

## June Lesson Plan: Fraternity — A Gospel Way of Life

### *Living Community Through Mutual Care, Forgiveness, and Service*

June invites us to reflect deeply on **fraternity as a Gospel lifestyle**. For St. Francis fraternity was not optional; it was the heart of the Christian journey. Franciscan fraternity is a place where we practice love, reconciliation, shared mission, and unity amid differences.

This month focuses on:

- **Mutual care**
- **Practicing forgiveness**
- **Serving one another and the world**
- **Fostering unity in diversity**
- **Living Articles 13–15 of the Rule**

**Key Question:**

**How do I actively contribute to the life and health of our fraternity?**

### **Opening**

#### **Welcome & Centering Prayer**

*Consider placing a Tau cross or an image of St. Francis with brothers at the center.*

**Opening prayer:**

*“Lord Jesus, You called us to love one another as You have loved us. Through the example of St. Francis and the gift of fraternity, help us walk together with humility, compassion, and joy. Amen.”*

#### **Scripture & Reflection (10 minutes)**

**Suggested Gospel:**

- **John 13:34–35** — “Love one another as I have loved you.”
- **Colossians 3:12–15** — Compassion, forgiveness, and unity in Christ.

**Reflection prompts:**

- What do these passages reveal about Christian community?
- How does forgiveness build fraternity?
- Where is Christ inviting me to deeper unity?

## Teaching Content

### A. Fraternity as a Gospel Way of Life

- For Francis, fraternity was a mirror of the Trinity — a relationship of love.
- Community is where we practice the Gospel: patience, kindness, accountability, and shared joy.
- Fraternity is not perfect; it is a workshop of the heart.

### B. Rule Articles 13–15 — Living the Call

**Article 13:** Calls members to be instruments of peace and reconciliation.

**Article 14:** Emphasizes the spirit of service and compassion, especially toward the poor and marginalized.

**Article 15:** Invites members to foster unity and presence within the fraternity.

Key themes:

- Forgiveness is essential.
- We are responsible for the well-being of one another.
- Service is our shared mission.
- Unity does not mean sameness; it is harmony in diversity.

### C. Mutual Care and Practiced Forgiveness

- True fraternity requires vulnerability, honesty, and humility.
- Forgiveness restores relationships and opens pathways to healing.
- Mutual care means noticing who is struggling and responding with compassion.

### D. Unity Amid Diversity

- Franciscan fraternity welcomes each person's uniqueness.
- Diversity strengthens the community's witness.
- Unity grows through listening, respect, and shared prayer.

## Discussion

Use any of these prompts:

- How do I contribute positively or negatively to the spirit of my fraternity?
- What helps me remain patient and generous within community life?
- How might God be inviting me to participate more fully?
- Where is forgiveness needed from me or toward me?

- What does humility in prayer look like for you?
- Have you ever felt God inviting you into greater simplicity or hidden service?

### **Love in Action: Humility & Hidden Service**

Introduce the monthly practices and invite participants to choose one or more.

#### **✓ Start each morning with a short prayer or reflection of praise.**

Let your first words be toward God.

#### **✓ Share encouragement with someone.**

Offer a simple word that builds up another person in your life or fraternity.

### **Reflect: Joy That Cannot Be Taken**

- **Begin each morning by naming one gift God has given you.**  
Cultivate awareness of God's generosity.
- **Let yourself smile at something simple every day.**  
Practice delight — a Franciscan virtue.
- **Offer a prayer of praise in your own words.**  
Even if it feels awkward or childlike, let it be sincere.

At week's end, reflect:

- What act of hidden service did I offer?
- How did it feel to serve without recognition?
- How might the person I helped have experienced this kindness?

#### ***Short praise example:***

***"My God and my All, thank You for this day and for every sign of Your love."***

**Repeat this prayer daily as a grounding rhythm of humility.**

### **Practical Application**

Invite:

**One act of fraternity-building** (checking in on a member, offering help, facilitating unity).

**One forgiveness practice** (releasing resentment, seeking reconciliation, praying for someone difficult).

**One daily joy practice** from the *Love in Action* list.

Encourage sharing intentions or accountability partners.

*Pray:*

*“Lord Jesus, make us builders of fraternity. Give us the grace to forgive, the courage to serve, and the joy that strengthens our unity. Guide our hearts to reflect Your love in all we do. Amen.”*