

## PFGM Homily using balloons

### Preparation

Before each Mass it is necessary to blow up 13-14 balloons and attached to each, a length of string or ribbon (for holding) about 25-40cms long.



Have at least two or three people who are not giving the homily sit at the rear of the church holding the balloons. (Be aware you need sometimes to fight to get the back seats!)

Try to arrange it so that you can use a remote or roving microphone for the homily. That will enable you to approach people and ask a question.

### The message

Keep the introduction brief and the facts brief because the passing out of balloons will take some time and that 'is' the message.

Explain that you are speaking about PFG's because 'we want to invite parishioners not involved to consider joining a group'.

Make at least one statement that indicates

- a) the message of Jesus calls for fellowship and more than ever we need to find ways to help people feel welcome and develop a sense of belonging, especially young people and those from different cultures
- b) the church is experiencing two obvious phenomena we need to take into account:
  - a)** an increase in migrant Catholics, many of whom find it difficult to belong to a parish community, and **b)** a lack of young families (unless they are migrant families)

The easiest way to explain a Passionist Family Group is to demonstrate to you what it looks like.

I am going to ask whether anyone here whether they or they and their family applies to the different categories I call out. So please raise your hand if what I say applies to you, and maybe not every one of you, but some of you will have a balloon given to you.

OK. So **first** is there anyone here who is 75 or older, and on their own...either widowed or never married?

*(Ask those with the balloons to give them to whoever you point out – preferably one male and one female)*

**2.** Is there anyone here who is 75 or older who are a couple? (No doubt your children now have left home).

*(Ask those with the balloons to give them to whoever you point out –to at least one couple, and more depending on whether the age profile is high in the parish or at that Mass)*

3. Are there any couples who are a bit younger – say 65 years or older, with or without children at home?

*(Direct those with the balloons to whoever you point out –to at least two couples)*

4. Are there any couples who are even younger – say 50-65 years or older, with or without children at home?

*(Direct those with the balloons to whoever you point out –to at least two couples)*

5. Are there any couples who are even younger – say 35-50 with or without children at home?

*(Direct those with the balloons to whoever you point out –to at least two couples)*

6. Is there a single parent with children living at home?

*(Direct those with the balloons to whoever you point out –to at least two individuals, one single Mum and one single Dad if there are both present)*

7. Apart from anyone already mentioned Is there a family or couple who were born overseas and been in Australia less than ten years?

*(Direct those with the balloons to whoever you point out –to at least two couples)*

8. Is there someone who has only joined our parish in the past year?

*(Direct those with the balloons to whoever you point out –two different types of persons)*

9. Is there anyone I have missed.-.anyone category that has not covered you?

*Explain:* This is important because our motto is 'A Family For All', so there is no one who cannot be welcomed into a Passionist Family Group.

*Now ask....*Those of you with a balloon, could you please come out the front here and bring your spouse or your family with you.

*When they have come out, simply say...'*this is what a Passionist Family looks like'.

You don't choose, you willingly accept to belong with whoever is allocated to your family – just as in ordinary family life.

If you have a roving microphone, devote two minutes to asking ad lib questions such as..

The one(s) who are new to the parish:

- how long have you been coming?
- do you know any of these others holding a balloon?

The one(s) who were born overseas and have been in Australia less than ten years?

- where were you born?
- do you have other relatives in this country? Do they live nearby?
- do you know any of these others holding a balloon?

*Now ask them to take two minutes to say hello to each other.*

*While this happens, just observe the warmth and keenness they display to meet one another.*

*Then comment briefly on what you observed and explain...*

This is what a Passionist Family Group is. It is a way of strangers becoming friends; it is a way of people from different ages and cultures mixing and belonging. Too often, those from different cultures mix only with each other because it can be so difficult to meet and mix because of language or personality.

*Ask those who came out to return to their seats and conclude with something like this....*

You can imagine that if we had several groups like this group, how friendly the parish would become and how much enjoyment people would have. You could see how these people enjoyed meeting one another.

In one parish they regretted that they didn't on the spot make this group a PFG!

A Passionist Family Group is not a prayer group or a study group. It is a Family, so the aim is that by meeting together once a month (either for shared meals or for inexpensive get togethers like bush walking or visits to the beach etc) the members become like a family and as they get to know one another better not only can they enjoy each other's company, but they can help out during difficult times in each other's lives – just like in a normal family.

Concluding comment:

We hope you will put yourself out to join a group, for your own sake and for the sake of others. I did x years ago, and for me (comment on your experience of a Family Group).