

Begin a New Life

Description of a Morning Retreat

Goals

The main goals of a *BNL Morning Retreat* are as follows:

- A chance to enjoy a morning time connection with God and people.
- An opportunity to go through one full experience of the *BNL* process.
- An opportunity to share and discuss your experience with others.
- An opportunity to do these things once or twice a year, possibly in tandem with a *Weekend Retreat*.

Welcome & Check-in

The morning opens with *Welcome* and *Check-in*. *Check-in* is a time for hearing from each member of the group. People share one highlight from their day or week, an opening thought, or a hope for the morning (*one* of these things, not all three). *Check-in* gives each person a chance to start actively engaging in the morning's activities. People who prefer to listen and not speak may "pass" on their turn. If the group is larger than eight people, consider breaking into groups of four to eight.

The key to *Check-in* is keeping it brief. Each person says just one, two, or a few sentences. There is typically no cross talk or conversation during *Check-in*, though this can be at the discretion of the leader. The group facilitator (and others in the group) acknowledge each person's contribution with the words "Thank you" before moving on to the next person. The total time of *Welcome* and *Check-in* doesn't exceed fifteen minutes. It ends by 9:15 a.m.

Main session: The *BNL* process

Following *Check-in* is a brief introduction to the morning. People then go off to individual places in the building or outdoors. Each person uses a "Full" set of *BNL* worksheets to go through the entire process for one particular issue in his or her life. Those who are new to the process remain behind for a brief overview. Afterward, they go off to private locations and go through the process in the same way. The main session lasts up to 1½ hours, ending by 10:45 a.m.

Communion with God

Following the main session is *Communion with God* (see the Step 4.4 worksheet for a description of this communion). It includes the following, with some items being optional:

- Attendees kneel (for the duration of the communion).
 - *Note: People who can't kneel for the entire time remain seated.*
- An opening prayer is offered by a group member or facilitator, or by different members of the group taking turns.
- People pass unleavened bread* from person to person, then wine. Each person eats and drinks.

- **Note:** People for whom the drinking of wine may compromise their health, well-being, and/or usefulness may drink water instead—a correspondent approximation to wine. Either that or another correspondent alternative.
- A closing prayer is offered by a group member or facilitator, or by different members of the group taking turns.

Communion with God ends by 11:00 a.m.

Note: People who can't stay until noon depart the morning at this point.)

Sharing & Discussion

Following *Communion with God* is *Sharing & Discussion*. People take turns sharing one or two highlights from their experience of the process. If the group is larger than eight, consider breaking into groups of four to eight. After everyone's had a chance to share, the floor is open for whole group discussion. *Sharing & Discussion* lasts up to forty-five minutes. It ends by 11:45 a.m.

Closing Thoughts

Following *Sharing and Discussion* is *Closing Thoughts*. *Closing Thoughts* is a time for hearing a final, brief thought from each member of the group. It allows people to remain actively engaged to the end of the morning and to "check out" of the main session. People who prefer to listen and not speak may "pass" on their turn. If the group is larger than eight people, consider breaking into groups of four to eight.

Closing Thoughts happens fairly quickly, with each person saying just one or two sentences. There is no cross talk or conversation during *Closing Thoughts*. The group leader (and others within the group) acknowledge each person's contribution with the words "Thank you" before moving on to the next person. The total time for *Closing Thoughts* doesn't exceed ten minutes. It ends by 11:55 a.m.

The Lord's Prayer

The *Morning Retreat* ends with *The Lord's Prayer*. Attendees stand, hold hands, and say the prayer together. Those who prefer to listen may do so. The entire morning ends by 12:00 noon.

Overall goal of BNL retreats: Once or twice a year

As mentioned on the BNL website, a *BNL Morning Retreat* can serve as an alternative to a *Weekend Retreat*. In addition, it can be spaced six months apart from a *Weekend Retreat*, or it can happen by itself on a semiannual basis. The overall goal of BNL retreats is for people to have one or two opportunities a year to commit themselves to the BNL process and follow through (as recommended on the Step 4.4 worksheet).

Cont.

*Unleavened Bread

BNL Communion with God includes (among other things) eating unleavened bread. Here is a simple recipe for making unleavened bread:

- 1 cup unbleached, sifted flour
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 5 teaspoons water

Mix thoroughly to form a non-sticky dough for rolling. (Note: If the dough is too dry and doesn't hold together, add tiny amounts of water until it does. Too *much* water will make the final product dense and hard.)

Roll between wax paper (to 3/16-inch thickness) and cut in circles using a water or wine glass like a cookie cutter.

Bake at 350° F for 18 to 20 minutes until golden.