pains, and frees us from our sins; they thirst to be



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listened to in their pain.

The questions of the stranger invite the disciples to proclaim that Jesus was a powerful prophet in words and deeds before God and before the people. But their own leaders had given him up to be condemned to death, and he was crucified. It is not difficult to imagine the great confusion and pain that the disciples must have felt



KEN FALLS

seeing their priests and officials surrendering a prophet sent by God to his death. The disciples and all of the followers of Jesus expected him to liberate Israel from the Roman oppression and to restore the glory of the Kingdom of Judea. With the death of Jesus, those dreams are demolished and the disciples sink into hopelessness, the Kingdom of God Jesus had announced seemed lost. They are likely to wonder how much longer they will have to wait for the “true Messiah.” The disciples express disappointment and

probably wonder if it was all worthwhile to follow Jesus all that time. The fact that they are returning to the way they lived before meeting Jesus is a sign of their defeated hopes, because the one who had offered to quench their thirst forever is no longer with them.

SEE

The facilitator of the session invites the group to create a space of trust to share.

1 Let us think, for a few moments, about our own personal history, and let us share with one another the challenges and difficulties that have questioned our dreams and aspirations.

This sharing can happen in pairs, making sure that, while a person is sharing his or her experience, the other one is listening without judging, without making comments, or giving advice. The person simply listens with all his or her senses and heart.

Share an experience in which you felt that life difficulties led you to doubt your faith in Jesus. What events or disappointment threatened to take away your hope (forced migration, a death in the family, a betrayed relationship, being the victim of discrimination or of crime, financial difficulties, sicknesses, an addiction in the family, etc.)?

Who was by your side? Who asked you tenderly and knew how to listen? Who lent you a friendly hand without judging you? Who or what helped you to express your pain and restore your hope? Who helped you to quench your thirst?

Once participants have offered their thoughts, the facilitator shares with the group the following examples of accompaniment from the historical memory of the Catholic Hispanic/Latino people in the United States.

2 Let us recall how many Catholics doing Hispanic ministry have become involved in the lives of people and entire communities.

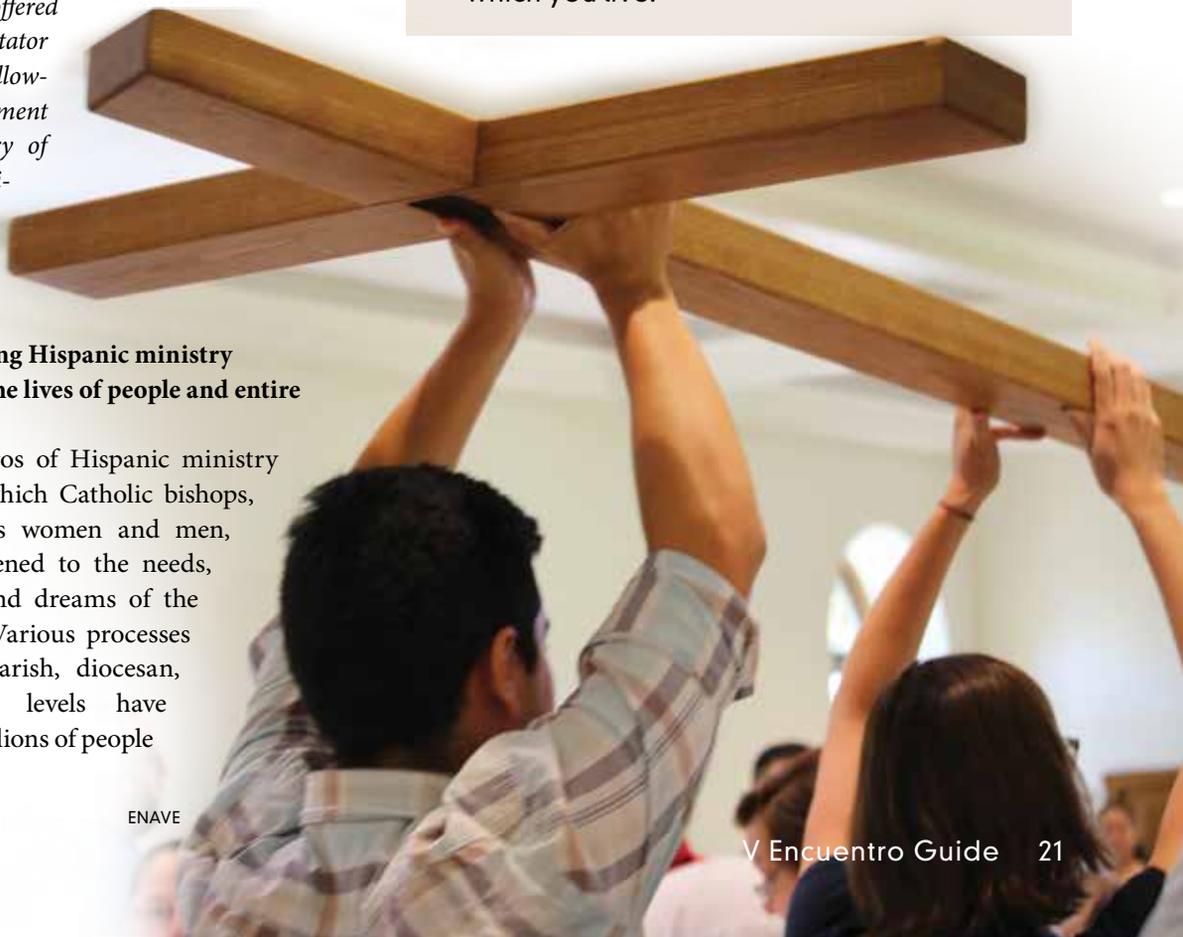
The national Encuentros of Hispanic ministry have been processes in which Catholic bishops, priests, deacons, religious women and men, and lay leaders have listened to the needs, challenges, aspirations, and dreams of the Hispanic/Latino people. Various processes of consultation at the parish, diocesan, regional, and national levels have awakened the hopes of millions of people

and created a space of safety and trust in thousands of parishes, ecclesial movements, and Catholic organizations for almost fifty years. Over 3,000 Hispanic/Latino priests are active in ministry today across the United States serving millions of Catholics. A growing number of Hispanic/Latino religious women are also involved in ministry, particularly evangelization, catechetical, formation, advocacy, and social services ministries.

Many Hispanic Catholics, and the Catholic Church as an institution, have been involved in the struggle for the rights of workers to organize: efforts leading to integral, fair, and human immigration reform; programs of assistance for people living in situations of poverty; initiatives to affirm and defend human life at all stages. César Chávez, for example, was a Catholic leader who dedicated his life to advocacy for justice for farmworkers. The United Farm Workers of America, founded by César Chávez, was an answer to the cry of thousands of farmworkers in their search for better salaries, better work conditions, the right to negotiate their contracts, and many other benefits that were rightly theirs.

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- Give examples of how your faith community, ecclesial movement, or Catholic organization is involved in the Hispanic community in which you live.



JUDGE

Pope Francis tells us that the disciples of an evangelizing community must be involved with works and gestures in the daily lives of others, particularly of those in difficult situations. Getting involved means narrowing distances, building bridges; going beyond one's own financial, cultural, educational, or migratory situation in order to reach out to the other. It means owning the suffering of others, taking on their difficulties, and even humbling ourselves, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Missionary disciples thus take on the “smell of the sheep’ and the sheep are willing to hear their voice’ (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 24).

This call to becoming involved with those who suffer poverty, dispossession, or even discrimination comes from the very heart of the Church. In the document *Encuentro and Mission*, the Catholic bishops of the United States say that the Church's Missionary Option shows predilection for those who live in situations of poverty, sickness, discrimination, spiritual poverty, and loneliness. And Pope Francis speaks of a cultural and interior poverty so prevalent today, requiring an urgent response from the Church (see *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 2).

The mission of the Church toward those who suffer—particularly youths, women, and families—demands these two things: works of mercy and a committed struggle against all forms of injustice. In the *National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry*, the bishops make an urgent call for us to get involved with those who live in the periphery, so that they can participate in the political, social, economic, and religious processes of their communities. The plan also calls to respond, in the pastoral and social realms, to the needs of families who are experiencing many difficulties, including abuse, divorce and separation, abortion, domestic violence, alcoholism and drug addiction, isolation, problems related to legal residence, and lack of educational opportunities (*Encuentro and Mission*, n. 32).

All these personal and

family situations create hopelessness, confusion, and suffering. Many people who live in these situations perhaps find themselves on the way back to their own Emmaus; that is to a way of living, thinking, and feeling removed from the Risen Christ, his love, and his promises of life lived to the fullest.

The encounter with the Samaritan woman is another example of how Jesus gets involved and involves a person in need with an entire community (see John 4:4-42). Jesus sits by the well where the Samaritan goes to procure water. He sits at the place where the life of the Samaritan woman finds its origin (the well is an image of the source of life for the Samaritan). As he asks “give me a drink,” he identifies himself as the source of water of that well. Jesus speaks to the Samaritan woman with familiarity, going far beyond social and cultural prejudices, and he gets involved in her life, quenching the thirst she feels even without knowing it. The text shows how Jesus awakens the interest of the Samaritan woman, helping her to make a transition from everyday concerns to personal ones, and from personal concerns to spiritual ones. In this process, the Samaritan woman experiences her own conversion and becomes a disciple. She cannot contain the joy of “knowing herself loved” and “knowing herself accepted” and she goes to announce to others that she has met someone special. Then she says, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty.”



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ENAVE

ACT

To be involved and to involve others

How can we get involved in the lives of people in our community and in the periphery, engaging young people in particular? What kinds of works and gestures should we carry out? In the Emmaus story we see how Jesus asks questions in order to start a conversation. He gradually gets involved in the anxieties and sadness of his disciples. In the case of the Samaritan woman, Jesus meets her by the well and shows interest in her daily life. He also asks questions and understands her need and her thirst for answers to the deep questions that give meaning to life. Jesus helps her to understand the difference between surviving and living to the fullest.

Our pastoral experience and many studies indicate that there are millions of Hispanic/Latino young people living in very difficult situations. Also, many of those young people are thirsty for opportunities for a better life: they thirst for tenderness and friendship, a sense of belonging to the Church and to society, the unconditional love of God, and a dignifying and fulfilling project of life. The V Encuentro offers a unique opportunity to see these young people not through sociological lenses but with the eyes of the disciple. Such a perspective moves us to get involved in the lives of millions of Hispanic/Latino young women and men who still have not felt the love of the Church and have

not had a personal encounter with the living Jesus.

The missionary action in this second week of the process of the V Encuentro sends us to places where we can meet young people and get involved in their lives. What are the wells where we can meet them? What questions can we ask them? What can we offer them?

In our daily life, let us show more interest in the regular life of young people in our own families. Let us ask them about what they consider most important in their lives, about their concerns, anxieties, what makes them happy, what they know for sure, their beliefs and doubts, what they expect from God, the message they wish they would hear from the Church.

In our community, we can get involved with young people who are experiencing major needs in the neighborhood, work, or faith community. Sit down with them to listen and be prepared to offer the services that the parish provides that could meet one of their needs. Another option is to meet with young people in the parish to talk about their needs, aspirations, and contributions to the life of the parish and society.

In the periphery, let's go in pairs to a "well," that is, a place where young people normally gather, and engage in dialogue with them.

CELEBRATE



Song: *Somos Pueblo Misionero* (Diego Correa y Damaris Thillet)

Lord, give us always of your water

Place a bowl with water where everybody can see it. This preferably should be a large, transparent receptacle, allowing the water to be seen. Add if appropriate other containers, such as the jars or bottles that workers or immigrants may use to carry water. Find some green plants, with leaves showing health and abundance to place around the water. If you can, find some soft music with sounds of water flowing that would invite a spirit of contemplation.

LEADER

I invite all of you to look at the water. Saint Francis of Assisi called it Sister Water. The eyes of Francis found in the water various demonstrations of goodness. The water refreshes us, energizes us, cleanses us, and heals us.

ALL

Praise to you, Lord, for our Sister Water.

Water is docile and adaptable. It can also be terrifying and powerful. It is joy for children and blessing for a worker.

ALL

Praise to you, Lord, for our Sister Water.

Immigrants know the power of water when they walk through the desert. In places where water is scarce, the poor long for water. Water is a blessing from God.

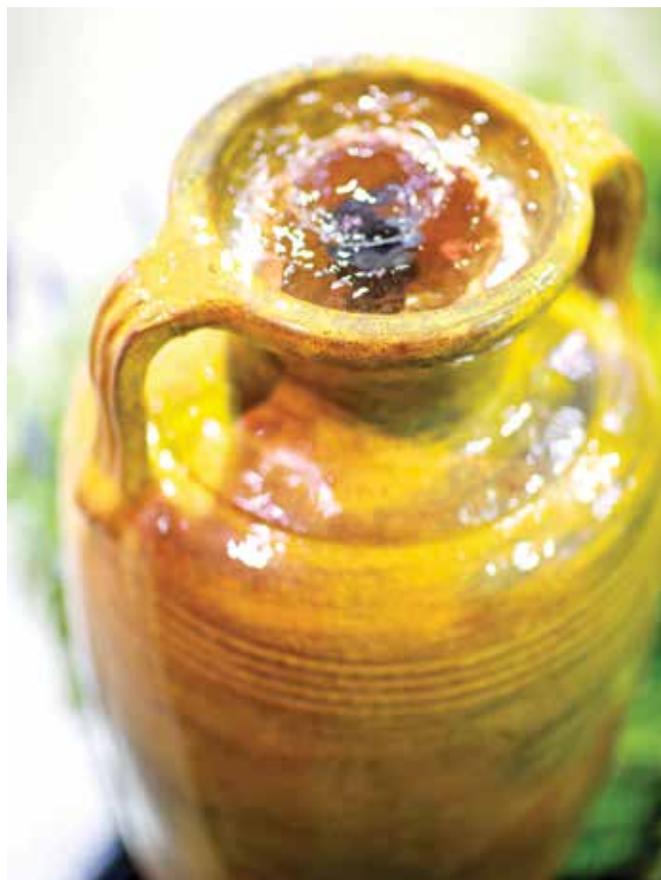
ALL

Praise to you, Lord, for our Sister Water.

Let us keep a moment of silence lifting up to the Father the concern of our Church about droughts in the world and the images of lands where rainfall is insufficient. The dryness of lakes, rivers, and springs should not be seen just with the eyes, but with the heart. Let us in silence ask for the Father's forgiveness for those moments when we don't take care of creation. It is an injustice toward creation, but also toward the new generations.

LEADER

Lord, our God, you created water to nourish the earth; you have blessed the waters from the creation of the world. When



DIOCESE OF FRESNO/KEVIN FORD

your Son went into the Jordan River, you made your will known, that we listen to your Son, because it is in him that the source of life is found. Embrace your children who journey as part of the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, that we renew our baptismal commitment and walk on the path of life with the power of your Spirit to promote justice and peace. Amen.

While singing, participants go to the front, and in pairs they sign each other with water and receive a water bottle.

INTERCESSIONS

LEADER

Lord, you said you are the spring of living water. Whoever drinks the water you give will never thirst. Allow us in this V Encuentro to quench the thirst to be affirmed as Hispanics and get closer to you as true disciples, to be refreshed in your friendship.

ALL

Lord, give us always of your life-giving water.

Lord, you said that no one can go to you unless the Father calls him or her. Through this process of the V Encuentro, cleanse us with your life-giving water from all the dust gathered on the paths we have traveled and free us from all forms of slavery and guilt.

ALL

Lord, give us always of your life-giving water.

Lord, who in your passion experienced thirst, free those who in their thirst drank water from false wells, and return them to your fold through the missionary action of your faithful.

ALL

Lord, give us always of your life-giving water.

Lord, you said that no one took your life from you because you surrendered it freely. We want to drink from your open side and take that living water to our sisters and brothers who remain in the periphery, and to those whose strength is spent in the ways of the world.

ALL

Lord, give us always of your life-giving water.

LEADER

We praise you, Father, who give water to your Church to make the fields of your Reign fruitful. We thank you for making us one in Christ through Baptism and renewing the opportunities for us to return to true life. Lord, send your life-giving waters to our homes, where you call us to be missionaries so that the seeds we plant in your name may grow into an abundant harvest in our children, our families, our communities, and in all of creation. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Song: *Llamados al Encuentro* (Santiago Fernández) and the *Prayer of the V Encuentro*.

MISSION

Instructions to get involved



Choose one person of the group with whom to go in missionary action in pairs.



Decide where you will go to get involved. It is recommended for the different pairs in the group to go to different places: a square, a store, a park, a detention center, a cafeteria, a place of work, etc.



Once you are in the place of mission, you can initiate the dialogue in a spontaneous way, or by introducing yourselves and asking for permission to converse. At the end of the dialogue, offer a sign of peace (e.g., a word, a gesture) to the person or persons with whom you spoke. You can give to one of them a V Encuentro wristband. When you get home, write down the most important ideas from the conversation in the *V Encuentro Mission and Consultation Journal*.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is most important in your life?
- What are your concerns?
- What makes you happy?
- What are your dreams?
- What obstacles prevent you from achieving them?
- What are you most certain about?
- What do you expect from God?
- What do you expect from the Catholic Church?
- What do you offer to others, to society?