



# Christian Life Community

## Australia

### **National Guidelines for Criteria, Selection, Appointment and Formation of Guides in CLC**

The Guide has a specific service role within CLC. There are certain characteristics of a person/CLC member who is suited for that role. The process of choosing and accompanying a Guide is always a communal process. *The Guide is sent for this task and is supported by the community - especially for the formation task.*

Well formed Guides are vital for the ongoing growth of the Christian Life Community in Australia. To continue to grow and deepen CLC, we know we need to form new groups which means recruiting, accompanying and forming new Guides.

#### **Role and Responsibility of CLC Guides (based on “The Process of Growth in CLC - Guidelines for Formation” 2009)**

The CLC Guide facilitates the formation of the CLC Group in all its stages of growth, helping it to live the CLC way of life, being sensitive to the movement of the Spirit at the personal and group level. The Guide embodies the CLC Charism, and has experience of all three pillars of CLC, namely, Ignatian Spirituality, Community Growth and Apostolic Mission.

The Guide is familiar with the communal nature of CLC. He or she understands the dynamics of group processes and encourages deep and respectful listening in the CLC group. The Guide is aware of CLC foundational literature and the outcomes of CLC Assemblies - National and World.

In particular, the CLC Guide:

- Assists in the CLC way of proceeding, encouraging the group to use:
  - *Ignatian methods of prayer*
  - *The daily Awareness Examen*
  - *The practice of discernment in response to God’s call in daily life*
  - *Spiritual direction*
  - *The Spiritual Exercises*
  - *DSSE (Discerning, Sending, Supporting, Evaluating) as a way of discerning mission.*
  - *Major CLC documents such as the General Principles, The CLC Charism, “The Process of Growth in CLC - Guidelines for Formation” 2009.*
- Suggests and facilitates the contents and experiences belonging to the relevant stages of growth.
- Maintains close contact with other Guides and the wider CLC community.

- Highlights the processes unfolding in the Group, identifying and making suggestions about matters which need to be addressed in more depth.
- Encourages a growing integration of faith and life.
- Whenever necessary, helps the group identify personal and/or group situations of stagnation.
- At the stage of apostolic discernment, encourages a dynamic apostolic life according to the principles of apostolic discernment, sending (missioning), supporting and evaluating (DSSE).
- Encourages members to continue to discern their vocation in the Church, recognising that CLC is but one way of Christian commitment.
- Encourages members to continue to discern whether they are ready to make a Temporary or Permanent Commitment to CLC.

### **Qualities and Experience Desirable in a Guide<sup>1</sup>**

The guide is a person who:

- Has a growing relationship with Christ through prayer.
- Values the Ignatian story and The Spiritual Exercises as the source of Ignatian spirituality and has some experience of the Exercises.
- Desires to be a 'contemplative in action'.
- Has discovered the need and importance for personal spiritual guidance.
- Demonstrates maturity and generosity.<sup>2</sup>
- Has some felt knowledge and understanding of CLC foundational documents, especially the General Principles.
- Is prepared to participate in and promote the activities of CLC at regional, national and world levels.
- Participates in ongoing formation as a Guide.
- Is able to listen.
- Manifests freedom in relation to being a Guide.<sup>3</sup>
- Has some experience of working with groups.
- Shows compassion and solidarity with the poor.
- Recognises their financial responsibility.

### **How is a Guide Chosen and Formed?**

It is the responsibility of Regional and National EXCOs to select potential Guides. Regional EXCO will mission those guides following a discernment process. The Regional and National CLC creates and provides formation for Guides in the various aspects of this work. The Regional EXCOs will also provide ongoing support and mentoring for their guides.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Process of Growth in CLC - Guidelines for Formation" 2009 - Point 195. Points 193 – 204 offer more information about Guides.

<sup>2</sup> "The CLC Charism Revised". Supplement No. 56 December 2001. See Points 32-36 The Profile of the CLC Person.

<sup>3</sup> Ignatian indifference SP. Ex. [23]

## **IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION OF GUIDES**

The discerning process with regard to guides is both personal and communal.

### **Identification of Potential Guides**

A potential Guide could be identified in the following ways:

1. Guides/EXCO/Formation Team members/wisdom figures invite and then nominate members to be considered as potential guides.
2. A CLC member may be part of a service/leadership team e.g. EXCO, Formation team or working group such as a National Gathering group and has the qualities desirable.
3. The CLC community notices the qualities in a CLC member.
4. The individual can feel a 'call' towards guiding.
5. When a guide is needed in a country area for a group of people wanting to join CLC, an experienced CLC guide/CLC member may need to identify someone.

## **STEPS IN BECOMING A GUIDE**

### **Process of Discernment**

1. Potential Guides can be invited to Guide Formation events as part of the discerning process within the wider community. The invitation needs to be clear that this does not necessarily mean that the person will be called upon to guide. Guide formation will vary according to Regional needs.
2. Ongoing discernment takes place between potential guide, own local CLC group, mentor guide or other CLC members.
3. Regional EXCO commissions and mandates the new Guide.<sup>4</sup> Each Region may choose to commission new guides in a variety of ways
  - World CLC Day
  - End of Year Gathering
  - Chairperson/EXCO member to attend first meeting.

## **BEGINNING AS A GUIDE**

A new Guide may be asked to serve:

1. A group of people new to CLC
2. An established group
3. A mixed group of new and established members.

### **Things to Consider**

1. One thing to be aware of is the 'matching' of people wanting to join CLC with the potential guide e.g. geographically and sometimes personally. For example, younger people need to be encouraged to articulate their experience in their own language, and the guide needs to be comfortable with and very sensitive to that.
2. Identify suitable time and place for the meetings.
3. Ongoing mentoring for new guides is necessary. Some possible suggestions:
  - EXCO arrange for experienced guide to mentor new guide
  - Meet with cluster of guides regularly
  - New guide to be part of ongoing formation with other guides

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix A -Protocol for Appointment of Guides developed by Regional EXCO in NSW

## WAYS OF PROVIDING ONGOING FORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR ALL GUIDES

1. Dialogue and sharing with other Guides either at planned events or informal get-togethers.
2. Ongoing reading particularly of CLC core documents.
3. Annual evaluation for guides - could incorporate questions such as:
  - What is happening with members of new CLC group?
  - Are some/most attending/participating in CLC experiences?
  - Identify what means that you have found most helpful – to you? To a group?
  - What has been most difficult?
  - What CLC documents have assisted?
  - What is missing in present Guide Formation?
  - Anything you would like to say about or see included in CLC Guide Formation?
  - In an ideal world what supports would you like or recommend for a new and/or experienced guide?
4. Cluster groups: In NSW guides meet approximately every eight weeks in geographical clusters.<sup>5</sup> In NSW the EXCO prepares the material for clusters.
5. Ongoing reflection
6. Further suggestions for content of Guide Formation are listed in Appendix C.

## GUIDING A NEW GROUP

1. A suggested resource to use with a new group is “To Share in the Life of Christ. Experiencing God in Everyday Life” by Laurence L. Gooley SJ.
2. After completing the first six meetings of “To Share in the Life of Christ” (or a series of introductory meetings), the members of the group will evaluate whether they wish to continue journeying in the CLC way of life.
3. The Guide needs to be accompanied by the mentor to ensure personal freedom of spirit to allow people to stay or leave at this time.
4. If the group or part of it decides to continue, some ritual<sup>6</sup> of commitment to a further period (perhaps a year) of discovering CLC is made. The Guide, at each stage of growth of the group, initiates that the individuals undertake an evaluation to determine whether to continue journeying in the CLC way of life.
5. The Guide may need to be assisted to attend not only to the individual members but also to the group as a whole - the communal movements.<sup>7</sup> The role of the Guide changes as the group grows through stages.
6. The Guide needs to be free to allow members to leave and in some cases for the group to dissolve, and to relinquish the role of Guide.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix B for Suggested Purpose of a Cluster Group and a Plan for a Cluster Group Meeting

<sup>6</sup> A ritual or some way to assist the new members to realise commitment has been requested by a guide and ways in which to discern the depth of commitment of people. Comment: *This commitment is to CLC and not to an individual group. Each group is asked to make an annual group evaluation (see CLC Handbook) and as part of this an individual/group may decide to continue or not. See a suggested prayer for Missioning in Appendix D*

<sup>7</sup> CLC Formation Stages 1995 is a helpful resource for identifying the stages of a group and the role of guide at various stages. It is available at [www.clcaustralia.org.au](http://www.clcaustralia.org.au). See also “The Process of Growth in CLC - Guidelines for Formation” 2009. It is available at [www.clcaustralia.org.au](http://www.clcaustralia.org.au).

## **POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES**

Problem situations can arise in a CLC group. A Guide needs to know and feel comfortable to seek assistance in discerning issues with a spiritual director, mentor guide, EXCO, Formation Team or Cluster Group (if established). The cluster group' model as in NSW CLC also provides a very valuable discerning community in such situations.

## Appendix A

### Protocol for Appointment of Guides NSW CLC Executive Council

Guides are appointed by the State EXCO and confirmed in person by a member of State EXCO at the local CLC group meeting. A missioning ceremony is held by the State EXCO for all guides, with a focus on new guides, at the annual World CLC Day.

Protocol adopted at NSW CLC EXCO meeting 5<sup>th</sup> December 1999.

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## Appendix B

### Purpose of Cluster Groups

- A Cluster Group is a place of formation of guides.
- It is different from an ordinary CLC group.
- It is not just a place where guides talk about what is happening in their various groups, rather it is where they can reflect on what is happening in them as they guide their groups.
- It is a place where they can be supported by others in learning about being a guide.
- It is a place where they can reflect with other guides on ways in which they can offer deeper formation to the members of their groups.

### Plan for a Cluster Group Meeting

- Brief prayer and settling.
- Prayerful sharing on one of the following while group listens in silence:
  - "What has energised/de-energised me as a guide in recent weeks?"
  - "What has challenged or affirmed me in my role as a guide in recent weeks?"
  - "What have I found difficult/rewarding in my role as a guide in recent weeks?"
  - "How have I felt an increase of faith, hope and charity through my guiding?"
  - "When/Where did I feel/hear/smell/sense the Lord's presence?"
  - "What sense do I have about being commissioned by my group/CLC in my role as guide?"
- Content (Material may be introduced by EXCO link or Cluster Co-ordinator or it may have been circulated for reflection prior to the meeting).
- Sharing of news from EXCO and any planning that needs to be done.
- Examen (evaluation) of meeting.

## Appendix C

### Suggestions for Guide Formation

- Writing of a faith journey, reflecting on leadership challenges/important faith events in the life journey.
- Small Meeting(s) with other potential Guides and experienced persons focusing only on Guide formation.
- Specific guide training days and materials. - Possible topics: Dealing with difficult behaviour, Guiding young people, Getting members to deepen sharing, Learning to sum up feelings of meeting, Recognising movements of the Spirit, Recognising stages of the group, Recognizing complacency/no outward movement of group,(Exist for themselves).
- Dedicated Guides Forum to discuss issues, Share new initiatives, Ways of presenting in groups – Aids, Be prepared for change of Guide in group, Taking turns to lead meeting.
- Suggested program of scripture readings focusing on Christian leadership.
- Short period of spiritual direction with a person who has good understanding of Christian leadership.
- Spending some time with other CLC groups to understand nature of leadership in different circumstances

- Some materials used over the years:

*Growing Together in Christ*

*The Canadian Programme Phase 1*

Some of the early material from World CLC, like *Guideposts for a Group*,

*Deepening Our Understanding of the General Principles*

Sr. Therese Daly *Deepest Longings*

Frank Anderson *Jesus, Our Story*

*CLC Handbook*

*General Principles*

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## Appendix D

### Missioning Prayer

Spirit of light and wisdom, be with .....

Strengthen him/her in his/her desire to serve you.

May he/she be assured of our support and continuing prayer.

We ask this prayer through the intercession of Ignatius and the first companions, through Mary and all the saints. Amen.

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